

Email Etiquette & Style

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The 2 biggies

Audience: who will read the
email?

Purpose: what do you want to
happen after the recipient reads the
email?

Today's workshop overview

- ❖ Your relationship with the audience
- ❖ Social graces
- ❖ Respecting the reader's time
- ❖ Style
- ❖ Effective organization and formatting
- ❖ Pitfalls

Relationship in hierarchy?

For buddies-peers

informal, text-msg, emoticons, lack of punctuation and grammar are fine

For employers and professors:

not so much

Relationship to reader

What relationship are you trying to establish with the reader?

?

What image are you trying to create of yourself?

The real problem with typos

Can yuo raed tihs? Aoccdnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinvertisy, our brians can maek sesne of wrods as lnog as the frist and lsat lettres are wheer they shuold be.

Email gone wrong #1

To: nickinso@cas.usf.edu
From: partygurr1@yahoo.com
Date: December 16, 2005
Re: FINAL GRADE!

dr nickinson i dont understand what happened on the final exam i thought i was passing with a c but u gave me a d and i dont no what to do i need a c so i can pass this class and get a job

Image and Attitude

Your image:

- careless
- self-centered
- clueless

Your attitude about the reader?

- disrespectful

Your image / your email address

mistercreamy@aol.com

hotgurrrrrl@yahoo.com

choose a more professional address for resumes and contacts with anyone higher in the hierarchy than you are

Social graces

Greetings

- address recipient by name
- use honorifics
- personalize templated emails to clients

Context

- identify yourself in opening
- establish context

Social graces

Polite closings

Receipt confirmation—to use or not to use?

Acknowledgement of email

Respecting reader's time

use a clear, specific, and defining subject line

bad: "meeting"

better: "picnic committee meeting"

best: "picnic committee agenda for August"

Respecting reader's time

A good subject line lets reader

1. decide if this requires immediate attention
2. find this particular email weeks later

Respecting reader's time

- keep email brief, to the point
- use the ! high priority mark very sparingly
- don't cc anyone who doesn't need to receive the email

Respecting reader's time

- for large attachments
 - warn reader
 - send files individually
- for series of emails back and forth
 - do leave previous message
 - trim thread when topic changes

Style

- word choices: respect or lack of respect
- as in any business letter, conventional grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
- emoticons: only for very informal emails (between friends, for instance)

Email gone wrong #2: style

My colleague and friend Dr. Pat Nickinson alerted me to the fact that you are in need **on** new copyeditors. (She asked me to forward her warm regards to you.) ☺

I have done both formal (on the job) & informal (catching errors in published monographs) proofreading & editing for many years.

I would love to take the editing test!

Organization and Formatting

Use paragraphing to separate ideas

- ↳ white space lets the reader breathe
- ↳ white spaces between paragraphs create visual cues
- ↳ Paragraph beginnings and endings are what readers pay attention to most

Organization and Formatting

Refer to crucial information in opening

To: All Managers
Re: Spring training schedule

Dear managers:

Your teams' meeting times and agendas are listed in the paragraphs below. Please make sure to copy all other managers for additions to the various agendas.

Organization and Formatting

- use bold headings
- divide information into brief sections

Email body, no headings

The writing center at COBA's Business Communications Center offers help to business majors—undergraduates and graduate students—in all phases of writing. We can help students pinpoint the requirements of assignments, organize information, express their ideas clearly, logically, and concisely, and fine-tune their grammar and punctuation. Our goal at the writing center is to help a writer learn how to do these things. We do not fix or edit or grade or evaluate papers; we work with writers to help them understand how to write more effectively, so that when they graduate, they take these skills with them into the working world.

Email body, with headings

What we are. The writing center at COBA's Business Communications Center offers help to business majors—undergraduates and graduate students—in all phases of writing.

What we do. We can help students pinpoint the requirements of assignments, organize information, express their ideas clearly, logically, and concisely, and fine-tune their grammar and punctuation.

Where we are. BSN 2101, upstairs from the COB deli.

Pitfalls

- potentially public, at a state institution
 - might be seen by other than intended reader
- don't put in writing things you may regret later
--proofread before you send
--cool down before you send angry or rude note