

## How to write a formal email

### 1 Use a neutral email address.

Your email address should be a variation of your real name, not a username or nickname. Use periods, hyphens, or underscores to secure an e-mail address that's just your name, without extra numbers or letters, if you can.

Never use an unprofessional email address. No one will take you seriously if your reply-to is a joke name, a nickname, or an inappropriate name.



### 2 Use a short and accurate subject header.

Avoid saying too much in the subject header, but make sure it reflects the content of your email to a person unfamiliar with you. If possible, include a keyword that will make the email content easier to remember and/or search for in a crowded inbox. For example, "Meeting regarding the damaged escalator on March 12th" is specific enough so that the email topic will not be mistaken for anything else but not so specific as to be distracting (for example:

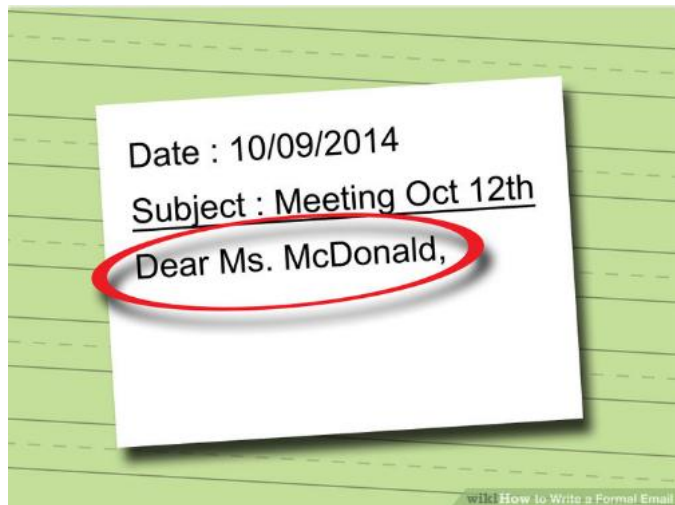
"Schedule, Guest List, Lunch

Requests, and Meeting Overview for March 12th"). Remember always that professionals may receive hundreds or more emails per day; the more specific and appealing the subject is the easier it is to connect it with one's personal work.



### 3 Use a proper salutation.

Addressing the recipient by the name is preferred. Use the person's title (Mr. Mrs. Ms. or Dr.) with their last name, followed by a comma (BrE) or a colon (AmE). Optionally, you can precede the salutation with "Dear..." (but "Hello..." is acceptable as well). Using a last name is more formal and should be used unless you are on first-name terms with the recipient. If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to (but you *really* should try to find one), use "Dear Sir/Madam" or "Dear Sir or Madam".

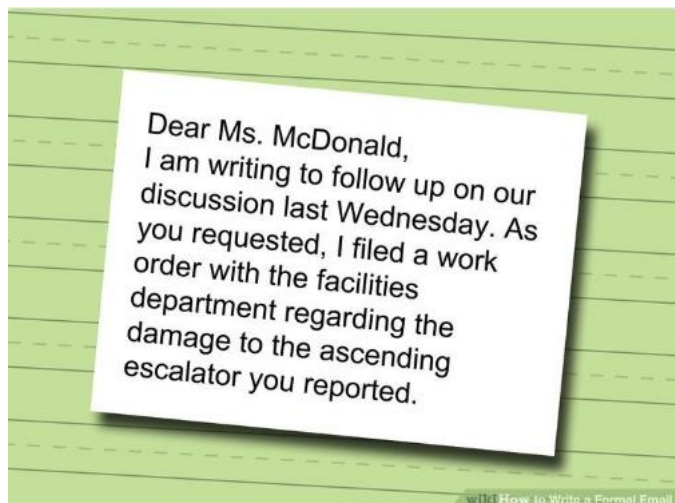


### 4 Introduce yourself in the first paragraph (if necessary).

Also include why you are writing, and how you found that person's email address, or the opportunity you are writing about. Examples:

*My name is Earl Rivers. I'm contacting you to apply for the administrative assistant position listed on CareerXYZ.com.*

*My name is Arlene Rivers. I am writing about the traffic citation I received on December 31, 2009. I obtained your email address from the Westchester County Clerk website.*



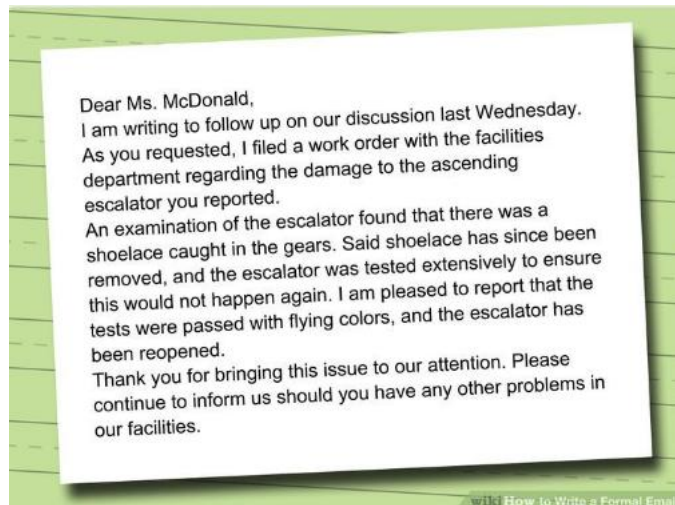
## 5 Write the actual message.

Be sure to get your point across without rambling; if it is fluffed up, the reader may glance over the important details. Try to break up the message into paragraphs by topic in order to make your message more logical and digestible.

The email should be no more than 5 paragraphs long and each paragraph should be no more than 5 sentences long.

Insert a line break between each paragraph; indenting is not necessary and will likely be lost during the email transfer anyway.

Be sure to avoid informal writing.



## 6 Use the correct form of leave-taking.

This will depend on your level of intimacy with the recipient. Examples include:

*Yours sincerely,*

*Yours cordially,*

*Respectfully,*

*Best,*

Your student,



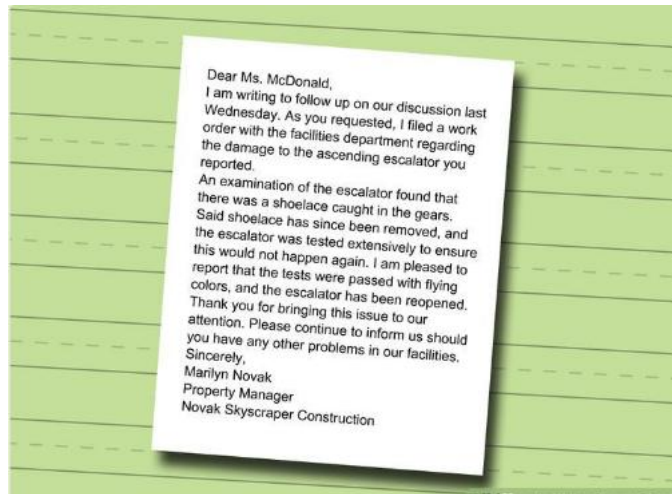
## 7 Sign with your full name.

If you have a job title, include that in the line after your name, and write the company name or website in the line after that. If you do not have a job title but you have your own blog or website *related to the content of the email*, include a link to that below your name. If the email is about a job, only include a career-related website or blog, not hobbies or interests.



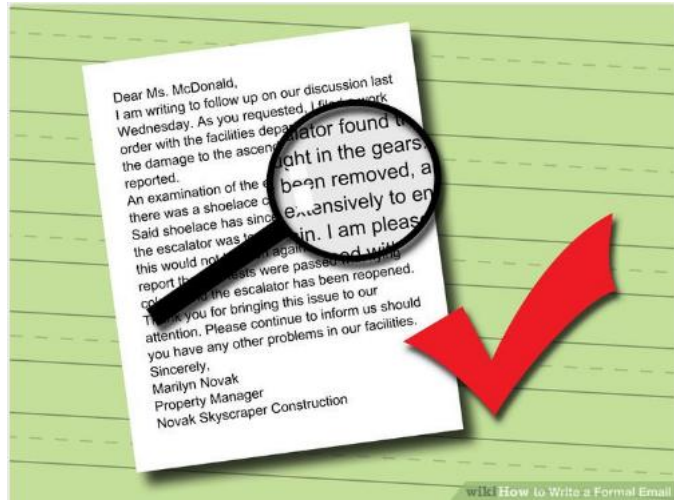
## 8 Proofread your message for content.

Make sure you have not omitted any important details (or repeated yourself). Reading your email aloud or asking someone to proofread it is a great way to get a different perspective on what you have written.



## 9 Proofread your message for spelling and grammar.

If your email provider does not already provide spelling and grammar options for you, copy and paste your email into a word processor, revise it if necessary, and copy and paste it back into your email.



Adapted from <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Formal-Email>