

# ONLINE ETIQUETTE

Online platforms are a big part of how we work and learn. Texting your friends is one thing, but if you are communicating with a teacher, classmate, boss, colleague, etc., it is a good idea to follow online etiquette. If you follow these tips, you should be able to communicate your message effectively and avoid causing offense.

## 1. Be relevant.

- On a public channel, make sure your posts are relevant to everyone.
- If the post is meant for 1 or 2 people, send an email, text, or DM instead.
- Reply to existing threads whenever possible. Only start a new thread for a new topic.
- Only @mention people when you think it is important that they see and/or respond to your post.

## 2. Be respectful and considerate.

- Remember everyone can see your posts. In some workplaces and schools, managers and administrators can monitor all posts – even in private channels.
- Tone and intentions are easily misread online. Choose your words carefully, and avoid skim reading posts to prevent misunderstandings.
- Adding emojis/gifs can make tone clearer but choose them carefully too. Overusing them gets annoying and choosing something inappropriate could upset people.
- Use please and thank you.
- Compliment your classmates when they post something intriguing or well-written – this helps create a positive and supportive online community. For example:
  - “Thank you, Lien, for sharing . . .”
  - “I really appreciate April’s insight into . . .”
  - “Kamaljit, that post was amazing! I really liked how you . . .”
- Avoid ALL CAPS – it seems like you are yelling, and most people think it’s rude.
- Avoid slang and swearing because this type of language can be quite negative and hurtful on top of being inappropriate for school.
- MOST IMPORTANTLY: If you wouldn’t say it to someone’s face in real life, don’t post it online – you’re not as anonymous as you think.

## 3. Be clear.

- Choose your words carefully and proofread before you hit send.
- Avoid slang, sarcasm and inside jokes because some people may misunderstand.
- Use complete sentences, proper capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.

## 4. Credit your sources.

- Do not rely too heavily on your personal opinions or experiences to prove your points. Back up your opinions with facts.
- It’s not cool to steal other people’s ideas, so if you got the information from somewhere, say where it came from. For example:
  - “On the news tonight, they said . . .”
  - “According to \_\_\_\_\_, . . .”
- If you can, share a link to the article or video – remember to only share reliable and relevant sources.

## 5. Build on what others have said.

- Use the other person's name when you respond to their post. This makes things clearer and helps to build a friendlier online community.
- Don't just repeat what has already been said, try acknowledging an earlier point and building on it. For example:
  - "I agree with Amir because . . ."
  - "Michelle brings up a good point. I would add . . ."
  - "Based on what Quinn, Shanaaz, and Amani have said, it seems like we agree that . . ."
  - "Kyle's comment made me think about . . ."
  - "Nina's observation that \_\_\_\_\_ reflects . . ."

## 6. Ask questions.

- If you have a question about an assignment or other issue where other people may have the same question, ask it in a public channel, so everyone can see the answer.
- Ask questions that encourage your classmates to clarify or improve their position. For example:
  - "Van, can you clarify what you meant by . . . ?"
  - "Peng, how do you define . . . ?"
  - "Can you provide supporting evidence for your opinion, Manvir?"
- Ask questions that invite others to participate. For example:
  - "Jenny, what do you think about Chiung-Fang's suggestion?"
  - "Given what we know about \_\_\_\_\_, Kayleigh, what are your thoughts on . . . ?"
  - "Ryan, do you agree or disagree with \_\_\_\_\_?"
- Ask questions that help move the conversation forward. For example:
  - "Great point, Sergio! Have you considered . . . ?"
  - "Does anyone have any personal experience with . . . ?"
  - "Does anyone have any theories about . . . ?"

## 7. Disagree respectfully.

- Stay open-minded about what others have to say and take the time to consider all ideas that have been presented before you react.
- If someone's comment has upset you, take time to calm down before you respond.
- Having some disagreement in a conversation keeps it interesting, but choose your words carefully, so you don't end up hurting the other person or shutting the conversation down altogether.
- Disagree with the ideas. Don't attack the person. For example:
  - "If we consider the other side . . ."
  - "I respectfully disagree with Alfonso because . . ."
  - "Looking at it from a different perspective, I think it is important to remember . . ."
  - "Although Gabe made a strong point that . . ."
  - "In contrast to Omar's point . . ."