

Some Advice on *Netiquette*

(adapted from *A Writer's Resource* by Elaine Maimon, McGraw, 2006)

"Netiquette" combines "Internet" and "etiquette" to form a new word referring to the use of good manners in cyberspace.

Ten Guidelines for Good Manners with E-mail:

1. **Remember that you are interacting with a real person, not a machine.** Practice kindness and patience in your e-mail correspondences.
2. **Use accurate subject headings to indicate your e-mail topic.** When e-mailing a teacher, it's a good idea to also include your course/section number in the subject line.
3. **Limit each e-mail to a single topic,** particularly if you are sending e-mail to lists or groups.
4. **Use words economically and edit carefully.** Readers' eyes tire and patience may evaporate when they encounter all lowercase letters or text that lacks appropriate punctuation. Also avoid using IM abbreviations in formal e-mails (for instance, in e-mails to teachers or potential employers).
5. **Remember that your reader can't see your facial expressions or body language or hear your vocal intonations, so messages might be misunderstood in a virtual setting.** Be extra careful about using humor that could be misread as sarcasm. Misunderstandings can escalate quickly into *flaming*, or the sending of angry, inflammatory ALL-CAP postings that seem rude or that use heated language.
6. **Avoid ALL CAPS.** Typing in all caps is considered shouting in an e-mail message.
7. **Remember that your e-mail message can be reproduced.** Avoid saying anything you would not want attributed to you or forwarded to others.
8. **Always seek permission to use other people's words or ideas, and never copy other people's words and present them as your own.** This practice is considered *plagiarism* and is always wrong. Electronic text makes sharing easy. If you use another person's online thoughts or words, **seek permission** first and **always acknowledge** the other person properly. **Never forward another person's e-mails without their consent.**
9. **Include a sufficient portion of the previous text when responding to an e-mail** to keep the conversation flowing and to provide context for your reader.
10. **Include your full name and contact information at the end of every e-mail message that you send,** especially when corresponding with teachers, who may get hundreds of e-mails a day from students in several different classes.

Remember, too, that e-mails are asynchronous—that is, they are not necessarily received in real time. Thus, it may take a while to get an answer.

Assignment: Before your next EN 103 meeting, send your instructor an e-mail introducing yourself and briefly explaining your hopes & fears for EN 103.