

# Proper e-mail format

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*The following will show you the style and content I expect from your e-mails. The red text will help you write an e-mail and the black will give you examples. Any e-mail I receive that is not meeting these criteria will be ignored and deleted!*

SUBJECT: Missing Geography 101 class, Monday, September 3 *Use a clear subject line so the recipient knows what your e-mail is about before he/she even reads it.*

Dear Professor Pesses, *Always write a greeting of some kind. Treat this more like a letter than a text message.*

*The body of your message goes here. When writing to someone who receives a lot of e-mails each day (which would be every professor and boss you ever have), you should make sure that you get to the point right away. You should make sure you include all relevant information, but don't go overboard. For example, if you need to miss a class for a legitimate issue do not go into a lengthy details that don't really matter in getting your message across. Don't write:* I have always taken college seriously and strive to attend every class meeting. I know that crucial information is given with each lecture and it harms me in missing a single moment. That is why I regret to inform you that due to our civic responsibility I must journey to the courthouse to see if I am to serve on a jury. That said, I will not be able to attend class on this Monday. *Instead write:* I have been summoned for jury duty and will have to miss class this Monday. I will keep you informed about having to miss any more classes this week. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,

Reginald J. Studenton

Geography 101, MW 9:30-10:50am *It is crucial that you include your full name and your class information. Professors often teach many classes with hundreds of students each semester. Don't expect them to know who you are, even if you had a conversation with them earlier in the day. It's nothing personal, just a tremendous amount of different faces and names each semester.*

## Examples of what not to do

The following are some actual e-mails I have received from students. I am presenting them to you so that you can understand how we professors interpret such messages.



Good morning this is [REDACTED] in your Monday/Wednesday Geography Class. I am emailing you about printing out the powerpoint Ecology which is powerpoint 22 on the computer. I am bringing this to your attention. Thank you!

While I appreciate the student wanting to bring something to my attention, his e-mail did not actually tell me what the problem was... Make sure you are clear! It may sound right in your head, but read it aloud to make sure everything actually makes sense.



The paper we have to write for your lab class is just a research paper correct? Also does it have to be work cited and how many pages? The day you gave out the assignment I wasn't in class so I'm not sure of the guidelines of the paper. I checked the schedule it says the presentation is on the 19th, which means the paper is due tues correct?

First, your missing class does not get you special treatment from your professor. Students seem to think that it is the professor's responsibility to clue them in to anything they may have missed. It isn't. Further, all of this information was clearly written out on the class website (in the very place where this student found the schedule). Five minutes of reading could have answered all of this. This really just shows your professor that you don't care about the class, so why should you professor care about your problems?



[Redacted]

May 27 (8 days ago) ☆



to me ▾

When we are calculating are grade do we add the extra 5 points in as well, for my case I just want a D atleast so I can pass. So I'm at 232 if I subtract 300 by that I'll need 68 points to get a D. But if I add the 5 I will need 63 I believe, so I was just trying to make sure if I add the extra 5 points or not.

Don't ask a professor how to calculate your grade. With the exception of statistical grade curving, figuring out a grade in a class is easy. Points are points. Get as many as you can. Divide what you have earned by how many are possible. Honestly, if you can't handle basic math and problem solving, you aren't ready for college level material. Also, the fact that this student can "pass" with a D is terrifying. Apparently at my college, a D will count for certain degrees, but to me that says that such degrees are worthless. If I were an employer trying to hire someone, would I really be impressed by someone who is below average?



[Redacted]

May 14 ☆



to me ▾

Hey I'm in your lecture class Thurs starting at 3:45. So I just did hw number 7 and I clicked submit and it said I basically didn't mark any answers and I got 0/14, which I know isn't right because I wrote down all the correct answers before I submitted it and I did it with a friend and made sure we both got the same right answers, but it just made it seem like I got them all wrong. I have the answers written down on a paper to show u just in case, but I can't take a 0 for somthin I know I atleast got some points for. I'm about to do hw 8 now so I hope it doesn't do somthin funny in the system again.

This student was referring to an online homework assignment. I checked her work through the website and sure enough she had managed to give the wrong answer every single time. In thinking about it, I realized she was probably copying answers from someone else, but the computer randomly ordered them so what was "C" on another computer wasn't "C" on hers. I hope that's the only possibility, because I can't imagine anyone being that wrong on anything ever. When telling her that she in fact scored a zero and it was not a computer glitch, she simply responded "OK." Do not waste your professor's time when you aren't even trying in the course, or worse yet, trying to cheat your way through it!



██████████@avc.edu>



to me ▾

Hey mike can you send over that website you wanted us to get our info from for the country research assignment you just gave us a few days ago. Get back to me asap please. Btw this is ██████████ from your MW 11-12:20 class!

A few things here. First, we aren't on a first name basis. Ever. Not while you are a student. Second, use proper punctuation, capitalization, etc. Third, as always, this is all spelled out in the assignment details on the class website, so the email is not necessary. Finally, ASAP (As Soon As Possible) has a demanding tone, whether you intend it or not. Based on the professor/student relationship, you are never in a position to demand anything. We demand of you.

This may sound like the ranting of a cranky old professor. It isn't. I actually do enjoy hearing from and helping students, as long as they are putting forth the effort to succeed in my class and their college education in general. College is a place for those dedicated to gaining knowledge and learning how to solve problems in the real world. Save the big, challenging questions for me and use your syllabus to answer these simple ones.

The main thing to remember when e-mailing your professors is that you should treat them like your boss at work. You should always maintain professionalism. We may come across as fun, easy-going people, but the reality is we are all stressed out and overworked. Your e-mail is one of many that we get that day and when students ask questions they could answer on their own or make us struggle to even understand them we get more stressed out.