



## 11. Email Etiquette

Today's youth will do most of their communicating online—in their lifetimes they will write very few actual letters, mail a resume, or pass a handwritten note. Yet rarely are they given any guidance or provided "norms" on what constitutes appropriate online communication. An ethical digital citizen should know **how to communicate properly and thoughtfully using technology**. In this lesson students will learn the norms that guide appropriate and thoughtful email communication.

Key Standards—CCSS.ELA-LITERACY: W.5.4, W.5.5, SL.5.1, SL.5.1.A, SL.5.1.B, SL.5.1.C, L.5.2, L.5.2.E, L.5.3, L.5.3.A; W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.10, SL.6.1, SL.6.1.A, SL.6.1.B, SL.6.1.C, SL.6.2, SL.6, SL.6.6, L.6.1, L.6.1.E, L.6.2, L.6.2.B, L.6.3, L.6.3.B. ISTE: 2a, 2b, 6a. CASEL: 3d, 4a, 4b, 5e, 5f.

### Learning Objectives

Students will...

- Learn how online communication differs from in-person communication.
- Understand the norms for crafting a respectful email.
- Recognize that not understanding or respecting norms of online communication can lead to misunderstandings.



### Introducing The Lesson

Tell students that communication sent over electronic media can be interpreted differently than if delivered in person, or even over the phone. Ask: *Have you ever been misunderstood via email or a text? Have you ever misinterpreted someone else's email or text? Have you ever shared a joke online that was misunderstood?* Illustrate this point by asking student volunteers to deliver the following words or phrases aloud to the class in *two different ways that give each word or phrase two different meanings* (come up with some phrases of your own too!):

- **No way**
- **What**
- **I don't believe you**
- **Stop it**



## Introducing The Lesson, continued

Afterwards, discuss how each word or phrase might be misinterpreted online when missing the voice inflections and/or facial expressions students just observed their classmates using.

## The Lesson

1. Explain that universal agreements or “norms” regarding electronic communication are still evolving, however **there are some general guidelines that can help us avoid misunderstandings or embarrassment when communicating online**. Tell students that these guidelines vary depending upon **platform** (i.e., email, text, visual platforms like Zoom or Skype). And remind them that unlike offline communication, online communication can be saved, forwarded, and shared with others.
2. Screen [Video 1]. Afterwards, ask students if they use email. Explain that email is something they will likely use more and more as they get older to communicate with teachers, prospective employers, and others. *That is why it is extremely important they choose (or have their parents choose) an email address they won't be embarrassed of in ten years!*
3. Explain that there are certain norms for respectful email communication. Discuss the following (and have students take notes).
  - The most important thing to remember is that email is more formal than texting or messaging.
  - At the top of a new email—after **To:**—add the email address of the main person you are sending the email to.
  - Next is **Cc:**—here you can add the email address (or addresses) of other people you want to receive a copy of the email. Cc, by the way, stands for “carbon copy.”
  - On the next line is **Bcc:**—here you can add the email address (or addresses) of other people who you want to receive a copy of the email “blindly” (that means others won't see that they are copied). Bcc stands for “blind carbon copy.”
  - The purpose of your email should be added after **Subject:** This tells the person you are sending the email to why you are writing.
  - It is considered polite to begin your email with a respectful salutation (“Dear” or “Hello”).
  - In your email, write in complete sentences, spell words correctly, and use proper grammar.
  - It's best to avoid informal text-talk.
  - It is also considered polite to end with “Sincerely,” “Thank you,” or a similar sign off.
  - If your email includes a question to which the recipient responds, send an email to say thank you.
  - A good rule of thumb is to check your emails for errors before sending.
  - It never hurts to have a parent or guardian check your emails too.

## Activity

4. Have students complete the assignment attached (also in the Student Packet).
5. When they are finished, or for homework, have them send YOU an email following the norms they just learned. In the body of the email, have them tell you a joke that they are sure will make you laugh. Tell students that you will share the best jokes during your next class (thanks to Cyber Civics teacher Rising Percey for this great idea!).

## Goal

To help students **understand the norms that guide respectful email communication**. They will also know that people online generally cannot see facial expressions or hear tone of voice, so they only have two ways of judging what you're communicating: the words you choose and the manners you use.



## EMAIL NORMS

- The most important thing to remember is that email is more formal than texting or messaging.
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- Next is **Cc:**—here you can add the email address (or addresses) of other people you want to receive a copy of the email.
- On the next line is **Bcc:**—here you can add the email address (or addresses) of other people who you want to receive a copy of the email “blindly” (that means others won’t see that they are copied).
- The purpose of your email should be added after **Subject:** This tells the person you are sending the email to why you are writing.
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- In your email, write in complete sentences, spell words correctly, and use proper grammar.
- It’s best to avoid informal text-talk.
- It is also considered polite to end with “Sincerely,” “Thank you,” or a similar sign off.
- If your email includes a question to which the recipient responds, be sure to send an email to say thank you.
- A good rule of thumb is to check your emails for errors before sending.
- It never hurts to have a parent or guardian check your emails too.

## Email Etiquette Practice

1. Anna sent the following email to her teacher, Mr. Kerr:

To: Jim Kerr

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject:

From: banananna@gmail.com

Hi, I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE HMWK ASSIGNMENT. Can u help. So confussed and i missed class on tue so bummed hope u get this

Please re-write Anna's email to Mr. Kerr, using the appropriate norms:

To: \_\_\_\_\_

Cc: \_\_\_\_\_

Bcc: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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