

How to Communicate Effectively by Email

This is a refresher on email correspondence. In order to receive the help you need from an instructor or colleague, it is important to correspond appropriately. Following these steps will ensure that your email message is respectful and productive.

1. Use a subject line that clearly indicates what the email is about. “Question about homework” doesn’t give enough information. Be specific. “Question about Homework due February 22” clearly indicates the topic of the message.
2. Begin your message with a greeting that includes the name of the person you are emailing. “Dear Ms. Havisham” format will work, as will “Hi Dora”, or other common varieties of salutation.
3. In the body of your message, be specific with your question or request. Imagine that the person you are writing to has no idea what you are talking about, then provide the details he or she needs to respond appropriately.
4. End your message with a closing that includes your own name, so that the recipient will know who sent the message. This also helps the recipient craft a response that meets your specific needs. “Sincerely, Felix Unger” is a traditional format, but you could also use “Regards, Oscar” or other variations that signal the end of the message.

If you have any questions about this, please feel free to ask! You may write me a practice email to test out these steps for yourself. My email address for WEB is RowenaAldridgeWEB@gmail.com . (It can be found on the course description page as well.)

A sample email is on the next page. Your email program might look slightly different; use this as a guide.

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From: FelixUnger@xmail.com *[This would be your email address.]*

To: MissHavisham@ymail.com *[This would be your recipient's address.]*

Subject: Question about your shoes *[Be specific.]*

Dear Miss Havisham, *[This is the greeting. Address the recipient by name.]*

It has come to my attention that you have been wearing only one shoe for a number of years. Do you need a replacement shoe? I have a couple of spares that are your size, and I would be glad to pass them on to you. I will be in your neighborhood tomorrow; shall I bring them for you to try on?

[This is the body of your message. Give enough details for the recipient to know what you're talking about.]

Your friend, *[This is your closure.]*

Felix Unger *[This is where your name goes.]*