Email Etiquette

COMMON PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EMAIL RULES

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Email Vocabulary

- CC – Carbon Copy
- BCC – Blind Carbon Copy
- Reply All
- Forward
- Delete
- Archive (Gmail)
- Folders/Labels
- What email client/company do you use?

Composing a Formal Email

- Have a neutral email address:

Example: lazygurl28@yahoo.com (BAD!)

Example: minh.nguyen@yahoo.com (GOOD!)

- Always begin with a "Dear Mr. / Ms. / Dr. ____," or if recipient is unknown use "To whom it may concern".
- Be sure to address the person correctly – check the spelling of their name, whether they are a man or woman and use the appropriate salutation.

Composing a Formal Email

- Introduce yourself in the first paragraph and tell the recipient why you are writing:

Example: "My name is Yuki Kondo-Shah and I am writing to you today to apply for the [position] at [institute]."

- Be concise and short: Generally, 3-5 sentences per paragraph and no more than 5 paragraphs in an introductory email.

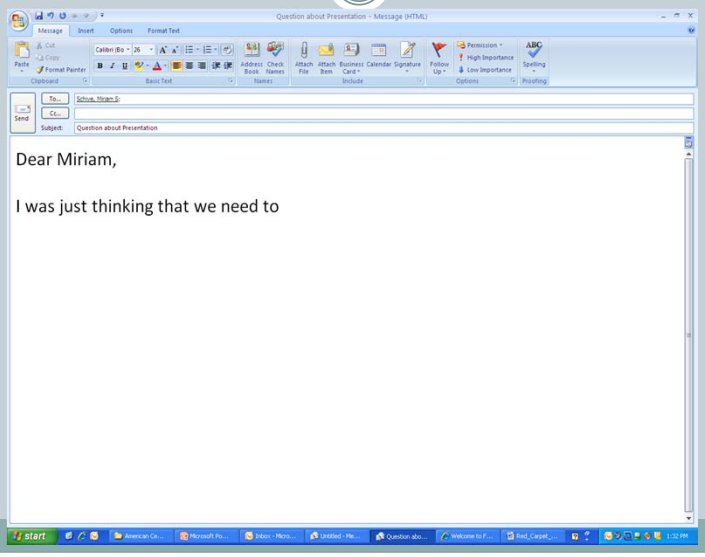
Composing a Formal Email

- Avoid abbreviations or acronyms, when possible.
- Never use slang (informal speech).
- Conclude the email with the appropriate ending:

Example: “Sincerely,” or “Respectfully,” or “Best regards,”

- Sign with your full name.
- ALWAYS be sure to spell-check your email before sending.

What is the problem with this email?



1. Sending before you mean to:

- Sending incomplete emails looks sloppy and careless
- Avoid the problem by entering the recipient's e-mail address only when your e-mail is ready to be sent!

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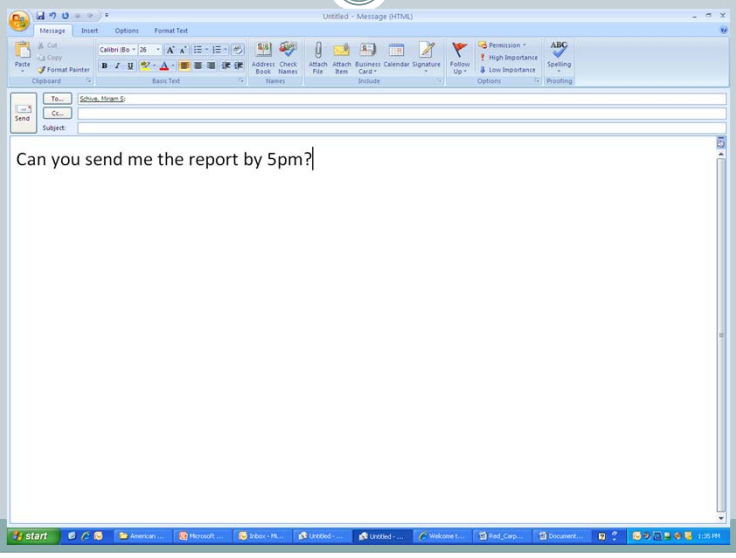

2. Forgetting a Greeting

- Example: “Can you send me the report by 5pm today?”

- Email is casual, but you do not want to be rude.
- Simple pleasantries do the trick.
- Say “Hi” at the start of the message and “Thanks” at the end.
- Be sure to use the recipient's name.
- Be polite yet brief with your courtesy.

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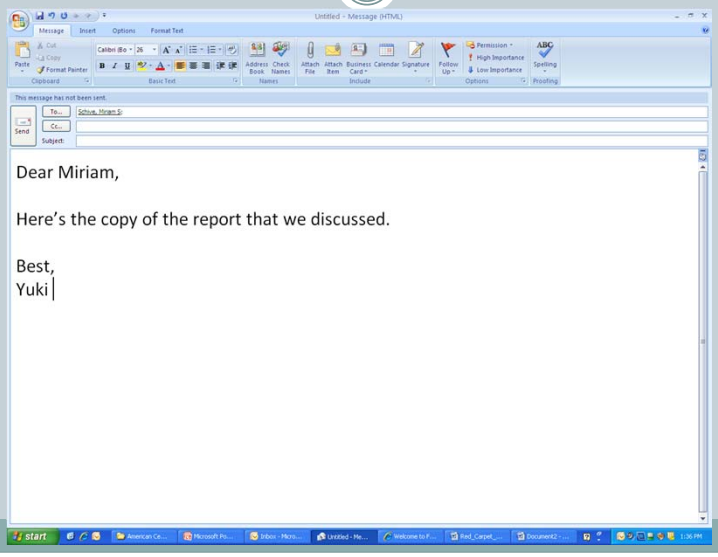

3. Forgetting the attachment

- Example: “Sorry, I forgot to include the attachment.”
- If your e-mail includes an attachment, upload the file to the e-mail *before* composing it.
- This eliminates the embarrassing mistake of forgetting it before hitting “send,” and having to send another e-mail saying you forgot to attach the document.

4. Forwarding Useless Emails

- Forwarding email can clutter inboxes and increase spam.
- Whether it is a silly joke or a heartwarming charity, there is never a time to share an e-mail forward using your work e-mail.

5. Underestimating the importance of the subject line

- The subject line is your headline.
- Make it interesting, and you'll increase the odds of getting the recipient's attention.
- Our inboxes are cluttered; you need to be creative and direct to help the recipient cut through the noise.
- You should consistently use meaningful and descriptive subject lines.
- Examples:
  - Application for P.A. Position at CSIS – Yuki Kondo-Shah
  - Inquiry about Volunteer Positions with ICG

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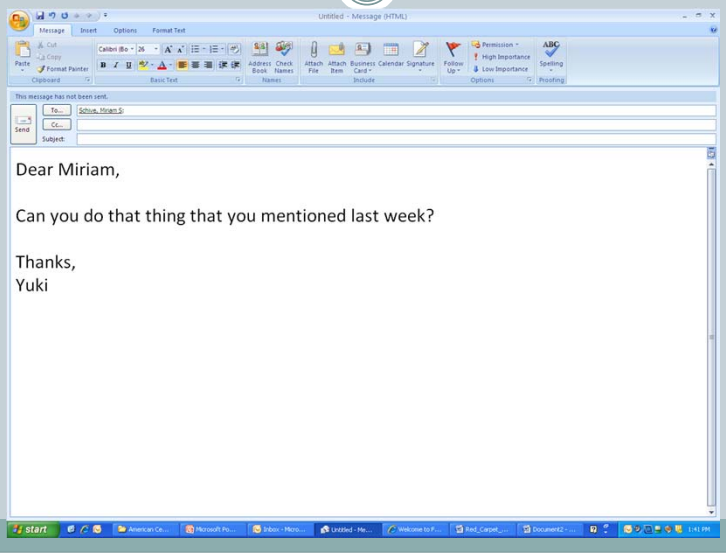

6. Using incorrect subject lines

- Change the subject line if you're changing the topic of conversation.
- Better yet, start a new e-mail thread

7. Not putting an e-mail in context

- Even if you were talking to someone an hour ago about something, remind them in the e-mail why you are writing.
- In this multi-tasking world of ours, it is easy for even the sharpest minds to forget what is going on.
- Example: "Dear Miriam, thanks for lunch today. It was great to get your ideas about Thursday's program. I have some additional questions that I want to ask you…"

8. Hitting Reply ALL unintentionally

- This is a biggie.
- And it is not just embarrassing; depending on what you wrote in that e-mail, it can ruin your relationship with a co-worker or even your boss.
- Take extra care whenever you respond so you do not hit this fatal button.
- Example: My classmate at Harvard emailing the class to complain about a professor…and the professor was included in the "reply all" response

9. Relying too much on e-mail

- No one is sitting around staring at their inbox waiting for your e-mail.
- If something is urgent, use another means of communication.
- A red "rush" exclamation point does not compare to getting up from your desk and conducting business in person.

10. E-mailing when you're angry

- Do not do it. Ever. Recall buttons are far from a perfect science, and sending a angry e-mail is often a catastrophic mistake.
- It sounds cliché, but the best thing to do is sleep on it.
- Save the message as a draft and see if you still want to send it the next morning.

11. Appropriate Auto-Reply Use

- Not at home? Not even at the office?
- Inform people about your absence (and when you plan to return) so they do not get nervous, frustrated or angry as their messages are not answered quickly.
- Ex:
  - "Thank you very much for your message. I will be out of the office on official work travel until August 26th. I will not have regular access to my email. For urgent matters, please contact Miriam Schive at (202)-xxx-xxxx or schivems@state.gov."

Inappropriate Auto-reply Use

- Auto-reply is NOT an appropriate way to send causal messages to your friends.
- Remember, anyone who emails you (from your professor, parents, bosses) can see the auto-reply.
- Ex:
  - "Hey Baby!"
  - "Hello!"
  - Links to ads, events, etc should be used sparingly and with your intended audience in mind.
  - College mailing lists – event annoucements

Conclusion

- Questions?