During college you will have to write many e-mails to both faculty and staff. Writing these formal, more professional types of e-mails can be an adjustment for many college students, but it is an essential skill that stretches beyond campus and into the workplace. This handout will show you how to write appropriate e-mails to your instructors and other staff members.

These are the components of an academic e-mail:

1. **Salutation/greeting**
   The salutation or greeting in an e-mail is how you open the e-mail and address it to the recipient. Common greetings include a salutation followed by the recipient’s name and a comma. Or, the greeting could simply be the recipient’s name. *Remember to address your instructor or a staff member with his or her proper title.*

   - Dear Dr. Chambers,
   - Hi Mrs. Adams,
   - Dr. Chambers,
   - Mrs. Adams,

2. **Introduction**
   The introduction simply tells the recipient who you are, perhaps what class you are in (if writing to an instructor) and your reason for writing.

   My name is Jane Doe and I am in your World Literary Types class on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12 p.m. I am writing because I have a question about the cultural report.

3. **Body**
   The body is the main text of your e-mail. It further explains your question or why you are writing.

   You mentioned in class that the cultural report should be 250 words. Is it okay if my report goes beyond that word limit? Also, I would like to attend a reading by novelist Joyce Carol Oates at the St. Louis County Library. I know the syllabus mentions a poetry reading, so is a book reading okay with you?

4. **Closing**
   The closing includes a brief phrase followed by a comma and your name typed below it.

   Thank you,
   Jane Doe
   Sincerely,
   Joe Smith

5. **Subject line**
   Don’t forget this important part of the e-mail! The subject line lets the recipient know the main idea or topic of the e-mail. Remember to always capitalize the first word. See these examples:

   - World Literary Types question
   - Reschedule meeting
   - College Algebra class today
Bad Examples

Subject: [Blank]
Sent: 1/26/11
To: Dr. Jo Ann Miller

I have STILL not received my textbook. I'm wondering if there was a problem with the order, so I'm going to order it again. Sorry for the inconvenience! C u wed.

-John Doe

Subject: class
Sent: 4/3/11
To: Dr. Thebeau

Prof. Thebeau, I'm sorry but I'm not going to be in class today. Plz send me any work I need to make up.

Thx, Jen

Good Examples

Subject: Reschedule advising appointment
Sent: 2/5/11
To: Mrs. Melanie Bloom

Dear Mrs. Bloom,

My name is Sarah Spartan, and I am one of your advisees. I am writing to reschedule my appointment with you this week.

Our appointment was scheduled for 10 a.m. this Thursday, Feb. 8, but I will be unable to make it at that time. Is it possible to move the meeting to 3 p.m.? I apologize for the inconvenience, but I appreciate your understanding.

Sincerely,

Sarah Spartan

Subject: Psychology class today
Sent: 10/12/11
To: Dr. Holly Brand

Dr. Brand,

I just wanted to let you know that I am not going to be at General Psychology class today. I have the flu. I went to the doctor yesterday, and he said I am contagious for 24 hours.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do to catch up on the material I will miss.

Thank you,

Nate Smith