

A Guide for Writing e-mail

Best practices for Writing e-mail.

- *Include an informative subject line.* Begin the subject line with "ENC 1101.your section *yourlastname*." (notice there are spaces between ENC, 1101.your section, and *yourlastname*. In addition, omit the quotation marks). Add a phrase that specifies what you want to say. For example, "ENC 1101.018 Jones Question about 1101 syllabus" is clear, as is "ENC 101 Jones Draft of WA 2." This allows instructors to keep e-mail organized.
- *Include a salutation.* E-mails do not usually include "Dear," as a letter does. Calling a professional by his or her first name (unless you are invited to do so) may be considered rude. It is important to know your professor's professional title. If they have a PhD., you should refer to them as "Dr." If your professor has a Master's Degree, you may refer to them as "Instructor" or by "Mr." or "Mrs." This last rule also applies to other professionals in the academic setting.
- *Initial cap only the first word of a complimentary close.* If you close your e-mail with a multi-word phrase such as "Thank you," note that only the first word takes an initial capital letter.
- *Include a closing.* Sign your e-mail with your name. Don't just stop after finishing your message. Again, this may be considered rude.
- *Create a signature file.* If your e-mail software allows, create a signature file that includes your name and contact information and (if you are employed) your job title and company name.
- *Use short paragraphs.* Legibility on the screen is less than legibility on paper. Therefore, use short paragraphs (in general, 3-4 lines maximum) to make the e-mail easy to read. Be sure to also skip lines between paragraphs.
- *Don't use instant-messaging spelling.* If u want 2 b treated like a pro, rite like 1.
- *Adhere to the conventions of Standard English.* Even though e-mails are informal, they should be correct. Edit and proofread for problems of correctness such as spelling errors and grammar mistakes.

Failing to follow these guidelines undercuts your ethos.