

Email is quick, easy, cheap, and reliable. It's also a minefield of irritation and bad habits. Avoid being labelled *that* emailer, with these netiquette tips.

1. Greet your reader. Spell the recipient's name correctly, use the name he or she prefers, and if you use a gender-based courtesy title, get it right.
2. Use a fresh, accurate subject if you are starting the communication. Use "reply" if you are continuing a conversation so that the threads can be followed and searched.
3. Remember to use "Please" when requesting or directing.
4. Spend no more than a brief sentence or two on relationship building, such as "Thanks for your enthusiasm at our launch last week."
5. Explain the purpose of your message before giving background.
6. Begin with a clear, simple sentence.
7. Focus on your readers and their needs.
8. Use "Reply to all" correctly. Is it important to communicate with the whole team? "Reply to All. Are you rsvp-ing to the national year end function? "Reply".
9. Begin positively. For instance, write "Thank you for letting us know how we handled your refund."
10. Give the reader the requested information; then apologise briefly, if necessary.

Bonus tip: Avoid using read receipts unless you must have evidence that your readers have opened your email. Read receipts shift the focus away from the message purpose and onto your need for documentation. They are not accurate, as the recipient can bypass them; or can open the message but not actually read it.

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