

## Discussion Forums and Threads – online “virtual classroom” communication guidelines.

Learning online can be a bit writing intensive. Communicating in writing is much different than communicating in person and the tools we use online to interact can vary. Your teacher may post some requirements as part of the course on how to interact properly with the available tools so be sure to follow those requirements. If not, the following recommendations should help you get started. Similar best practices are often referred to as "netiquette."

1. **Write clearly and concisely.**

Use full sentences, including proper grammar and spelling. In other words, avoid "chat" type text unless requested.

2. **Maintain your personality.**

When expressing opinions and perspectives, find ways to add humor, emotion, empathy, and other elements into your messages.

3. **Avoid plagiarism.**

Always express yourself using your own words. When using someone else's words to help describe or support your point, quote or credit your source.

4. **Create Drafts.**

When composing long messages, emails, or discussion responses, you may want to draft them off-line first to avoid any possibility of losing your work. You can also take advantage of spell and grammar checkers when drafting off-line.

5. **Email Properly.**

Always include a Subject for each email and always sign your name at the end to inform your instructor you are sending the message.

#2` **Personality is GOOD.** “ways to add **humor, emotion, empathy**, and other elements into your messages.” Rap and rhythmic speech would be okay. Relating to pop-culture would be good! Music, TV shows, books, UNI volleyball, Orchestras, GBPAC performances – good!

Online discussions provide you with the opportunity to "*think before you speak*." You have time to reflect on what you want to say before you enter your response in the system. You are also able to view the responses and perspectives of all your classmates, which is not easily accomplished in a real classroom setting.

*Opportunity in Japanese is “suki”.* Write, reflect on what you write, ponder, rewrite, share.

You can access the Discussion Board through the Tools link on the Course Menu. Some teachers place a link to the Discussion Board directly on the Course Menu. Other times there may be a Course Link inside a Learning Module or on a content page that leads to the Discussion Board.

Now that you've learned how to use the tools within the Discussion Board, let's review a few best practices. Communicating online is different than communicating in person. For instance, you cannot see the other person's facial expressions or hear the inflection in their voice. As such, we must rely on the conventions of the written word to relay our message and to understand what other people are saying. In addition to any requirements your teacher may publish, below are some helpful considerations when participating:

1. Treat others and their points of view with respect.
2. Use proper grammar, spelling and complete sentences.
3. Avoid using ALL CAPITALS. That can signify you are yelling.
4. Avoid using shortcuts such as "cu l8tr" for "see you later."
5. Think before you type. Provide thorough and thoughtful responses.