

Email Etiquette

Writing an Email to a Professor:

- Emails to professors should always be courteous and professional. They should never look like a text message or be too informal.
- The subject of the email should be short and clear. Type the name of the class in the subject so the professor knows what class you're referring to and a few words stating the topic of the email.

Example: Subject: MATH 1001-010 Question about Assignment

or

Subject: Intro to Archeology – Set up a Meeting

- Start your email with a salutation. This does not need to be too formal, but do not make it too informal either. “Dear Professor Smith” or “Good Morning Professor Jones” are good to use while “Hey Professor” or “Hi” are not professional enough and come across as inappropriate.
- In the body of your email, make sure to use proper sentences, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. An email is just an electronic letter. Therefore, it should be formatted like one.
- Spell out words entirely. Do not use abbreviations or text-speak. Using “OMG” and “gonna” are inappropriate for an email to a professor. Spell out “going to” and never use text slang at all. If you do not know the spelling of a word, look it up rather than guessing and possibly misspelling it.
- The email should not be an essay. Make sure to get to the point and make it clear to the professor what you are saying.
- Always sign off on an email. Include any information the professor will need. Use your full name and your 855 student ID.

Example: Thank you.

Sincerely, Your Name, Student ID: 855#####

- Always send an email to a professor from your student email. **Do not use your personal email.**
- Have someone proofread your email. It always helps to have a second set of eyes to see any mistakes. The more professional it looks, the more the professor will appreciate it and want to help you.

Email Etiquette

Bad Sample Email:

Subject: Quiz Grade

Hey Professor, I didn't like the grade I got on the quiz. Is there any way I could get a B instead of a C. I meet with you or C U in class.

Mistakes in This Email:

- The subject does not say what class the student is referring to in the email. Many professors teach more than one class, and you may even be in two or more classes with the same professor.
- The greeting comes across too informal and it's not separated by its own line.
- "Could" is misspelled and the improper punctuation is used at the end of a question.
- "I meet with you" is missing some words. It should read, "I would like to meet with you."
- The student used "C U" instead of "see you."
- There is no sign off. The student did not state their name anywhere.
- It appears that the student put no effort into writing it, and a professor would interpret that as someone who does not deserve to have a grade changed from a C to a B.
- The overall tone of this email is completely unprofessional. Most professors do not like it when a student asks for a grade change, especially in this manner. There are better ways to communicate with a professor to show them why you deserve a higher grade.

Email Etiquette

Good Sample Email:

Subject: History of African Art - Quiz Concern

Dear Professor Richards,

I did not do as well on the quiz we took last Thursday as I would have liked. I would like to set up a meeting to speak with you about my grade. If I am unavailable during your office hours, is it possible to meet after class this week?

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Sally Samplestudent
Student ID# 855000001
SamplestudentS1@samplestudent.wpunj.edu

Why This Email Works:

- The subject states the class and a few words about the student's issue so it is clear to the professor what the email is about.
- There is a proper greeting set on its own line.
- The body of the message is correctly formatted with proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- The student gives a full sign off, providing the professor with all of the information needed about the student.
- The email is professional and courteous. It is not asking the professor to change a grade. The student wants to discuss the grade, and while the professor may or may not change it, they would be much more willing to work with the student for better grades in the future. A professor who sees a student who is professional will want the student to do well and is more willing to help them.