10 Steps to E-mailing a Professor or an Advisor

Academic Resource Center
Loyola Marymount University
1. LANGUAGE

- Think of an e-mail as an essay
  - Always use formal language and proper grammar
  - No abbreviations or “text-talk”

**Do:**
- Spell out all of your words
- Use apostrophes when using contractions
- Use periods, commas, questions marks
- Capitalize words that need it

**Don’t:**
- Use ‘u’ instead of ‘you’
- Close with ‘hit me up’ or any informal salutation
2. CLEAR MESSAGE

- Get to the point
  - Professors are busy, so make your e-mail short and sweet.
  - Don’t write a really long e-mail that only says one thing.
  - If you have a question, ask.
3. FORMATTING

- Begin with a greeting
  - Dear/Hello Professor ________,

- Introduce yourself
  - Name, what class you are in/how you know each other

- Say why you are e-mailing them
  - Question about an assignment, request to make an appointment, etc.

- Ask for a reply and thank them for their time
  - “A response would be very much appreciated. Thank you for your time.”

- End with a salutation
  - Sincerely, Best, etc.
4. USE APPROPRIATE SIGNATURES

- In closing your letter, make sure you sign your full name in an appropriate font/color
  - Times New Roman, 12 pt, Black or Blue
  - Avoid bright colors, smiley faces, or other icons
  - Exclude AIM screen names
5. SETTING UP AN APPOINTMENT

- If you need to make an appointment to meet, always send an e-mail.
  - Professors can’t always confirm meeting dates in person, so an e-mail gives them the time to check their schedules
- Let them know when you’re free, and ask if they have time to meet with you.
- Briefly state what the meeting is about.
  - Grades, feedback for a paper, clarification of in-class topics, or simply to get to know one another better
6. USE THE SUBJECT LINE

- Say what the e-mail is about
  - Appointment, missed class, etc.

- Do not leave it blank!
  - If a professor does not see a subject, s/he might think it’s spam and delete.
7. USE AN APPROPRIATE EMAIL ACCOUNT

- It is best to use your Lion account to send an e-mail; that way the professor will know it is from a student.

- If you get your Lion mail forwarded to a different account (e.g., Gmail or Yahoo), DO NOT reply with that one.
8. BE PATIENT!

- Professors are busy!
- They don’t always have time to reply right away, so give them at least a week.
- If you don’t hear back after one week, it is okay to resend the e-mail.
  - Make sure to say “I am resending the e-mail in case you did not receive it the first time” or something along those lines.
9. WHEN TO SEND AN EMAIL?

- Setting up an appointment
- Telling a professor you are going to miss class
- Explaining why you missed class, for an emergency
- Asking for an extension on an assignment
- Thanking a professor
- Keeping in touch with a former professor or a mentor
  - You don’t have to be in their class to talk to them!
  - You can send updates about what you are currently doing.
10. WHEN NOT TO SEND AN EMAIL?

- Discussing/disputing a grade
  - This needs to be done in person
  - Set up an appointment to meet and allow sufficient time to ask all the of the questions you have concerning the issue
GOOD LUCK!

THIS POWER POINT IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MARISA CERVANTES, LMU CLASS OF 2014, FIRST TO GO PARTICIPANT.