

### EXAMPLE EMAIL

**1. Why should I open this email?** — **Subject Line:** Transfiguration 101 Transformation Assignment Issue

Hello Professor McGonagall, —

I hope your weekend is going well.

**3. Who are you?** — My name is Ron Weasley and I'm in your Transfiguration 101 class, section FWH. I've been working on our first transformation assignment and I'm having trouble turning my match to a needle. After working on it with a classmate, I was able to improve my pronunciation. The match is looking a bit pointier, but the material hasn't changed from wood to metal. I reviewed the textbook, and I think the issue may be with my wand form. —

**5. What have you tried?** — I am attaching a short clip of my last attempt. If you could take a look and let me know if you notice anything in particular I can work on before next class, that would be greatly appreciated. —

**7. Say thank you** — Thank you,  
Ron Weasley

**2. Do you respect me?**

**4. What do you need?**

**6. How can I help?**

**8. Go the extra mile**

 **Send**

## EMAIL OR OFFICE HOURS?

### Examples of email requests

- Clarification of a practice question
- Feedback on thesis statement

### Examples of office hour conversations

- Struggling with a paper
- Having trouble keeping up with the class material

### But before you go . . .

If you are going to office hours, it is still a good practice to send an email with a summary of what you will be coming in about and when you will be dropping by. This way, your email can serve as your meeting agenda and your professor can be better prepared to help you. Make sure to reference your syllabus for class-specific office hour policies.

## BREAKDOWN

### 1. Why should I open this email?

Use a clear subject line. Review this after you finish the email to make sure it still encapsulates the spirit of the email.

### 2. Do you respect me?

Use a professional salutation. Use either “Hello” or “Dear” as a greeting, followed by their title, “Professor,” and their last name. Double-check that you have the correct spelling for their name. Copy and paste it in if you have any doubts. If your professor uses a different title or name in their sign-offs or tells you to call them something else in class, you can switch to that. However, the safest route is to stick to the formula, and there is never an excuse for casual greetings like “Hey Prof!”

### 3. Who are you?

Make it easy for your professor to pinpoint who you are and what class you are in. Professors are often running multiple classes or multiple sections of the same class. They have a lot of students to keep track of. You can also include a pliantry in the beginning to form that human connection before requesting help, but keep it short and professional.

### 4. What do you need?

State your question or describe what you need help with. If you are asking about a specific practice question, paste in the question. If you are asking a question about a project or paper, attach your most recent draft. Provide any relevant information and files so your professor does not have to hunt anything down.

### 5. What have you tried?

Tell your professor what you’ve tried so far to show you’ve put in the effort to figure it out on your own. If you haven’t tried anything yet, put that email in drafts until you do. Check the syllabus, your notes, your classmates’ notes, the textbook. After exhausting all the materials available to you, if you have any inkling what the solution could be, let your professor know so they can tune in to your line of thought. Remember, their job as a teacher is to help you help yourself, not to do your work for you.

### 6. How can I help?

Clarify exactly what you want in their reply. What are the action item(s) you expect to accomplish from this interaction? Do you want them to simply answer a question? Do you want them to read your thesis statement and let you know if you’re on the right track? Take a moment to think about what you are asking for and make sure it is an email sized request.

If you cannot condense and define what you need from them, a conversation with your professor is in order. Ask for an office hours appointment instead of a reply.

### 7. Say thank you

Let your professor know you value their time and assistance. End with a polite sign-off. Include your full name.

### 8. Go the extra mile

Proofread. Read your email over for typos and make sure you attached anything you meant to attach. If you tend to miss mistakes when rereading your own work, enable speech so you can hear your email read back to you. If something sounds funny, it is probably a typo or grammatical error.

To do this on Mac, go to Edit Menu > Speech > Start Speaking. On PC, turn on Narrator by going to Start > Settings > Ease of Access > Narrator, then press Caps Lock + R to start Narrator and Ctrl to stop. Mistakes will slip through regardless, but taking a minute or two to minimize them is worth it.