

Guidelines for Online Communication

1. **Be respectful.** While it is easier to say hurtful or disrespectful things without standing face-to-face with someone, it is important to remember that your classmates and teachers are real people who are affected by the words you say and write. It is essential to keep in mind the feelings and opinions of others, even if they differ from your own. Keep your comments positive. *If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it online either.*

2. **Be aware of strong language, all caps, and exclamation points.** It is easy for written text to be misread and misunderstood. Strong language can alienate people or make us feel attacked. Writing in all caps looks like you are shouting. Exclamation points subconsciously convey anger. Avoid these pitfalls; write honestly and gently.

3. **Be careful with humor and sarcasm.** Certainly you shouldn't avoid being funny. We love to see your personality shine through in online classes. But like mentioned in Rule #2, make sure that it is clear you are being funny and not being rude.

4. **Yes, grammar and spelling matter.** While texting, textspeak can be great for friends. In an educational setting (even online) however, keep it formal. Your written communication should be professional and reflect proper writing style. Save written shortcuts and less than stellar grammar for Snapchat if you must, but follow grammar rules for school.