



Professional Emails

Professional Development and Academic Skills



University of Dayton
UDayton Global

Objectives

- **Learn how to write professional emails**
- **Learn different degrees of formality**
- **Learn about different titles to address recipients**
- **Learn the difference between writing an email to a professor or someone at the workplace**
- **Learn how to avoid impolite language**



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Email Writing

As a graduate student, you're going to be communicating with administrators and professors by email.

- **Is there a correct way to write an email to a professor?**
Yes, there's a specific way to address a professor, write a subject line and write the beginning of an email.

Also, as a professional, you're also going to communicate at the workplace by email.

- **Is there a difference between writing a correct email to a professor and someone at the workplace?**
Yes, there's a slight difference. Basically, it's how you address the recipient in the greeting section and what you write in the subject line.



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Let's look at the components of an email and examples of email writing in the next slides.

Parts and Components in an Email

An email is formed by two parts; a subject line and a body:

- **The subject line**
- **The body of the email contains six components:**
 1. **A proper greeting called salutation**
 2. **An introduction**
 3. **One or more body paragraphs**
 4. **A final sentence**
 5. **A closing**
 6. **A signature**



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The Subject Line

The subject line is the first part of the email that the recipient sees. It's important to write a clear subject line so the recipient can know what the email is about.

A subject line should...

- **Be written like a title**, which means that the **major words should be capitalized** (all words except for articles, conjunctions, and prepositions).
- Contain the **essential information** about the email that you're writing, but it shouldn't be a sentence.
- There are some **variants** between emails addressed to a professor and other professional emails. Let's look at these variants in the next slide.



Subject Lines Examples

Email to a Professor

An email addressed to a professor should contain a clear subject line stating the **course name, course code, and the subject of the email.**

- PDAS 503-02 Missed Attendance
- English 101 Request for Assignment Review
- Engineering 567 Grades Concern
- Biology 667-09 Project Question

Email at the Workplace

An email addressed to someone at the workplace should also contain **a clear subject line.** It won't need the course number, but it can include **the name of a project or the number of a document.**

- Biomedical Survey 348 Final review
- Request to Utilize Resource Room Computers
- Lamp Invoice 67000123 Returned



The Salutation

- Greeting someone by email is just as important as the way you address someone in person. If you forget the salutation, it's like not saying "hello" to someone!
- There are **different types of salutations** depending on the **degree of formality**.
- Also, depending on the **recipient's title or role**, you need to address them differently.



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Correct Salutations for Professors

If your professor holds a Ph.D., you should address them as Dr. followed by their last name. For example:

- **Dear Dr. Muller,**
- **Hello Dr. Muller,**

If your professor doesn't hold a Ph.D., you should address them as Professor followed by their last name. For example:

- **Dear Professor Berloni,**
- **Hello Professor Berloni,**

- ✓ **Remember to add a comma at the end of the salutation.**
- ✓ **Never address a professor by their first name unless they give you permission!**



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Correct Professional Salutations

If you're writing to someone that you don't know or you're writing to for the first time, write:

- **Dear Mr. Brown,** (for men)
- **Dear Ms. Brown,** (for women)
- **Dear Mx. Brown,** (for people who identify as gender neutral)

If you don't know the recipient's name, although you should try to find it out, write:

- **Dear Sir or Madam,** (neutral & traditional)
- **To Whom It May Concern,** (neutral & professional)

- ✓ **Don't write "Mrs."** for a woman unless that's how they sign their name.
- ✓ **Don't write "Mam" in any case.**
- ✓ **Don't use the person's first name** unless they sign their email off with their first name.



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The Introduction

The introduction of an email is like introducing yourself when you walk into a place.

- **You say who you are.**
- **You say what you want.**



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Writing an Introduction to a Professor

- The introduction consists of **one or two sentences** introducing who you are and **why you're writing**.
- When you write to a professor, you should **state your full name, the course number, and the section you're in** before you say why you're writing.

For example:

Dear Professor Baez,

I'm Ming Chao, a student in your PDAS class, Section 02, and I'm writing to inquire about the group project.



Writing a Professional Introduction

- The introduction consists of **one or two sentences introducing who you are or referring to previous communication, and why you're writing.**
- When you write a professional email, you should be clear and concise.

For example:

Dear Ms. Henderson,

I received your email stating that you received an erroneous invoice. I am now sending you the invoice pertaining to your purchase on November 6.



The Body Paragraphs

The body paragraph/s **describes the details of the subject** you mentioned in the subject line and in the introduction.

- Each paragraph should address only **one topic**.
- Write in **blocks**.
- Keep the information **concise and precise**. People are busy, so keep it short and sweet!

Dear Mrs. Pipes:



This is where you will begin the first paragraph of your business letter. Do not indent any spaces in a block format. Start each line at the left margin. When you are ready, you may go on to your second paragraph.

This is where you will begin your second paragraph of your business letter. Just as in the first letter, you will not indent the paragraph. You should leave one line between the two paragraphs. After you have finished writing your letter, you are almost done.



Sincerely,


Rhonda Avery


Spacing and Punctuation in Emails


There are spacing and punctuation rules in emails:



- Write in blocks by leaving double space (2.0) between the salutation, body paragraphs, closing sentence, closing, and signature.
- Add a comma after the salutation and the closing.

Dear Professor Baez,  

I'm Ming Chao, a student in your PDAS class,
Section 02, and I'm writing to inquire about the
group project. 

Since I cannot find enough sources about the topic I
chose, I was wondering if I could change my project
topic. 

I look forward to knowing your suggestions. 

Sincerely,  

Ming Chao



The Final Sentence

- Add a last sentence to close the email **requesting** what you would like to be done or **explaining** the next steps to be performed.

For example:

I look forward to receiving your feedback on the project and further discuss some ideas.



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The Closing

- The closing section is the part when you say “goodbye.”
- There are **different levels of formality**, and you need to choose the correct closing depending on who you’re writing to.
- In the next slide, you’ll see **different levels of formality for closings**.



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Different Levels of Formality for Closings

Very Formal	Used when you don't know the recipient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very truly yours,• Yours truly,• Respectfully yours,• Yours faithfully,
Formal	Used when you know the recipient's name.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sincerely,• Yours sincerely,• With appreciation,
Less Formal	Used for a more informal professional relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best regards,• Kind regards,• All the best,• Best wishes,

Don't Forget the Signature!

- Unlike on a hard copy, a signature is made up of a printed first name and last name.

Venkatakrishna Khan

- If you have a nickname, write it in parenthesis, after your first name.

Venkatakrishna (Krish) Khan



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Avoid Impolite Language

You need to pay special attention not to sound aggressive or impolite. You should avoid the following sentences, especially to a superior:

- **Avoid a sense of urgency:** Don't use words such as "urgent" or "right now." It sounds aggressive.
- **Avoid the imperative.** Instead of saying, "Please check my work," say, "I'd appreciate it if you could check my work."
- **Avoid the sentence "Please do the needful."** It sounds rude.
- **Avoid being accusative.** Instead of saying, "You didn't send me the form," say, "I didn't receive the form."

How to Make Language More Polite

- **Impolite:** I request you to do the needful. → • **Polite:** If possible, I would like you to consider my grade.
- **Impolite:** Please go over my assignment. → • **Polite:** I'd appreciate it if you could go over my assignment.
- **Impolite:** Please check my grades. → • **Polite:** Could you please check my grades at your convenience?
- **Impolite:** Tell me when the retake is please. → • **Polite:** I'd like to know when the retake is.

Remember to always say THANK YOU!



Quiz Time!

Now that you've learned the rules to professional email writing, you can complete the **Professional Email Quiz**.



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