

Netiquette!

Manners for emailing

When writing emails, it is important to remember who the recipients are and that different audiences require different minimum standards of writing. For example:

- *formal correspondence to employers, professionals and colleagues,*
- *informal correspondence to family and friends.*

As email may at times be your only method of communication, it is important to portray yourself in the best possible light.

To this end, we have, 'netiquette', a straightforward approach to getting it right!

Address your email appropriately

It is important to use 'hello' and 'goodbye' in your message but it must be in an appropriate form. 'Hiya' and 'Cheers' may be fine for a close friend but not for your not-so-friendly bank manager. Who are you writing to and how important do they consider their status? If in doubt, assume it is very important to them. So is it Dear Sir, Madam, Mr, Mrs or Dear Bill, Betty...?

Be polite

Even with correct punctuation, letters don't carry a musical score, so beware that the tone of your letter may be misconstrued. Take the time to ensure there's no cause for misunderstanding.

Don't shout

If you wish to emphasise a word or phrase, limited use of upper case is acceptable, though italics are more subtle. For formal emails, use upper case only when necessary.

Be concise but not curt.

A rambling prose won't hold anyone's attention. A prospective reader may write you off before he or she's finished reading if you're not actually saying anything. However, if you are too brief, you may be considered lacking in social skills or even just rude. Find the correct balance of information/conversation appropriate to your audience.

Don't abbreviate

Standard abbreviations—e.g. Dr, USA, etc.—are acceptable in formal correspondence, but SMS text messaging abbreviations are not. With informal letters, your relationship with the recipient will dictate what you should or should not use. Your best friend will understand your cryptic abbreviations whereas your grandmother may not! CUL8R!

Spelling and grammar are important!

One would expect a student learning a foreign language to make errors in spelling and grammar yet still be understood. 'Getting by' in a foreign language is a skill to be proud of and improved upon. In your own language, it creates an impression—but not a good one.

Attachments

With the constant problem of viruses, be wary of sending an attachment unless you know the recipient will really benefit from it and is prepared to accept it. If in doubt, where possible cut and paste directly into the email rather than sending an attachment.

Your address

For formal purposes, if your address is anything other than your name, you may wish to use an alternative; `squeezemebabee@gfgddg.com` might not impress your conservative employer!

