



OVERVIEW

BIG IDEA

Email is an essential form of communication many health science professions today.

OBJECTIVE

15.2: Use professional communication etiquette and norms.

AGENDA

1. Your Communication Style
2. Professional Communication
3. Professional Email Critique
4. Email Etiquette
5. Other Best Practices

HOMEWORK

Compose and send an email to a professional in a career area you are interested in.

LESSON 15.2

Professional Communication

SUMMARY:

This lesson will focus on helping students begin to develop professional communication skills, using the email as form. Students will begin with some reflection questions evaluating their own communication style and preferences. Then they will evaluate an example email and provide suggestions and edits for improvement. Next, students will read some tips for professional email communication and finally they will spend time writing their own additional tips. For homework they will email a professional in a career of interest to them.

STANDARDS:

WHST.11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.



MODULE 15: HEALTH CAREERS

LESSON 15.2

Professional Communication

Obj. 15.2: Use professional communication etiquette and norms.



Your Communication Style

Answer the following questions to reflect upon your communication style.

1. List all the ways you communicate with others (e.g., text, phone call, face to face, etc.).
2. What is your preferred way to communicate with friends?
3. What is your preferred way to communicate with family?
4. What is your preferred way to communicate with other adults (e.g. teacher, coach, employer)?
5. Were any of those questions difficult to answer? If so, why?
6. What factors do you consider when deciding which form of communication to use?



Professional Communication

With a partner, discuss:

- 1) In what ways do you currently communicate with professionals and in what ways will you communicate in the future?
- 2) What aspects of professional communication are you most comfortable with? Least comfortable with?



Professional Email Critique

Read over the email on the following page. This email was sent by a real high school student to a real college professor who had agreed to mentor the student. After you read the email, write in any edits to grammar and spelling directly on the email. Then jot down ways the email could be improved in the box below.

DO NOW:

Students may come to realize in answering these questions that their preferences vary more by each individual person, rather than by group (family, friends, others). For example, they may primarily text with one family member but talk on the phone or in person with others. This brings up an important point that carries over into the professional realm as well: preferences and norms or policies around communication may sometimes be complementary and sometimes in tension. One employer may rely almost exclusively on email while another may prefer face to face and phone communication.

DISCUSS:

Encourage students to include teachers, counselors, coaches, pastors, employers, and other adults in authority roles as the scope of their current professional communication.



Lesson 15.2 Instructor Guide

MODULE 15: HEALTH CAREERS

From: Student <student@gmail.com>
To: Mentor <mentor@gmail.com>
Date: 9/1/15
Subject: Hi

Dear Mentor,

Hello, My name is XXXXXXXX. I know you have a busy schedule, but this email is just to let you know I'm excited with working with you. I am excited to be working with you. I know there might be some difficulties but I am here to let you know I will work my hardest. Thank you for taking time to read this. I am very excited. Have a nice day.

Regards,
XXXXXXX

Suggestions for Improving Email:



Email Etiquette

While there are many forms of communication, email is easily the most common in many of today's workplaces. Writing multiple professional emails is an essential everyday task in many jobs. Yet an email can make a lasting first impression or change the impression others already have of you, in ways that can be either good or bad. Read on for some email etiquette tips. Then you will partner up to come up with your own additional tips to add to the list!

THINK:

- Ask students to share the positives along with their constructive criticism.
- Ask students to explain what the main point of the email is. If they struggle, remind them that this means the email is probably unclear to the professor as well.
- If time permits, ask them to re-write the email on a separate sheet of paper.

NEW INFO:

Some useful sources for more tips on writing professional emails can be found at the following websites:

UNC: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/effective-e-mail-communication/>

ABOUT.COM: <http://grammar.about.com/od/developingessays/a/profemails.htm>



Lesson 15.2 Instructor Guide

MODULE 15: HEALTH CAREERS

1. **Be concise.** If the email warrants a long response, consider calling the person or talking face to face instead. Avoid wordiness and use bullets or numbered lists when appropriate.
2. **Be clear.** Get directly to your point as soon as possible. Don't leave the reader confused or guessing about anything.
3. **Use appropriate language.** Consider your audience. Use language that conveys a professional tone.
4. **Be cordial and polite.** Use manners the way you would in real conversation. Say please and thank you. Be cheerful.
5. **Respond to emails in a timely fashion.** Replying the same or the next day is a standard in many workplaces. Waiting up to two business days is sometimes okay. But if you know you need longer than that, send a quick update and acknowledgement email to the email sender explaining when you will be able to send your reply.
6. **State expectations clearly.** If there is a deadline or required follow-up involved, state it directly. Summarize any action items you or the recipient will take.
7. **Include a specific subject line.** Use 3-5 words that describe the content or main focus of the email clearly, with enough detail to help the recipient have a sense of the content before they even open the email up.
8. **Watch spelling and grammar.** Re-read your email once before you send it to check for these mistakes. If you edit your wording, re-read the email again, because oftentimes errors occur when a part of the writing is adjusted without re-reading it.

Other Best Practices in Communication

With a partner, brainstorm other possible rules, words of wisdom, or norms for etiquette and style related to professional communication. Add your idea to the table below:

Your Professional Communication Advice



Email A Professional

Conduct informal research (using the Internet and/or your own personal contacts!) to find a person who works in a career field you are interested in. Then compose a professional email to this person in which you ask questions about the field or even ask to shadow or have a face-to-face or phone conversation with them, if they are available.

NEW INFO:

This list of tips is not an exhaustive one, but it should help with the most common errors made in email communication.

Some additional ideas may include:

- Avoid "textspeak" (e.g., "plz" for please)
- Pay attention to who you are sending to. Are you "replying all"?
- Fill in the "To" box last (this avoids the issue of sending an email early by accident, a common error)
- Be sure to add attachments if you mention them in the email
- Rather than go into unnecessary detail, offer to continue the conversation by phone or in person
- Use separation of paragraphs between vastly different ideas or for emails that will run on past 5-6 sentences

HOMEWORK:

The purpose of this assignment is to give students authentic practice in professional communication via email.

- Consider requiring that students "cc" you or forward the email once they send it.
- If students are new to this skill or struggle with writing, have them pair up to have a peer approve a draft. For those who struggle most, require a 3rd check from you to pre-approve the emails.