

How to Send Messages

Netiquette Communications - What Can I Use? What Should I Use?

Email: Emails are messages that you send to someone when you have a message that may be longer AND that doesn't need to be in real time. That means that it's not something that is necessary for the receiver to get instantly. It's okay if they get it a little later in the day, or even tomorrow. Most people check their email at least once a day, and many people in school and who are working check their email throughout the day. The only time it may be necessary to send an email that needs to be received right away is if someone has requested that you do so.

Emails are more formal. You should not use texting or messaging shorthand – spell out the words correctly. You should also proofread emails before you send them to make sure your spelling, grammar, and punctuation are correct. Since these are slightly longer and usually more formal correspondence, it is very important that you are clear about your message and how you want it to be received when it is read.

Begin email messages with a greeting – if you are initiating the email, begin with the person's name (first or last, depending on how familiar and appropriate the situation is). For example, if I am sending an email to a teacher, or an employer, I would begin with “Mrs. Jones,”. If I am sending an email to a friend or family member I might be more familiar, “Mom,” or “Sally”.

Sign your name at the end of your email. If it is to someone you aren't on very personal terms with, use your first and last name (remember to capitalize). If it is to someone very familiar, just your first name is fine. This avoids confusion. I am a teacher, and I know all of my students very well, however, I may have several students in different classes named Josh. For that reason, it is helpful to me when students sign their first and last name.

Texting and Messaging: Text messages are sent from one cell phone to another. Instant messages are usually sent on a computer through a platform like Facebook. They are received instantly. Texts and messages usually are meant to communicate very short messages, and are usually very informal. You may want to text or message someone to tell them when you will meet them, to pass along a picture, or just to say “hi.” Texts and messages are usually written in texting shorthand, and use many familiar and fun acronyms (“lol” – laugh out loud, OMG – oh my gosh, IMO – in my opinion). It is common to use the letter “u” for the word “you”, “r” for the word “are”, and so forth. Sometimes words are shortened (Fbks for Fairbanks), and capitalization and punctuation are not all that important. People often use emoticons for fun to emphasize

a feeling or mood. It's still important to be careful and think about how your message will be received, but the other formalities of email don't really apply.

Some warnings about texting, messaging, and Snapchat:

- Be careful about over-texting or messaging. Don't continue to message someone who is not replying back – that is usually a strong indicator that they do not wish to continue the conversation, and you don't want to be a stalker!
- If you are angry at someone, don't send angry texts or messages – be mature, save those conversations for face-to-face.
- If someone is texting or messaging you angry messages, or if they are over-texting, don't reply. Either confront them in person, or show the messages to someone who can help you deal with the situation. People sometimes “hide” behind texts and messages, saying things they would never have the guts to say to you in person.
- Never send any kinds of pictures or messages that you would be embarrassed for someone else (like your parents, grandparents, or teachers) to see. Even if you delete the texts or messages on your end, the person you sent them to still has them, and may forward them or show them to anyone else they wish.

Facebook postings and messages: Facebook is an informal platform that people mostly use for keeping up with friends and family. Facebook also has other uses as a business or organization platform, but for our purposes, we are only going to discuss its uses for communicating with friends and family. Before we get into messages, it's important to know what your privacy settings are, if any. We will be talking more specifically about privacy settings later in the course, but for right now, at least be aware of what you have. If your Facebook page is public, anyone anywhere can see your posts – that includes teachers, potential employers, and strangers. You may have a long friends list who will see it, but anyone not on that list can see it too. If your page is set to private, remember that your posts on other's pages can still be seen by people you are not friends with. If you are tagged in someone else's photo, others not on your friends list can see that too.

Ways you can communicate in Facebook: Status updates on your own wall – these can be seen by your friends (or others depending on your privacy settings). Wall posts that you make on others' walls - these can be seen by that person's friends – and you may not know who they are. Very often teens are friends with at least some older relatives like parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. When you post on someone else's wall, any friends and family they have can see that.

How to use the communication tools in Facebook:

Status updates on your own wall - this can be for posting your thoughts or feelings,

sharing pictures or links, or announcements or casual communications with your whole community of friends. It's fun when people comment back on these and you can get a conversation started. Be careful about posting overly-personal, mushy, or private information on your status updates. You want people to have a positive opinion of you.

Wall posts you make on others' walls – these can be for thoughts, feelings, pictures or links that you want to specifically share with that person, but that aren't private or too personal in nature. You may want to share an article with them, and don't mind if their friends also read it. You may want to congratulate them on an accomplishment or wish them a happy birthday. This can be a fun way to meet and connect with friends of your friend, who you may not know.

The Messenger feature on Facebook – think of this as an alternative to email. You would use it in much the same way you would use email, but it is somewhat less formal since you are already friends with that person. It's not something that needs to be read instantly, and it is private in that the message isn't posted on a wall for others to read. The same warnings apply here as they do with email, texts, or messages in terms of your behavior, and the chance that the person you sent it to may forward or share your messages without your knowledge or permission.