

# Netiquette

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## Netiquette

The term "Netiquette" generally refers to the rules governing internet communication. The practices of courtesy and respect that apply in a traditional classroom also apply online. Sometimes, these practices online require special attention. Here are some guidelines and tips:

- **Participate.** It is not enough to login or just "show up" in your course. Your voice needs to be heard through your postings so others can feel your presence. Your comments add to the information, the shared learning, and the sense of community in each class. This is a simple but a crucial tip. It takes some time for discussions to build up momentum, so you will need to return to a discussion frequently to track and channel its development
- **Share tips and questions.** For many of us, taking online courses is a new frontier. There are no dumb questions, and even if you think your solution is obvious, please share it by posting it in the "General Course Questions Discussion"
- **Think before you send.** Did you say what you meant? How will the other person read the words? While you cannot anticipate all reactions, do read over what you have written before you send it
- **Accurately express yourself.** Remember that others cannot see the grin on your face when you make a sarcastic comment, they cannot see the concern on your face if you only say a couple of words, and they cannot read your mind to fill in the gaps if you abbreviate your comments. Help others "see" you by explaining your ideas fully
- **Ask for feedback.** If you are not sure how your ideas and comments will be taken, ask for more information. Remember there is a person on the other side. If you disagree with what someone said, practice your communication skills to express your disagreement
- **"Flaming," "flying off the handle," and/or ranting is unacceptable.** Most of us would not act this way in a face-to-face classroom, and it is not tolerated in the online classroom either

- **Derogatory or inappropriate comments will not be tolerated.** Offensive remarks regarding race, gender, age, religion, disability, or sexual orientation are unacceptable and subject to the same disciplinary action that you would receive were these to occur in a physical classroom. If you have concerns about something that has been said, please inform your instructor right away
- **Do not disappear after posting your comment.** A discussion should be more than a series of postings. Someone may reply to your comment, asking for clarification or presenting a different opinion. Check the discussion's progress a day or two after you have posted your comments and address your peers' and/or your instructor's response to your initial post
- **Stick to one topic at a time.** If you have several different ideas to bring into a discussion, start a new post for each idea, and give each thread a clear, descriptive title. This way other classmates can engage with each idea in depth, and participants can easily find the topics that most interest them
- **Engage directly with your peers.** If each participant in the discussion makes a special effort to relate to ideas voiced by other participants, the discussion will maintain a sense of coherence. Briefly mention which specific points you are responding to whenever possible
- **Choose informative subject lines for your posts.** Your subject line should be a short summary of your post
- **Take time to organize your thoughts before posting.** You want everyone to read and understand your comment, so present it in an organized, easy-to-read manner. Provide only the most essential information in your post. If people want further details, they will ask for them in a reply. When your comment contains a lot of material, try to break up the information into short sections by category
- **Avoid discussion posts that offer little more than "I agree."** Your postings should be thorough and thoughtful. Each discussion posting should offer new content, to foster continued exploration of the topic. While your opinion is important, back it with new evidence or information. Raise new questions, and keep track of issues that have not been fully investigated in previous posts
- **Discussions are an exchange, not a lecture.** Solicit feedback from your classmates.

You should take a clear position in your post, but it is a good idea to invite alternative perspectives. What new questions or problems arise from the position you are taking? How does your position relate to the position taken by other participants?

- **Do not forget to include reference citations.** Do not forget to include reference citations. To avoid plagiarism, be sure to cite all materials you use in your postings. You can find more information about how to cite your references in the library
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