

Foster Care to Career Success

Email Etiquette

Good morning [skankinpunk!](#)

How are you, you [depressingly stupid robot?](#)

Wazzup, [2hott4u?](#)

Are you shocked? Are you wondering if OFA has gone crazy, addressing you like that?

If that's your email address, that's just what you're saying –

[Skankinpunk@gmail.com](#) says good morning!

[Depressingly_stupid_robot@aol.com](#) wonders, how are you?

[2hott4you@yahoo.com](#) asks, wazzup?

How do you think a prospective employer would look at your resume when you're applying for a receptionist job or a position in the accounting department and large as life on top of the page it says, [imdrunkinpublic@yahoo.com](#)?

Now is the time to professionalize your email address if yours is a private joke or a nickname or even, and this is said with no disrespect to your faith, a profession of that faith. [ilovebabyjesus](#) is a profound and beautiful statement, but not as an email address.

Your email address should be some combination of the letters of your name. Assuming your name is Jane Doe (goodness, I couldn't be more boring, could I? Oh well it's just an example.) Assuming your name is Jane L. Doe and you were born on July 4th, 1989, your email address could be –

[Janedoe@gmail.com](#)

[Doe_jl@yahoo.com](#)

[Janedoe@hotmail.com](#)

[Jdoe1989@aol.com](#)

[J.doe@sbcglobal.net](#)

[Jldoe7489@msn.com](#)

You get the picture. Another suggestion, of course, is to use your school email address for all professional communication – [jane.doe@nvcc.edu](#) for example, or [jdoe123@ohsu.edu](#). If you have a “desk job” you may well have an organizational email address – [jane.doe@whitneyprinting.com](#).

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Your email address is often your first face to the world, and you need to sound professional, grown up, and polite.

Keep [2hott4u](#) for IM with your friends.

Here are some rules for communicating professionally via email:

Always

- **Keep it short and to the point.**
- **Sign your name!** If it's a common name, like Joe or Beth, sign your last name as well.
- **Use proper grammar, correct spelling and appropriate punctuation.** Write in full sentences and always use spell check. Don't overuse emoticons, and never use abbreviations such as LOL, BTW or TTYL. Spell out the words "you," and "are."
- **Set your email options so that email you are answering is included in your response.** Nothing is more frustrating than getting an email that says, "Absolutely! I couldn't agree more!" and not knowing what the writer is talking about.

Never

- **Send personal email from a professional email address.** Use your personal email address to write your friends; keep the party invitations off your work email! You could end up in real trouble, or even fired, if your boss somehow ends up with a copy of a romantic email to your girlfriend.
- **USE ALL CAPITAL LETTERS – it looks like you're screaming, and is hard to read.**
- **Use email to avoid talking to somebody in person or on the telephone.**

Think before you

- **Reply to all.** Most of the time everyone copied on the original email does not need to see your response.
- **Forward an email someone else wrote to you.** It is wise to ask the original sender before you forward their email. Sometimes you might copy another person in your response, saying, "I'm copying Jane Doe (good ole Jane!) because she will be able to answer your question."
- **Mark an email "urgent" (!).** Like the boy who cried wolf, if you send too many urgent emails people will stop believing you.
- **Attach files.** Attachments can contain viruses, and some email programs filter them out or drop them into spam. Only attach files if they are absolutely necessary.

Finally, remember that email never goes away. Once it's written and sent, it is out of your hands. Consider it "physical evidence." Never write anything in a professional email that you would not want publicly broadcast.