

*Communicating successfully in  
your online class*



- We are an online community and as such we need to interact. Because we don't see the person on the other end, online interaction can sometimes be ambiguous, unclear, and probably rude. Respect, sincerity, and camaraderie are essential in the online environment. Therefore, it is very important to keep the following in mind:

## Subject line

When emailing, always clearly identify the topic in the subject line. Try not to send messages with a blank subject line. The topic in the subject line helps others identify, categorize, and/or prioritize the message. For example:

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>  
Cc:   
Bcc:   
Subject: APA

## Greeting

Always try to greet when communicating online. Greeting helps give the sense that one is communicating with a human being, not a machine. For example:

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>,  
Cc:   
Bcc:   
Subject: APA

Priority **Normal** Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

Good morning Silvio,

I've taken due note that assignments should be typed in either Times New Roman or Arial, font size 12, no color titles, one inch margin top, bottom and sides. Fine. But what is APA? And what is MLA?

Juanita Smith

Attach:  No file chosen  (max. 8 M)

Other greetings:  
Hello Ms. Grisham  
Dear Mrs. Brese  
Dear Dr. Taylor

**Context**  
When replying to an email message, include part of the message that you are responding to or paraphrase the other person's message. Always provide a context. Otherwise, the person on the other side of the cyber world will not know what you are talking about. Look at the following examples:

**A) Not so good**

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>,  
Cc:   
Bcc:   
Subject: APA

Priority Normal ▾ Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

Signature Addresses Save Draft Send Groups Check Spelling

Yes.  
Mr. I Don't Know What

Send

Yes what? Keep in mind that some people (like me) receive at least 50 messages a day....

**B) Good**

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: APA

Priority  Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

Dear Silvio,

In your previous message, you asked if I would be interested in learning more about APA. The truth is that I am. Please refer me to a Web site that can help me.

Ms. Context



**B) Good**

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: Assignment for Week of Oct 3rd

Priority  Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

Hello Silvio,

I hope that you're enjoying the nice weather at UMBC. I am sending my assignment for the week of October 3rd. Please see attached.

Thank you,

Tom

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# Signing

Always sign your messages so that others know who you are...Remember that we can't see you...but we can "hear" you. For example:

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>,  
Cc:   
Bcc:   
Subject: APA

Priority Normal  Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

Hello Silvio,

I hope that you're enjoying the nice weather at UMBC. I am sending my assignment for the week of October 3rd. Please see attached.

J. Smith

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## Yelling

Don't yell! If you use capitals, everybody else will think you're yelling. Please use capitals only when necessary, i.e., emphasizing.

A) Not good

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: APA

Priority: Normal  Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

SILVIO,  
WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO BEFORE NEXT CLASS  
SINCERELY,  
MS. YELLING SO LOUD

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**B) Good**

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: APA

Priority Normal  Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

Silvio,

What do we need to do for next class?

Mr. I Don't Yell

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### **Having a bad day**

If you are having a bad day, go take a short walk or breathe before you compose an email message for the class. Because cyber communication lacks the non-verbal language that non-cyber communication has, messages might come on too strong if we do not choose a soft language when communicating online. You can always make your voice heard in a nice way. Messages are often misinterpreted if you do not use the right wording. Sometimes we do not mean harm...but we might hurt others unintentionally...so choose your wording carefully....and give others the opportunity to be heard too. Look at the examples below:

**A) Too strong:**

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: My assignment!!!

Priority: Normal  Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

I sent my assignment last week!!

Mr. Strong

Attach:  No file chosen  (max. 8 M)

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>,

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: About my assignment

Priority: Normal  Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

Dear Silvio,

How are you?  
Could you please look at your files and check if you have my assignment for last week? If you don't have it, please let me know and I'll resend.

Thanks,

Mr. I Don't Want to Sound Too Strong

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(max. 8 M)

**B) Not very strong:**

## Tolerance

Tolerance and patience are very important in the cyber world. If something is annoying you, say it in a nice way and support your statements. Give arguments or reasons.

### A) Not tolerant:

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>,  
Cc:   
Bcc:   
Subject: HEY!

Priority  Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

stop CCing me on the messages to your other students.  
You're filling my inbox!

Mr. Intolerant!

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# B) Tolerant

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: receiving messages

Priority: Normal  Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

Dear all,

I just realized that I have been receiving messages that probably don't concern me. Is there a reason for being Cc'd on class messages? Please advise me on this matter.

Have a wonderful day everyone!

Ms. Tolerant

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## **Interaction**

Presence and interaction are also important in the cyber world. It is good to know that someone is listening to us on the other side. Always, make every effort in assuring us that there is someone else on the other side. Say something. Many times you will be required to respond to messages and you will be graded for that. Other times you will not be required to do so. Regardless of requirements, it is always good to interact, to make others feel that they are important too. You might want to use your own judgment to do this. The whole idea is that we don't want others to feel lonely. We certainly want everyone to feel that they belong to a community.

## Getting lost

It is very easy to get lost in the cyber world. If at any time you suspect that you are lost or know of someone who might be lost, please let us know as soon as possible. We will make every effort to bring you or anybody else back to the class. Communication is important. Ask for help. Cry for help! Never, never be embarrassed to ask questions or to ask for help. An exemplary message follows:

To: "Silvio Avendano" <speaking@umbc.edu>,  
Cc:   
Bcc:   
Subject: lost

Priority: Normal   
Receipt:  On Read  On Delivery

Dear Silvio and colleagues,  
I suspect I am lost. Please help!  
Mr. Lost

Attach:  No file chosen  (max. 8 M)

*The End*