

Tip for Writing Thank You Notes/Emails

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Professional/Formal

When should I write a professional thank you?

- A boss/superior gives a gift/grants an unexpected favor
- An interviewer (each member if interviewed by a committee)
- An escort or guide (college visits...get the name of anyone who goes out of their way to show you around.)
- A contact (ex: college, scholarship, College Board, ACT, representative at a career fair) who has given you special attention
- A person who has provided a recommendation or put you in touch with another contact
- The organization committee/contact who awarded you a scholarship
- Anyone who has helped you network or who has done their job especially well

How soon should I send the thank you?

- Professional thank you notes/emails should be sent as soon as possible...*within a few days.*

Guidelines for Professional Emails

- Acceptable unless the favor was of a personal nature or granted by a friend of the family...then write a note.
- Use your college email once you receive one to avoid being blocked or “spammed” by the recipient. Avoid embarrassing email addresses: hotmess2018
 - ✓ **Subject Line:** The subject line should concisely convey your purpose for writing.
Examples: Thank You
Request for Recommendation
Application for interview---Karen Reeves
Watson-Brown Scholarship
 - ✓ **Greeting:** Even if you are writing a very short email, include a greeting. If you know the name of the person, include it. Unless you are on a first-name basis with the person, call them by their title. If you do not know the contact person’s name, look it up on their website or call the contact number and ask!
Examples: Dear Mr./Dr. Jones,
Dear Ms./Mrs./Dr. Jones,
To Whom it May Concern:
 - ✓ **Length:** Keep your email as concise as possible. People tend to skim long emails, so only include essential information.
 - ✓ **Font Style:** Use professional fonts: Times New Roman, Georgia are always good bets. Avoid overusing bold and italics as well, which make an email look cluttered. Do not write in all capital letters either; this comes across as angry or overexcited in an email.
 - ✓ **Emoticons:** Do not include emoticons in a professional email; please limit their use even in personal correspondence. They often look childish.
 - ✓ **Spelling and Grammar:** Edit your email carefully before sending it. Reading it aloud to yourself often helps you edit effectively.
 - ✓ **Closing:** Sign off with a brief "Thank you," "Best," or other simple send-off, and then your name. Most email accounts let you embed a signature with your name:
Name
Email address
Address
Phone Number
Web address

- **How to Send Professional Email Messages**
 - ✓ **Make Sure Your Message is Complete**
 - ✓ **Proof Your Email Message**
 - ✓ **Send a Test Email Message**
 - ✓ **Send a Copy of the Email Message to Yourself:** Use the **Bcc** field to send a copy of the email message to yourself so you have a record of when you sent the message and who you sent it to.
 - ✓ **File Your Copies:** Set up a folder for all your professional emails.
 - ✓ **Check Your Email Regularly**

Sample E-mail Message

SUBJECT: Internship Recommendation Request

Dear Dr. Boyer,

I was in your ENG 309 Technical Editing class last fall and learned many techniques that could be used in an internship for which I've applied. Would you be willing to recommend me for the position?

The internship is at Spectrum Publishing, which produces print and web-based textbooks for high school science courses. As you may recall, although my major is in English, I chose a minor in biology in hopes of obtaining a job in a science-related publishing field.

The recommendation is a simple web-based form that can be completed at <http://spectrumpublishing.com/internrecommendation>. The deadline is April 15.

I hope you'll be willing to recommend me. The internship is a perfect fit for my interests and goals, and a vote of confidence from a professor with in-depth experience in this field would carry much weight. I look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you,

Cynthia Voight

Specific subject line gives reader a good idea of what the message is about.

A more formal salutation is appropriate for a request like this.

Introduction reminds the reader of who the writer is and states the purpose of the email.

These paragraphs provide all necessary information for completing the recommendation, making it easy for the professor to agree.

Courteous closing emphasizes how important the recommendation is without sounding pushy.

Sources (other than this instructor):

Writing Commons: <https://writingcommons.org/>

The Balance: <https://www.thebalance.com/>

Hallmark: <https://ideas.hallmark.com/articles/thank-you-ideas/how-to-write-a-thank-you-note/>

Personal Notes

When should I write a personal note/thank you?

- When anyone gives a gift/grants a favor
- When someone has been especially kind during a difficult period
- To congratulate someone on a particular accomplishment
- Express gratitude of any kind...or you are just thinking about that person....

How soon should I send the thank you?

- Personal thank you notes should be sent as soon as possible...*within three days, no longer than two weeks...though late is better than never.*

Guidelines for Personal Notes

- Avoid generic comments; personalize your note.
- Even if you print the note, always sign in cursive.
- Be sure to include:
 - ✓ A **date** (specific day or month, year); people often keep these notes for years and want to be able to place the sender in time.
 - ✓ A **greeting**: Dear _____, (Be sure to spell the name correctly.)
Ex: *Dear Aunt Rose and Uncle Robert,*
Dear Dr. Raskolnikov,
 - ✓ Indicate the **reason for the note**
Ex: *I want to thank you so very much for acting as my guide during my recent visit to the Georgia Southern campus.*
Ex: *Imagine my surprise when I opened my birthday gift and found a puppy!*
 - ✓ **Personalize** the note by indicating why this gift/favor was so special; add specific details.
Ex: *I have wanted to visit for some time but had no idea where to start. You were able to provide me with the information most useful to my making this important decision.*
Ex: *I especially enjoyed the tour of the biology lab as I plan to enter the medical field and have never had the opportunity to observe cell division.*
Ex: *I love the five gallon mug as it will hold an entire day's ration of coffee! Now I can relax in my retirement chair, drink coffee, and read books all day without interruption.*
- **[Note:** If your gift is money, do not refer directly to the amount; describe what you expect to purchase or use terms like “generous gift.”]
- ✓ **Close** with a personal note about the next time you expect (or hope) to see them and reference the person’s thoughtfulness.
- ✓ **Valediction**: Keep it simple and appropriate to your relationship with the recipient.
Sincerely, (always appropriate)
Warm regards,
Respectfully,
Love, (usually reserved for a close relative)
- ✓ **Signature** (in cursive)

Avoid effusiveness and flattery. Keep personal notes simple and sincere.

