Writing Formal emails

“hey prof, c u l8ter.”

by Anthony Starros, M.F.A.
e-mails with working professionals should be handled with attention and purpose - they should not be too casual in tone or style and should never be written like a text message to a friend.

Formal, professional communications with people will convey a feeling of respect for the sender and for the recipient of the e-mail.

• Be clear and concise with no unnecessary information.
• Phrase your ideas carefully since e-mails can be easily misread.
• Without your voice and body-language, the tone of an email can be difficult to interpret – avoid sarcasm or humor.
You should also consider acquiring a proper email address for formal, professional communications.

If you haven’t already done so, create a professional email address for formal communications with people.

Your colleagues, co-workers, or any other business professionals do not need to know you as sexybunnycutie@yahoo.arg.
Here are some ideas to keep in mind when emailing working professionals:

1. Write an appropriate subject line that pertains to the content of the email. This makes it easier to search for the e-mail in the future.

2. Begin with the title and full name of the person to whom you are writing (Mr. Smith, Dr. Jones, Prof. James, etc.).

3. Write your message in a clear and concise manner. Keep your paragraphs short and your statements clear.

4. Do not write in all caps or in all lowercase letters. Punctuate accordingly.

5. Close the email with your contact information (you should include the course name and number in academic settings).

6. Always reread and check for spelling and grammar errors before sending. Don’t rely on spelling & grammar checkers.
Here is a sample format to use for asking questions via email in this class.

Tuesday, 6:20 p.m.
Subject: Homework for English 1 hybrid, class #31562

Hi Professor Starros,

Can you please confirm the homework that’s due on Monday? Were we supposed to read chapters one through three, or chapters one and three?

Thanks,

Sally Student
English 1, #31562
Hi Professor Starros,

Can you please confirm the homework that’s due on Monday? Were we supposed to read chapters one through three, or chapters one and three?

Thanks,

Sally Student

English 1, #31562
Tuesday, 6:01 p.m.
Subject: homework

hey starros,

whats the homework for Monday

thanx
Here is what not to do.

Tuesday, 6:01 p.m.
Subject: homework

hey starros,
whats the homework for Monday
thanx

vague subject line
overly-casual opening
poor grammar
no student name or class info
fin