

## WRITING EFFECTIVE EMAILS

Writing effective emails is a key skill not only when working from home during lockdown, but also for higher education and the world of work. It's not an easy skill to crack, so use this handout to help you write emails that no one could fail to respond to!

### THE FUNDAMENTALS

BUILDING THE PERFECT EMAIL...

- ✓ Make good use of your subject line
- ✓ Be clear, concise, and specific
- ✓ Use a polite tone
- ✓ Proofread and use formal English



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Don't just leave the subject line blank! A well-thought out subject line helps to direct your reader and could lead to a quicker response!

## POOR EXAMPLE

To	teacher123@sch.uk	Bcc
Cc		
Add a subject		

Would you answer this? Remember – some people receive hundreds of emails a day so it doesn't take a lot for them to ignore an email without a subject line!

## GOOD EXAMPLE

To	teacher123@sch.uk	Bcc
Cc		
Assistance with S4 Class Task set 02/06/2020		

Here the reader of the email will know exactly what the subject of the email is and the inclusion of the date will make the reader aware that the email is time sensitive.

Being direct and clear in your emails really helps you to receive a prompt and useful response.

## POOR EXAMPLE

I started writing my essay last week and have looked up some sources but i dont know what im meant to do as i haven't been taught to write an essay like this and its pretty confusing. I've read a lot about gun control in America and i know the arguments for and against and have read news articles but i don't know how to put it together to create an essay as theres nothing on Teams to help.

Here the author of the email does not address their recipient or sign off from their email and it is not exactly clear what they want help with. There are also quite a few errors in the email that could have been avoided with proper proof-reading. Writing an email like this might lead to a delayed response!

## GOOD EXAMPLE

Hi Mr Smith,

I've been working on the essay that we were set for class last week and I have a few questions.

- 1) How do you structure a discursive essay? I have looked up some sources for information, but I'm not sure how to use my research to create an argument.
- 2) Are there any sources that you could recommend on writing discursive essays?
- 3) Would you be able to offer me some support with structuring a discursive essay?

Thank you for your help,

Emma |

Here the author of the email addresses their teacher politely and puts quite a lot of thought into what kind of help they want from their teacher. Throughout the email the author is polite and they are also clear in listing their concerns, and direct in the kind of help they ask for.

This email might have taken a bit longer to write than the email above, but it is exactly the kind of email a teacher wants to receive and would be happy to reply to!

While we all get stressed out with work and with emails, it's important to remember to always be polite. This will keep your email at the top of the pile! Here are our top tips for keeping your email polite:

- ✓ Always address your recipient.
- ✓ Use formal language – you don't have to write like Charles Dickens, but never be tempted to use text-speak.
- ✓ Always be constructive and try to find a solution to any problems you have.
- ✓ Sign off your email – a simple “thank you” or “best wishes” will suffice in most situations. Keep the “Yours faithfully” and “Yours Sincerely” for job applications!
- ✓ Proofread your work – although we all make mistakes with spelling, grammar, and typos, try to avoid these as much as possible.

- ✓ Don't be afraid to write emails seeking support or clarification. Your teachers, LIFT OFF, and HE institutions are happy to help. Using the LIFT OFF Top Tips to compose your email will help to ensure you get a response more quickly!
- ✓ If you're not using your Glow account, remember to have a professional sounding private email – no nicknames or aliases!
- ✓ Remember when you write an email to someone that they may receive hundreds of emails a day and that it could take a while to receive a response.
- ✓ Most people that you write to in a professional capacity (teachers, HE professionals etc.) only check their emails during business hours – usually from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.
- ✓ You should allow 72 business hours to receive a response to your email.
- ✓ If you have not received a reply to your email in 72 business hours, it is perfectly acceptable (and sensible) to send a politely worded reminder. E.g.:

“Hi there, I know that this is a very busy period, but I wonder if you have had the time to read my email sent on 02/06/2020  
Thanks for your help...”

- ✓ Never write an email when you are annoyed or in a panic. Always give yourself time to calm down before you write an email! This will help to ensure that your writing is clear and that you get a useful response.