

Lecture 8 - IT

➤ Writing E-mails

Important components of an effective e-mail:

Subject Lines

- ★ E-mail subject lines are like newspaper headlines. They should deliver the main point or idea of your message. Therefore, be as specific as possible.
- ★ Do not use one-word subjects such as “Hi,” “Question,” or “FYI” because they don’t give the reader an idea of how important your message is.
- ★ If time is important, you can include a date in your subject line, like “Meeting on Thurs., Dec 2”.

Greetings and Closings/Signatures

- ★ Greetings are written at the beginning of your e-mail. Some common ways to greet your reader are:
 - Dear Professor Smith,
 - Hello, Ms. McMahon,
 - Hi, Mary Jane,
- ★ If you don’t know the name of the person, or if the e-mail addresses a group of different people, use something polite like:
 - To whom it may concern,
 - Dear members of the selection committee,

- Hello, everyone,
- ★ Your closing is extremely important because it lets the reader know who is contacting them. For your closing, use something brief but friendly, or just write your name.
- Thank you,
- Best wishes,
- See you tomorrow,
- Regards,
- ★ For a very formal message, such as a job application, use the kind of closing that you might see in a business letter:
- Sincerely,
- Respectfully yours,
- ★ In the signature, you may include your title and the organization you belong to; for example:

Eng. Mary Watkins
 Senior Research Associate
 Bain and Company

Dr. Joseph Smith
 University of Queensland

More tips for effective business e-mails

- **Include a clear, brief, and specific subject line.** For example, “Proposal attached” or “Your question of the last meeting.”

- **Open with an appropriate greeting that shows respect.** For example, use a greeting like “Dear Ms. Alexandra”, “Hi Barry”, or “Dear Sam Jones”. Never use the title Mrs. as you cannot be sure a woman is married.
- **Briefly state your purpose for writing** in the beginning of your message.
- **Provide the reader with some context.** If you’re asking a question, cut and paste any relevant text (for example, computer error messages, assignment parts you don’t understand, part of a previous message, etc.) into your e-mail. When replying to someone’s e-mail, include or restate the original message.
- **Avoid abbreviations.** An e-mail is not a text message. Never use abbreviations like ROTFLOL (roll on the floor laughing out loud).
- **Be brief.** Delete unnecessary words.
- **Use a good format.** Format your message so that it is easy to read. Divide your message into small paragraphs. A good e-mail should get to the point and include only three small paragraphs or less. Use white space to visually separate paragraphs. Bullet important details so that they are easy to pick out. Use bold face type or capital letters to highlight critical information, such as due dates (but do not write your entire message in capital letters or bold face—your reader may understand this as “shouting”).

- **Reread, revise, and review.** Re-read messages before you send them. Check your grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Try reading your message out loud to help you catch any mistakes.
- **State the desired outcome at the end of your message.** If you're requesting a response, let the reader know what type of response you require (for example, an e-mail reply, possible times for a meeting, a recommendation letter, etc.). If you're requesting something that has a due date, highlight that due date in your message. You can also end your e-mail with the next step, especially in work settings (for example, you might write "I will follow this up with a phone call to you on the next day" or "Let's plan to further discuss this at the meeting on Wednesday").
- **Close with a signature.** Identify yourself by creating a signature block that automatically contains your name and business contact information.

Sample e-mail that includes the principles above.

From: Steve Johns <sjohns@apple.com>
To: Human Resources Division <hr@apple.com>
Date: September 12, 2022
Subject: Safe Zone Training

Dear Colleagues:

Please consider signing up for the next available Safe Zone workshop offered by the College. As you know, our department is working toward increasing the number of Safe Zone volunteers, and I hope several of you may be available for the next workshop scheduled for Friday, October 9.

For more information on the Safe Zone program, please visit <http://www.cocc.edu/multicultural/safe-zone-training/>

Please let me know if you will attend.

Steve Johns
CEO Apple Computing
sjobs@apple.com

Exercise 1

Use what you've just learned to explain why Student 2's e-mail to Professor Tomas is more effective than the e-mail written by Student 1. What's the difference? What makes Student 2's e-mail look and sound more appropriate? If you were Professor Tomas and you received both messages, how would you respond to each one?

E-mail from Student 1:

hey,
i need help on my paper can i come by your office tomorrow

thx

E-mail from Student 2:

Hi Dr. Tomas,

I am in your ENGL 101 class on Thursdays, and I have a question about the paper that is due next Tuesday. I'm not sure that I understand what is meant by the following sentence in the prompt:

"Write a 10 page paper arguing for or against requiring ENGL 101 for all UNC freshmen and provide adequate support for your point of view."

I am not sure what would count as "adequate" support. Would using 3 sources be OK?

Can I come by your office tomorrow at 2:00 pm to talk to you about my question? Please let me know if that fits your schedule. If not, I could also come by on Friday after 1:00.

Thank you,

Tim Smith

Exercise 2

Here are two versions of an e-mail from a supervisor, Jane Doe, to a group of her employees. Which version do you think is most effective? Why?

Version 1 of Jane Doe's e-mail:

Subject: materials for Wed. staff meeting

Hi, everyone—

For tomorrow's 3 p.m. staff meeting in the conference room, please bring 15 copies of the following materials:

- Your project calendar
- A one-page report describing your progress so far
- A list of goals for the next month
- Copies of any progress report messages you have sent to clients this past month

See you tomorrow—

Jane

Version 2 of Jane Doe's e-mail:

Subject: tomorrow

As you know, tomorrow afternoon we'll be meeting to discuss the status of all of our current projects. Donuts will be provided. Be sure to arrive on time and bring along the materials you have been working on this week—bring enough copies for everyone. Some of these material might include your calendars, reports, and any important e-mails you have sent. Also, I wanted to remind you that your parking permit requests are due later this week; you should turn those in to Ms. Jones, and if she is not at her desk when you stop by, you can e-mail them to her.

Exercise 3

Opening and Closing Formal and Informal E-mails

Think of one formal and one informal example for each of the following:

	Formal	Informal
<i>Opening greeting</i>		
<i>Opening line</i>		
<i>Closing line</i>		
<i>Closing greeting</i>		
<i>Signature at the end</i>		