

TABLE OF CONTENTS
(E-mail)

Contents	Pages
1.0 How to Write a Formal Email	2
2.0 Improving Your Email Etiquette	6
3.0 Some Basic Don'ts	8

1.0 How to Write a Formal Email

i. Use a neutral email address

Your e-mail address should be a variation of your real name, not a username or nickname. Use periods, hyphens, or underscores to secure an e-mail address that is just your name, without extra numbers or letters, if you can.

Never use an unprofessional email address. No one will take you seriously if your reply-to is **kupeningselalu@yahoo.com.**

ii. Use a short and accurate subject header

Avoid saying too much in the subject header, but make sure it reflects the content of your email to a person unfamiliar with you. If possible, include a keyword that will make the email content easier to remember and/or search for in a crowded inbox. For example, "Meeting on March 12th" is specific enough that the email topic won't be mistaken for anything else but not so specific as to be distracting (ex. "Schedule, Guest List, Lunch Requests, and Meeting Overview for March 12th").

iii. Use a proper salutation

Addressing the recipient by name is preferred. Use the person's title (Mr. Mrs. Ms. or Dr.) with their last name, followed by a comma or a colon. Optionally, you can precede the salutation with "Dear..." (but "Hello..." is acceptable as well). Using a last name is more formal and should be used unless you are on first-name terms with the recipient. If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to (but you really should try and find one) use "Dear Sir/Madam" or "Dear Sir or Madam" followed by a colon.

iv. Introduce yourself in the first paragraph (if necessary)

Also include why you are writing, and how you found that person's e-mail address, or the opportunity you are writing about.

Example:

- *My name is Earl Rivers. I'm contacting you to apply for the administrative assistant position listed on CareerXYZ.com.*

- *My name is Arlene Thornton. I am writing about the traffic citation I received on August 31, 2013. I obtained your e-mail address from the Westchester County Clerk website.*

v. **Write the actual message**

Be sure to get your point across without rambling; if it is fluffed up, the reader may glance over the important details. Try to break up the message into paragraphs by topic to make your message more logical and digestible.

- The email should be no more than 5 paragraphs long and each paragraph should be no more than 5 sentences long.
- Insert a line break between each paragraph; indenting is not necessary and will likely be lost during the email transfer anyway.
- Be sure to avoid informal writing.

vi. **Use the correct form of leave-taking**

This will depend on your level of intimacy with the recipient. Examples include:

- *Yours sincerely,*
- *Yours cordially,*
- *Respectfully,*
- *Best,*

vii. **Sign with your full name**

If you have a job title, include that in the line after your name, and write the company name or website in the line after that. If you do not have a job title but you have your own blog or website related to the content of the e-mail, include a link to that below your name. If the e-mail is about a job, only include a career-related website or blog, not hobbies or interests.

viii. **Proofread your message for content**

Make sure you have not omitted any important details (or repeated yourself). Reading your email aloud or asking someone to proofread it is a great way to get a different perspective on what you've written.

ix. **Proof read your message for grammar and spelling**

If your email provider does not already provide spelling and grammar options for you, copy and paste your email into a word processor, revise it if necessary, and copy and paste it back into your email.

Sample Emails

Sample 1: Sample Letter About Resolved Issue

Dear Ms. McDonald,

I am writing to follow up on our discussion last Wednesday. As you requested, I filed a work order with the facilities department regarding the damage to the ascending escalator you reported.

An examination of the escalator found that there was a shoelace caught in the gears. Said shoelace has since been removed, and the escalator was tested extensively to ensure this would not happen again. I am pleased to report that the tests were passed with flying colors, and the escalator has been reopened.

Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. Please continue to inform us should you have any other problems in our facilities.

Sincerely,

Marilyn M. Novak
Property Manager
Novak Skyscraper Construction

Sample 2: Formal Letter of Apology

To whom it may concern:

My name is Edward Miller. I stayed at your hotel with my family March 8-12, 2013. We had a lovely stay, but I recently learned that my six-year-old son took the alarm clock from our hotel room with him when we left.

I apologize for my son's actions. He is quite chagrined. I would like to know what address I should mail the alarm clock back to. Please let me know the preferred address, and I will send the clock (and my son's letter of apology) as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Edward Miller

Sample 3: Formal Email to Boss

To: jjones@jonesofficesolutions.com

From: tmcaden@jonesofficesolutions.com

Subject: Meeting About New Internet Service Provider 1/8/2013

Mr. Jones,

I have been researching our choices for internet providers over the past week, and I would like to update you on my progress. We have two options: H.C. Cable and Toll South. Both offer business plans, and I will go over the pricing of each plan at the meeting on Tuesday. Both of the options I listed have comparable speed and data usage offerings as well. I called your personal provider, GoGo Satellite, but they do not have any business offerings. They primarily do residential internet service.

I will talk with Joe and Susan in IT about these options and get their suggestions. I will also send out meeting requests to everyone, including Mr. Morris in operations. If you have any questions prior to the meeting, please let me know.

Respectfully,

Tina McAden

Administrative Assistant

Jones Office Solutions

<http://www.jonesofficesolutions.com>

07-555 28 28

Retrieved from August 18, 2014 <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Formal-Email>

2.0 Improving Your Email Etiquette

Opening your email inbox can be like opening a Pandora's box of inadequate grammar, poor spelling, and bad taste. Consider what impressions your emails make on others; it is always the right time to set your emails apart from the pack. Follow these steps and improve your email etiquette.

i. **Keep your email concise, conversational, and focused**

It is harder to read letters on a computer screen than on a sheet of paper, so keep emails short and to the point. While there is no ideal email length, keep sentences short, about 8-12 words and leave a space between paragraphs.

- In a work email, get straight to the point: "I'm hoping you will..." "I think we should...." etc right up front, making the case in the following lines. Many people only read the first few lines before deciding to respond or to save for later. Those line should give enough of the "meat" to allow an informed decision. For personal emails, it's often a nice idea to open with a brief personal note before getting into the main point of your email.

ii. **Avoid fancy formatting**

Changing fonts and colors, inserting bullet lists, or using HTML can make an email look bizarre or render it unreadable for the recipient, even if the formatting looks fine on your computer. Keep it simple.

iii. **Limit attachments**

Do not add an attachment unless really necessary. Keep attachments as small as possible. Most email applications can send and receive attachments up to 1 MB, but anything over that can be a hassle for you or the recipient, and even smaller files can take a long time to open if the recipient's email connection is slow. If you need to send a larger file, compress or zip it or use online services that will help you send large files such as YouSendIt.com. If you need to send multiple pages, such as meeting plans or large text corrections, send a fax or a typed set of pages in a letter.

- Do not zip email attachments unless necessary. Unless an attachment is too large to send otherwise, you risk wasting your recipient's time and possibly hinder them from accessing your attachments. Many mobile devices are unable to uncompress zip files. Additionally it is redundant since many common files like .xlsx, .docx, .pptx (MS Excel, Word and PowerPoint) are already in a compressed format.
- Keep in mind that many people or businesses will not open attachments from someone they do not know, and some email accounts are set up to automatically send emails with attachments to the spam folder, so if you're applying for a job, for example, make sure you follow the recipient's instructions regarding attachments. If no instructions are given, send another email to let the recipient know you will be sending an email with an attachment.

iv. **Think before you send**

Do not send e-mails when you are emotional. Feel free to write the subject and text of the email, then save it. Only add the recipients and send it *after* you have had time to think about what you are sending; you might change your mind and be better off for it.

- Email has also become a tool to ask or tell people things that you would normally never say face-to-face (ever wonder why you become a different person instinctively online?). If you are sending someone **anything**, reread it and ask yourself if you would say this to them if they were right next to you, or face-to-face. If it's on a touchy subject, read it twice.

v. **Be careful using abbreviations and emoticons**

This may be acceptable in an informal e-mail such as with a friend. However, in a formal letter you would not have to tell someone that you are "laughing out loud," people may find it inappropriate, and could feel you are being frivolous.

- Some abbreviations, such as "BTW" for "By the Way," are commonly used in emails and are generally acceptable except in formal, professional emails.

Retrieved from August 18, 2014 <http://www.wikihow.com/Improve-Your-Email-Etiquette>

3.0 Some Basic Don'ts

i. **Don't forward emails that are private**

For example, avoid forwarding an email containing a secret, especially if the person you are e-mailing does not want you to. Doing so can possibly cause the recipient to lose trust in you, and you could possibly have your relationship messed up. You certainly do not want that to happen.

ii. **Don't spread rumors about people**

If you feel tempted to do so, put yourself in the other person's shoes, and think about how you would feel if that person spread rumors about you. For example, if your friend has a reputation for being mean and bossy, think about how you would feel if your friend told your other friends about one of your quirks. You would not be very happy, right?

iii. **Avoid discussing people's private business**

For example, avoid letting your friend know that her friend broke up with an ex-boyfriend. Email is not *completely* private, so it's possible that the person whose business you are discussing could see the emails and become mad at you and/or embarrassed, and this could mess up your relationship with the person.

iv. **Avoid flaming**

Flames are basically insults sent online to offend you, so it is important not to send flames to other people or start flame wars. This could make the other person angry, and you could also have your account suspended for this.

v. **Avoid sharing the personal information of others without permission**

This can be anything, from a person's age to the name of the school that he or she goes to. Put yourself in the other person's shoes -- how would you feel if someone gave your friend the address of your house? You would not be very happy, so be sure to obtain permission before sharing someone's personal information with others over email, or do not do so at all.

vi. **Don't send an email when you're angry**

It will show you are angry and you can upset the person. For example, if you are angry at someone at work, and you email that person a large rant in all caps, this could cause the person that you emailed to become irritated. This is the same thing with replying to emails; if you are angry at someone for sending you a particular message, hold off replying until you have calmed down.

Sample Emails

Sample 1: Outlining New Policy

To: staff@widgetco.com
From: howard@widgetco.com
Subject: New Etiquette Policy

Dear WidgetCo Staff,

In an attempt to make our office a more enjoyable place for everyone to be, we are implementing a few new policies to try to improve workplace morale:

1. Please refrain from wearing perfume or other strong fragrances in the office.
2. Whenever possible, personal hygiene should be taken care of in the bathroom or another private area.
3. While employees are definitely allowed to listen to music, please make sure that your volume is low and you are wearing headphones so that others are not distracted.
4. Please remember to keep all conversations and emails work-appropriate. Over-sharing and discussing potentially controversial topics are not good choices for office communication.

We are proud of the welcoming and comfortable environment at WidgetCo and feel that these policies will help to ensure a continued positive working atmosphere. If you have any questions regarding these or other office policies, please be sure to ask your supervisor for clarification.

Best regards,

Howard Parson
CEO, WidgetCo, Inc.
Office: (228) 555-0198 Ext. 125

Retrieved from August 18, 2014 <http://www.wikihow.com/Sample/Email-Outlining-New-Policy>

NOTE:

Go to <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/694/1/> for Email Etiquette for Students.