

How to Write an Email to Your Instructor

On the surface, an email to an instructor might seem similar to a text message you might send to a friend, but they are not the same. The good news: **sending an email to your instructor is like sending a professional work email**, which means getting in the habit now will keep you a step ahead when you're in your chosen career! Here's a rundown of what to keep in mind when sending a professional email:

Before sending, make sure the email is necessary.

Remember your instructor is dealing with many students. Double check the syllabus, your notes, or any online discussion boards to see if your questions are answered there *first*, before deciding the email is necessary.

Use the appropriate email address. When sending an email to your instructor, send it from your SUNY O email to their SUNY O email (never personal emails). If you do not know your instructor's email, check the syllabus or college website.

firstname.lastname@sunyorange.edu

Question About Homework

Dear Professor Garcia,

I'm currently working on the homework problems that are due for next class, and I wanted to double check that my notes were accurate from what we went over in class. I checked the text book and it says to do something differently, which is why I'm thinking my notes aren't accurate. I'm attaching a picture of what I wrote down from the lesson. I would be very grateful if you could confirm for me how to show my work. [Thank you so much for taking the time to read this email, and I appreciate any help you can give!]

Signed,
Sally Smith

Keep the subject line simple and straightforward (to the point).

Address your reader with respect.

Remember this is a formal email, and not a text to a friend. Don't assume a casual greeting is appropriate, *unless* your instructor asks you to address them some specific way.

Explain attachments (if there are any).

Provide specific details about what you're sending and why.

Close with courtesy. A respectful end will maintain the air of formality. Remember to sign your name.

Simplify the email as much as possible. Emails should be quick and efficient. If possible, limit the email to one or two topics. Communicate clearly by asking direct questions. If the topic requires extended discussion, it may be better to attend office hours rather than discuss through email.

It is not easy communicating with instructors, especially if the class just started. [Schedule a time with a tutor](#) to talk through any communications or questions you need to send!