

Anatomy of a Professional Email

Greeting: Immediately establish that you view the relationship with your instructor as professional. Use Dear, Hi, or Hello and include their title and name. If you are unsure of their title, "Instructor" will work.

Concisely state what it is you need from the instructor – remember this is a request, not a demand. Using one or two sentences, include a reason for the request. If your explanation is longer, consider talking with the instructor in person.

Professional Signature: Set as a default to add to your emails. At minimum, include your preferred first name, last name, and ID number.

To: Cc Bcc
Subject: Question about class p... Priority ▾

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Hello Dr. Smith,

My name is Sam (ID# 01010101) and I am in your MATH 1203 section 005 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I have been falling behind in your course, and I am reaching out to discuss ways that I can catch up. I have reviewed the syllabus and I think I could potentially do last week's assignments to get back on track. I would like to talk about this in person, but I have class during your office hours. I am available Mondays from 2-4 and Thursdays 9-11. Do any of those times work for a meeting?

Thank you and I look forward to hearing back,

Sam Garcia

ID# 01010101|

Subject Line: Be specific. Include the class and headline of your reason for emailing. If something is time sensitive, include a date instead of "urgent".

If your syllabus says anything about your situation, include it in your email (Ex: I have read the syllabus and see that you state XYZ).

Final tip: The reminder email. Unless you clearly communicated a time-sensitive issue, allow your instructor at least 2 business days to respond. If they do not respond to the reminder, it is time to talk to them during office hours or briefly after class.