



How to Email a Teacher



Adapted by Mrs. Day from Laura Portwood-Stacer's *Medium* article

Here's a template you can follow when constructing an email to ANY teacher or professor. Each element is explained below.

Dear [1] Professor/Mr./Ms [2] Last Name [3],

This is a sentence that recognizes our common humanity [4].

I'm in your Class Name/Period [5]. This is a question that I have or the help that I need [6]. I've looked on your website/syllabus, and at my notes/handout, and I have asked someone else from the class [7]. I think this is the answer [8], but I'm not sure. This is the action that I would like you to take [9].

*Signing off with a "Thank You" is always a good idea [10],
Favorite Student*

[1] - **Salutation** - Yes, it's formal, but it's also polite to begin an email with "Dear." If that feels too stuffy, "Hello" will also work.

[2] - **Honorific** - Address your teacher with whatever name she/he prefers, meaning Mr., Ms., Professor, Dr., etc. If you're not sure what to call him/her, err on the side of formality. It's better to be *more* formal than necessary, instead of less.

[3] - **Teacher's Name** - It's polite!

[4] - **Meaningless Nicety** - It never hurts to start off with a sentence that demonstrates that you know that I am a human person, with a life of my own. Say something like, "I hope your family is doing well," or, "I hope you're having a good weekend."

[5] - **Reminder of how the teacher knows you** - Obviously, I know all of my students' names, but when I'm away from school (and especially if we're on break) I turn off my teacher brain. Sometimes it takes me a minute to remember who you are, which class you're in, etc. This is also essential if you are emailing a former teacher, or if you sometimes go by a different name.

[6] - **The Reason for Your Email** - Concisely state what you need from me. Be courteous and brief.

[7] - **Prove You're A Wonderful Person** - Teachers get A LOT of emails asking for information that we've has already given. Your teacher will really appreciate it if you demonstrate that you have at least attempted to find out the answer to your question on your own.

[8 & 9] - **Polite Restatement of Your Request** - Suggest a course of action or answer to your question, and then say, again, what you'd like the teacher to do. Write something like, "Will you please let me know at your earliest convenience?"

[10] - **Sign-Off** - Always end with a, "Thank You," and your name.

Always use polite, formal English when writing to teachers - ESPECIALLY English teachers! This is NOT the time or place for text-speak or emojis.