

Email Etiquette

COMMON PERSONAL AND
PROFESSIONAL EMAIL RULES

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Email Vocabulary

- CC – Carbon Copy
- BCC – Blind Carbon Copy
- Reply All
- Forward
- Delete
- Archive (Gmail)
- Folders/Labels
- What email client/company do you use?

Composing a Formal Email

- Have a neutral email address:

Example: lazygurl28@yahoo.com (BAD!)

Example: minh.nguyen@yahoo.com (GOOD!)

- Always begin with a “Dear Mr. / Ms. / Dr. _____,” or if recipient is unknown use “To whom it may concern”.
- Be sure to address the person correctly – check the spelling of their name, whether they are a man or woman and use the appropriate salutation.

Composing a Formal Email

- Introduce yourself in the first paragraph and tell the recipient why you are writing:

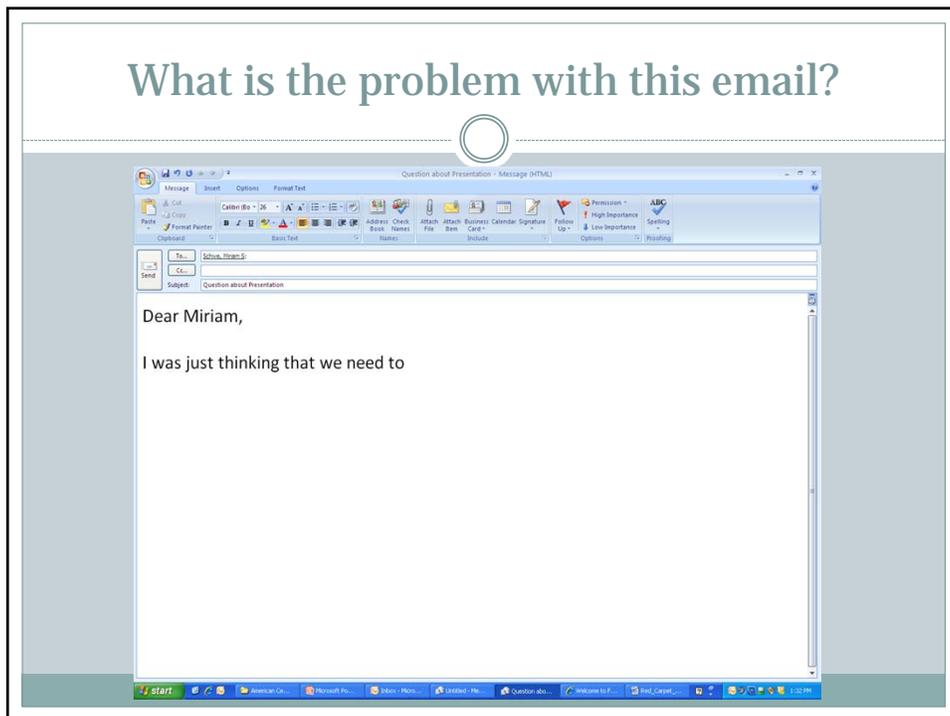
Example: “My name is Yuki Kondo-Shah and I am writing to you today to apply for the [position] at [institute].”

- Be concise and short: Generally, 3-5 sentences per paragraph and no more than 5 paragraphs in an introductory email.

Composing a Formal Email

- Avoid abbreviations or acronyms, when possible.
- Never use slang (informal speech).
- Conclude the email with the appropriate ending:
Example: “Sincerely,” or “Respectfully,” or “Best regards,”
- Sign with your full name.
- ALWAYS be sure to spell-check your email before sending.

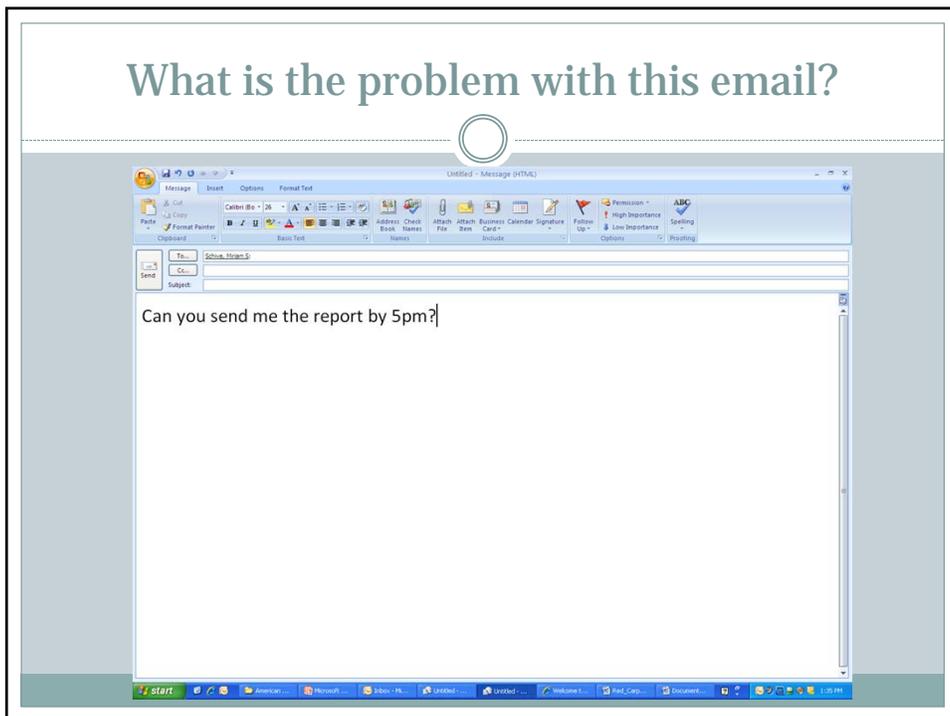
What is the problem with this email?



1. Sending before you mean to:

- Sending incomplete emails looks sloppy and careless
- Avoid the problem by entering the recipient's e-mail address only when your e-mail is ready to be sent!

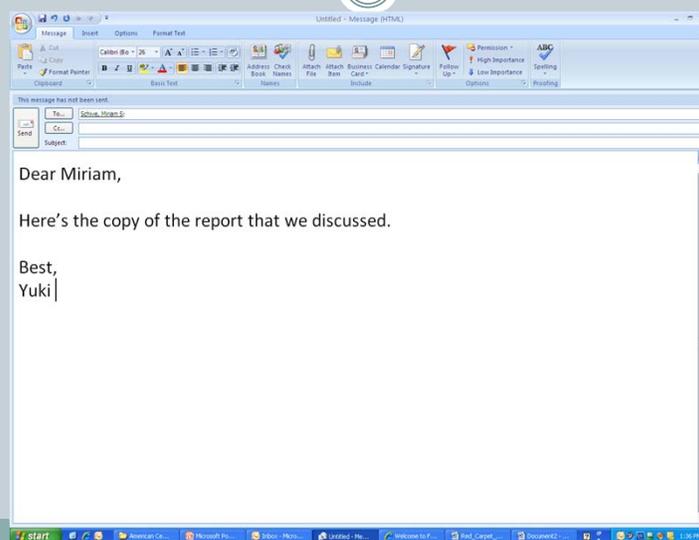
What is the problem with this email?



2. Forgetting a Greeting

- Example: “Can you send me the report by 5pm today?”
- Email is casual, but you do not want to be rude.
- Simple pleasantries do the trick.
- Say “Hi” at the start of the message and “Thanks” at the end.
- Be sure to use the recipient's name.
- Be polite yet brief with your courtesy.

What is the problem with this email?



3. Forgetting the attachment

- Example: “Sorry, I forgot to include the attachment.”
- If your e-mail includes an attachment, upload the file to the e-mail *before* composing it.
- This eliminates the embarrassing mistake of forgetting it before hitting “send,” and having to send another e-mail saying you forgot to attach the document.

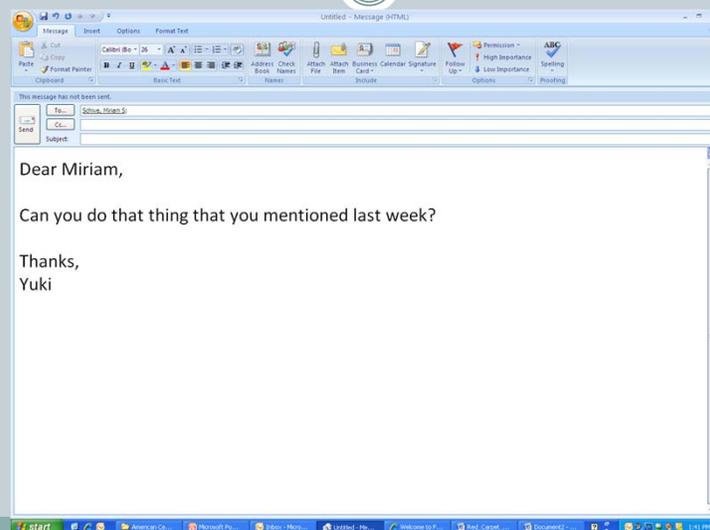
4. Forwarding Useless Emails

- Forwarding email can clutter inboxes and increase spam.
- Whether it is a silly joke or a heartwarming charity, there is never a time to share an e-mail forward using your work e-mail.

5. Underestimating the importance of the subject line

- The subject line is your headline.
- Make it interesting, and you'll increase the odds of getting the recipient's attention.
- Our inboxes are cluttered; you need to be creative and direct to help the recipient cut through the noise.
- You should consistently use meaningful and descriptive subject lines.
- Examples:
 - Application for P.A. Position at CSIS – Yuki Kondo-Shah
 - Inquiry about Volunteer Positions with ICG

What is the problem with this email?



6. Using incorrect subject lines

- Change the subject line if you're changing the topic of conversation.
- Better yet, start a new e-mail thread

7. Not putting an e-mail in context

- Even if you were talking to someone an hour ago about something, remind them in the e-mail why you are writing.
- In this multi-tasking world of ours, it is easy for even the sharpest minds to forget what is going on.
- Example: "Dear Miriam, thanks for lunch today. It was great to get your ideas about Thursday's program. I have some additional questions that I want to ask you..."

8. Hitting Reply ALL unintentionally

- This is a biggie.
- And it is not just embarrassing; depending on what you wrote in that e-mail, it can ruin your relationship with a co-worker or even your boss.
- Take extra care whenever you respond so you do not hit this fatal button.
- Example: My classmate at Harvard emailing the class to complain about a professor...and the professor was included in the “reply all” response

9. Relying too much on e-mail

- No one is sitting around staring at their inbox waiting for your e-mail.
- If something is urgent, use another means of communication.
- A red “rush” exclamation point does not compare to getting up from your desk and conducting business in person.

10. E-mailing when you're angry

- Do not do it. Ever. Recall buttons are far from a perfect science, and sending an angry e-mail is often a catastrophic mistake.
- It sounds cliché, but the best thing to do is sleep on it.
- Save the message as a draft and see if you still want to send it the next morning.

11. Appropriate Auto-Reply Use

- Not at home? Not even at the office?
- Inform people about your absence (and when you plan to return) so they do not get nervous, frustrated or angry as their messages are not answered quickly.
- Ex:
 - “Thank you very much for your message. I will be out of the office on official work travel until August 26th. I will not have regular access to my email. For urgent matters, please contact Miriam Schive at (202)-xxx-xxxx or schivems@state.gov.”

Inappropriate Auto-reply Use

- Auto-reply is NOT an appropriate way to send causal messages to your friends.
- Remember, anyone who emails you (from your professor, parents, bosses) can see the auto-reply.
- Ex:
 - “Hey Baby!”
 - “Hello!”
 - Links to ads, events, etc should be used sparingly and with your intended audience in mind.
 - College mailing lists – event announcements

Conclusion

- Questions?

EMAIL ETIQUETTE IN THE WORKPLACE

In today's rapidly changing workplace, overlooking the value of the written word is easy to do. Writing skills are as important in electronic form as in paper communication. It is important to take an extra moment to review and organize your thoughts before keying them onto the screen and pressing the "send" button. Here are some email tips and a review of email diplomacy:

- To help recipients prioritize email, make the subject line specific.
- Email is a form of professional communication and it is also the property of the employer. Never write anything that would make you uncomfortable if it were published.
- Don't send an email if you are angry or emotional. Cool off, and then review your response. You may find you want to send a more tactful message.
- Ask the writer's permission before forwarding their email directed to you, to others. Sometimes a great deal is lost without the context of that original conversation, and misunderstandings by third parties can result.
- Be careful about identifying some email as "urgent". Use this warning sparingly, or you may find yourself in the same predicament as the boy who cried wolf too often.
- Be discriminating when sending lengthy attachments. They take time to download, as well as time to read.
- When replying to a question, copy only the question in your email, then provide your response. Don't send a message that only reads, "Yes." It's too blunt and the message could confuse the reader.
- If you have not had correspondence with someone, introduce yourself with your first email by identifying your company, area of interest, background, etc.
- Add contact information at the bottom of your email messages in each one that you send. Include your name, title, email address, company, phone and fax numbers, and web site address.
- **DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS.** This can be perceived as "shouting" via email.
- If you aren't able to check your email for a period of time, be sure to leave an outgoing message indicating the date when you will be reading and responding to your messages.

Remember, email is still a written medium, and it is important to review outgoing communication for spelling errors, incomplete sentences, or grammatical errors.