WRITING COMMUNITY PROJECT

GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of the educational divide amongst minority youths of South Los Angeles resurfaces due to COVID-19. Despite historical and on-going efforts of equality in education, concerns of the increasing "digital divide" recur as the pandemic majorly impacts students of color and low-income based on personal, financial, and environmental factors. Because of the augmenting educational gap, this project focuses on reducing the divide by providing a free technology guide for those who cannot access affordable and quality technology education during these unprecedented times.

Our team's mission is to ensure that all students regardless of age, gender, race, language barriers, disabilities, or any other cultural identifiers have an equitable opportunity in education.

— Team

TECHNOLOGY ETIQUETTES

Educational institutions are incorporating curriculums that are hybrid or entirely online/distanced learning. Due to the technological shift in educational systems creating distance learning less supervised and boundless for students and staff to commit deliberate and/or unintentional harmful actions, it is quintessential to educate oneself on general technology etiquettes to create a productive learning environment for all.

This section serves as a crash course on essential technology etiquettes that covers expected behaviors, common errors, and even explores features during an online Zoom session. While this section primarily focuses on the Zoom platform, general technology etiquettes may be applied in varied platforms. Also, look forward to other sections that will guide you through popular technological tools and tips.

GETTING STARTED

- *What are the appropriate camera settings?*
- *What are the ideal audio settings?*
- *What is this meeting checklist?*

BEFORE MEETING *checklist*

☐ Find a quiet, distraction free area.

☐ Prepare necessary meeting materials.

☐ Double check the meeting date and time.

☐ Set your camera and audio settings.

☐ Label your name (ID/tag) appropriately.

☐ Ensure that your internet connection is good.

☐ Ensure that your attire and lighting is appropriate.

☐ Miscellaneous - chargers, calculator, etc.

LIGHTS, CAMERAS, AND ACTION

Cameras on or off? This is a global dilemma for both hosts and participants. While cameras may be mandatory or optional based on the class/meeting formality, it is highly recommended to turn on your cameras for positive action. However, remember to be mindful of what you show on your cameras!

Don't look good today?
Don't worry, Zoom has a filter option to fix this.

Do you have a distracting background?
Zoom has a variety of pre-set virtual backgrounds, but you can also add your own images/videos. If you located in a noisy area, try relocating to a quiet room. If relocation is not possible, please keep yourself muted when you are not speaking.

Tip: Make sure to adjust your light accordingly. If you are in a dark room, please adjust your lighting so that the host(s)/participants can see your amazing face. Avoid having a source of light directly behind you as it presents your face as a silhouette.

1...2...3... MIC CHECK

While it is important to participate vocally, keep yourself muted unless it is an appropriate time to speak/participate. Rather than unmuting your microphone and speaking right away, use the raise hand function.

Tip: Test your microphone/audio settings before entering the meeting. Reference to https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362283-Testing-computer-or-device-audio, for in-depth Zoom audio configurations and troubleshooting.

ARE YOU ON TIME?

While there may be a 5 to 10 minute leeway for some chill hosts/teachers, it is rude to be lazy or even too early. Please double check the schedule and link at least fifteen minutes in advance. If you are in a different time zone, please plan and set the alarm accordingly.

BACKGROUNDS/DISTRACTIONS

Ask yourself, are you ready for this meeting? If not, make sure you are in an appropriate attire and setting. Relocate to a secluded and quiet location so that you can focus on your meeting. Find a spot where there is strong internet connection, a desk, a chair, and numerous outlets.

Are you lying in your bed barely awake?
Are there a lot of people around you?
Are you eating a full-course meal?

Tip: If you answered yes to any of these questions, maybe you should reconsider your meeting readiness. Wake up, finish eating, and relocate!

MEETING MATERIALS

If your meeting requires certain materials such as a calculator or notes, make sure to prepare it in advance!

HELLO, MY NAME IS...

Names serve as a first impression on the screen. If you are unsure of how to format your name, it is a safe bet to use one of the following combinations:

Last, First
First Last
First

Tip: Avoid putting your name in all capital letters or using an inappropriate/offensive name. Rather, observe how others or the host has labeled their name. If you are unsure, simply ask the host if there is a specific method of naming. In an informal setting where jokes are appropriate, perhaps it may be acceptable to use a less formal name.

CLOTHES ON OR OFF?

Definitely on! If you are in a professional meeting, plan in advance on what to wear. Please do not flash or display other participants inappropriate images.

ZOOM FUNDAMENTALS

This serves as a basic guide to common features from creating a meeting to reacting to someone's presentation! Additional in-depth information for troubleshooting can be found on Zoom's Solutions page.

1. Getting Started
- To create a free account, go to https://zoom.us/signin and select sign up free.
- If you already have an account, simply sign in.
- Fill in verification information as necessary e.g., date of birth.
- There are multiple sign up options available such as email, SSO, Google, or Facebook. If your institution requires a specific method, please select accordingly.

2. Downloading Zoom on a Device (2021)
- There are multiple options to download Zoom through the Download Center https://zoom.us/download. (Note: Zoom extensions are available for both Google Chrome and Firefox)
- If you are downloading Zoom for Mac/Apple, click https://zoom.us/download.
- If you are downloading Zoom for Microsoft Outlook, use https://zoom.us/download.
- Mobile devices/apps can be downloaded in the App Store/Google Play
- Other plugins such as Zoom Client Plugin, Zoom Rooms, and Controllers may be found through the Download Center https://zoom.us/download.

3. Hosting Meetings
- Start by signing into your Zoom account. To host your own meeting, select the orange New Meeting option. For details, click the downward arrow as shown on the image. This displays the options to start your meeting with your video on and to use your personal meeting ID (PMI). Furthermore, by hovering over your unique ID number, it displays additional features such as copy ID, copy invitation, and PMI settings.

ZOOM FUNDAMENTALS - CONT.

<u>4. PMI Settings</u>
- For security purposes, you may put a passcode, authenticate permitted users to join, and even create a waiting room.
- For video, as the host you have the option to put your video on/off as well as permit the participants whether they have the choice to turn on their cameras.
- For audio, there is a telephone, computer, and telephone/computer audio option.
- Under advanced options, you may customize whether participants can join anytime, automatically record a meeting, mute participants upon entry, and even add alternative hosts.

<u>5. Additional Host Features</u>
- Recording: The host may automatically record before setting up a meeting or manually select the recording button located on the bottom of the screen.
- Reference to this video, <u>https://youtu.be/lZHSAMd89JE</u> for a quick tutorial. Note that participants will get a notification when you are recording.
- Polling: As the host, there will be a built-in polling button on the bottom of the screen. Feel free to edit the questions and format the poll before you launch it for your participants.
- Reference to this video, <u>https://youtu.be/erz4xtQHoVs</u> for a quick tutorial.
- Sharing screens: As the host, you have the power to enable co-hosts/participants to have the option to share screens. The share screen option is located on the bottom in green. From there, you will be given various display options for sharing. If you are planning to share audio for your presentation, make sure to check the share computer sound. box on the bottom left.
- Reference to this video, <u>https://youtu.be/YA6SGQlVmcA</u> for a quick tutorial.

<u>6. Other Features</u>

- Breakout rooms: Breakout rooms serve to split large groups into a smaller size. This button is only available for the host/co-host. The breakout room button is also located on the bottom of the screen with four squares. After selecting it, you may manually or automatically assign participants in your desired number of rooms. Once finalized, select create breakout rooms. The participants will get an automatic notification to join their breakout rooms.
- Reference to this video, <u>https://youtu.be/jbPpdyn16sY</u> for a quick tutorial.
- Joining meetings: If the host provided a Zoom link, click on the link to automatically join the meeting. If it is password protected, enter the passcode provided by the host to join the meeting. Another method to join is to manually join by entering the meeting ID or personal link name. To manually join, select the button next to the New Meeting called "Join." Then, proceed to enter the information accordingly with an appropriate name. Once completed, hit join to enter the meeting.

<u>7. Interactive Features</u>

You've downloaded Zoom, but it isn't as interactive as you thought it would be. Don't fret, there are fun features to communicate with others in the meeting!

- Chatting: While chatting may be fun, it is important to be mindful of what you post. The host has the option to cutomize and even disable public/private chatting if necessary. In both private/public chatting, you may share files, conversations, and even emojis/reactions.
- Reactions: When appropriate, it is ideal to non-verbally react as it encourages participation and engagement. Select the reactions button. If the host enables reactions, you should be able to applaud, thumbs up, heart, laugh, surprised, celebrate, yes, no, slower, faster, and raise/lower hand.

Tip: Raising your hand rather than interrupting the flow of the classroom is an optimal solution to grab the attention of the host. Make sure to lower your hand after you have been called on to avoid confusion.

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY ISSUES

Experiencing Zoom lag and poor WiFi connectivity?

WAYS TO
Troubleshoot

☐ For stronger connection, try relocating closer to your WiFi router.

☐ Check if multiple devices such as smart LED lights are slowing down the internet speed.

☐ Ensure that your internet bandwidth is at minimum 25Mbps.

☐ Maybe, it is time for an upgrade on your router firmware.

☐ Try leaving the meeting and rejoining .

☐ Use wired connection such as using an ethernet cable.

☐ Lower the quality of the camera (if it is in HD mode) or simply turn it off.

☐ Other tips available on Zoom's official website.

FINAL ADVICE

This section only serves as a rapid crash course to start your Zoom journey. For in-depth tutorials or troubleshooting issues, reference to Zoom's official website and select the solutions tab. For video tutorials, Zoom has a YouTube channel with free content that teaches you step-by-step. Instead, one advice that we can give you is to check your camera and audio settings before a meeting. This can save you time but also help you avoid awkard moments when you think you are muted or your camera is off. Lastly, please be mindful of what you say and show during the meetings. Treat virtual meetings as if you are meeting in person.

Look forward to the next sections for other useful tips and information!

— Wishing you the best of luck on your technological endeavors!

INTRODUCTION TO GOOGLE

If you are familiar with the internet, you probably already know what Google is. Whether you are just searching a fact on the internet or creating a shareable document, Google is the go-to internet solution. Google's multinational technology solutions enhance the online-experience, and it is especially helpful for academic and personal use. In this guide, we will be touching upon the basics of Google and its features used for academic purposes.
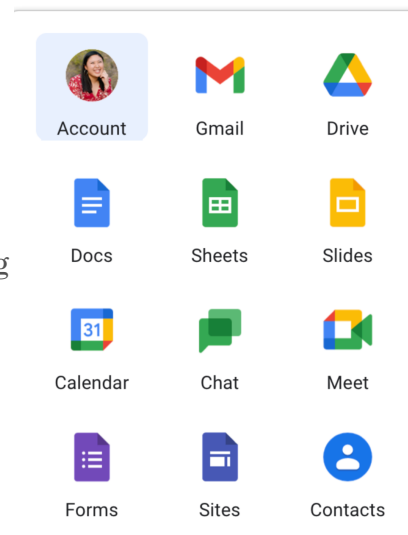
Let's Get Started.

1. Create a Google account
This may seem obvious, but if you want to use all the Google applications and have it saved onto an account, you must create an account or login to an existing account (personal or educational). Whichever account you end up using, make sure you remember your login so there won't be any trouble in the future.

2. Check out the Google Applications
If you go to your Google internet browser, you can see on the top right corner your profile picture and six grey dots. If you click on the dots, you can view all of the Google options: Account, Gmail, Drive, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Calendar, and any additional applications (some can be downloaded from the Google Workspace Marketplace). In this section, we will go over how to use Google Drive and Google Docs for educational purposes.

3. Start Creating!
Now that you have your account set up and you know where to access it to all the Google applications (you can also search them up online and they will appear), you have the freedom to start creating and utilizing the Google features.

GOOGLE DRIVE

Want to see where all of your work goes? Google Drive is the central hub for all of your creations: documents, sheets, slides, forms, etc. If you are just starting to figure out how to use Google, this is the place to familiarize yourself with!

Navigating the Drive

Where do I start?

Once you are signed into your Google account and have opened your Google Drive, you will see a few of your files taking the majority of the page, a menu bar on the right hand side, and a search bar at the top of the screen. Lets go over the features of the Drive!

The Menu

1. My Drive (Homepage)

When you first open your Google Drive you will see the "My Drive" page, featuring "Quick Access" (documents that you use frequently/some of your recent work), "Folders" (folders that YOU created, tip: you use folders to organize and drop work into them), "Files" (a selection of your work). This is the main Google Drive homepage, and it is helpful for accessing files quickly and organizing your work.

2. Priority

Above the "My Drive" tab is the "Priority" section. This section is not frequently used, but it shows files that you recently commented, edited, or opened. It can be used for quick access files and Google Workspaces.

3. Shared Drives

Below "My Drive" is "Shared drives," which is just like "My Drive" but shared with multiple people. Makes sense right? This section can be used frequently if you want to create multiple folders, files, and sections to be shared with multiple people.
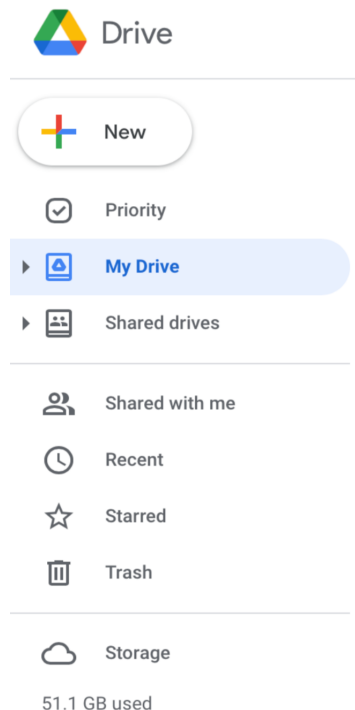
4. <u>Shared with</u>

Below "Shared drives" is "Shared with me," this feature is helpful for finding files that people shared with you. In an academic setting, students often share their work with peers to get feedback, not only will the receiver get an email (this depends if the sharer disabled this feature) but they will also see the document in their drive. The main part of this page has "Quick Access" and the options to view other files (by share date, name, last modified, last modified by me, and last opened by me). Or you can search for the file in the search bar.
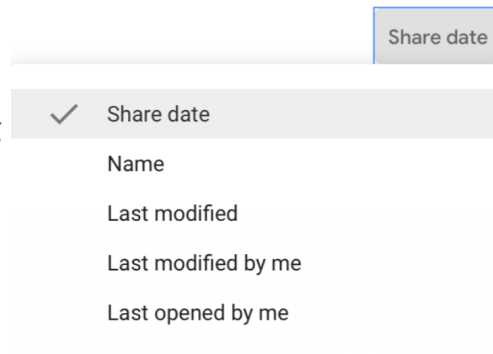
5. <u>Recent</u>

Below "Shared with me" is "Recent," which is pretty self explanatory, it contains your most recently edited or opened files. This helps for easy access.

6. <u>Starred</u>

This is where the files that you starred go into, starring a document can be used to highlight an important file. To star a file, there should be a star symbol towards the top on the right side of the File name. Once you click on the star, it should turn yellow to indicate that it is important.

7. <u>Trash</u>

This is where all of the files that you trashed or other collaborators on shared files trashed documents. Features in this section include empty trash and options to view the files in the trash. Once you trash a file, you have 30 days to recover them, otherwise it goes away forever. If you lose documents consistently or don't know where to find a document that is not showing up when you search for it, you might have deleted it. It is a good idea to review the trah tab every month to make sure you aren't deleting something important.

8. <u>Storage</u>

If you look at the very bottom of the menu bar you can see the storage tab with all of the files and the amount of storage they are taking up. This is important for those using a personal account on Google because there is a storage limit, and if you go above, you will need to pay. That is why it is helpful to use a school account because most school accounts allow unlimited storage.

9. <u>New</u>

Above the menu bar, there is a button that has a plus sign and states "New." This one way to start or drop a new file. If you click on the button you have multiple options to start with (folder, file upload, folder upload, Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Forms, Google Drawings, Google My Maps, Google Sites, Google Apps Script, Google Jamboard, and any other application that you can choose from or add).
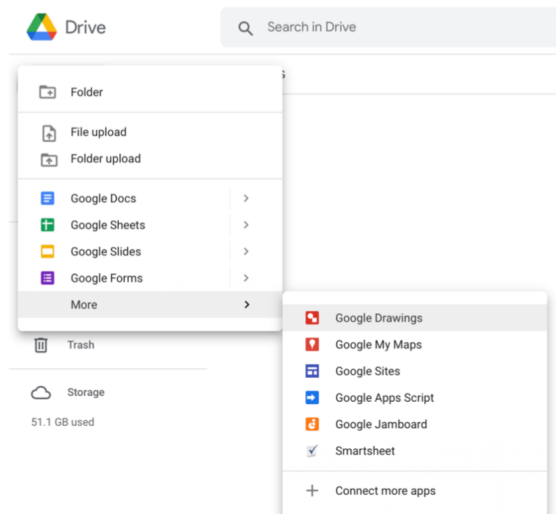
GOOGLE DOCS

Google docs is one of the many Editor Suites offered by Google. The browser-based word processor allows you to create, share, and collaborate on documents through the internet. It is very helpful, efficient, and easy to use for students and adults.
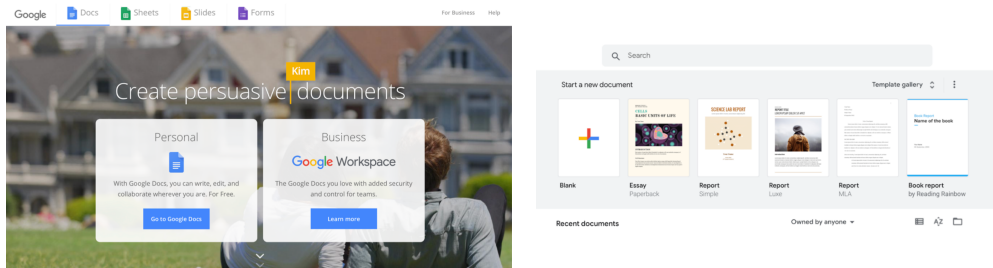
Where to Start...

1. Open Google Docs

You can open Google Docs by searching in a web browser or using one of Google's quick access options. You will probably see this opening page (first image above), to get started click on "Go to Google Docs."

1. At the Home Page

When starting your Google Doc journey, you will be presented with the homepage.

- At the top of the page you can see three grey lines (this is your menu button) and the long grey search bar to find existing documents.
- Below the search bar, is the option to start a new document, this is similar to Microsoft Word (allowing you to choose a black page or use one of the templates provided by Google).
- Below the new document option, are your most recent documents. You can change the order in which they are presented by using the tool bar (shown in picture below). Click on each of the options to see what works best for your viewing.
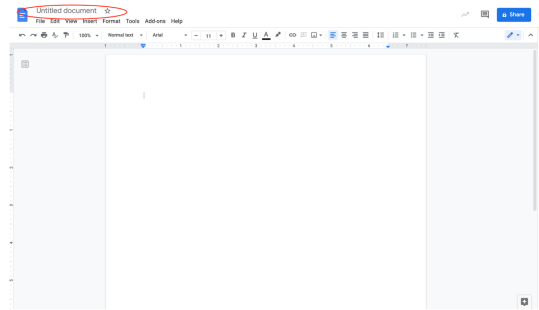
GOOGLE DOCS - CONT

New Document
   1. Title Your Document

When you create a new document, you will be presented with this page. The document would be labeled "Untitled document," at the top left corner. Click on the title and rename your document. Notice after you title your document there is a notification on the right that states "Saved to Drive" (This means your document has been saved). One of the many perks Google docs has is the automatic save!

2. Familiarize Yourself with the Tool Bar

Below the title is the ToolBar that has so many features to elevate your document.
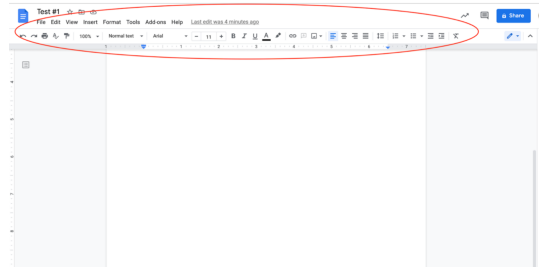
For a more in-depth description of each feature use is article from alickeeler.com: https://alicekeeler.com/2017/09/24/google-apps-new-toolbar-icons/

3. Share Your Work!

Being able to share your work allows for immediate collaboration, comments, and edits to your work.
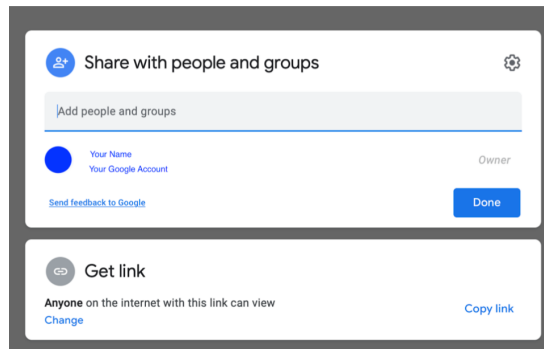
Click the blue Share button at the top right of the page to give access to a person directly or to create a sharable link. TIP: It is helpful to get a link that allows anyone on the internet to view if you are sharing it with multiple people.

3. Annotate, Comment, and Edit a Doc

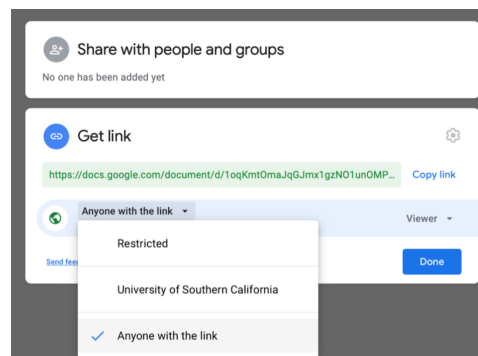Once the document is shared, participants can add comments and suggestions by highlighting the text and clicking on the commenting or suggesting button. The editor can then review the comments and edits and either accept or reject them. This feature is extremely useful if you are asking someone to review your paper and provide feedback.
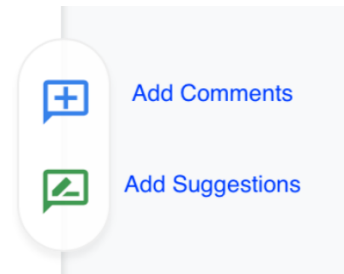
Any Further Questions?
If you have any more questions, Google Drive has a support website to search any problems you have
https://support.google.com/drive/?hl=en#topic=14940.

Good luck and have fun creating on Google!

WRITING EMAILS

A Few Words About Reaching Out

First and foremost, it's okay to feel that emails are confusing and intimidating. The good news with this, is that emails are basically text messages with a few small changes. In the same way, these forms of communication are similar to how we talk in real life. If that's the case, why are they more confusing? This comes down to how we might overthink and try to perfect what we're trying to say. In my experience as a student, I've found that being respectful and direct is the most effective way to not only get answers but also build relationships with other people via email.

Subject Line - What Is It?

A subject line in an email is similar to a news headline. If there's a specific topic you're discussing, you can include this. Typically, you want it to be a few words. It should grab the attention of whoever's on the receiving end so they know what the email is about. For example, if you were to send an email regarding a specific math assignment to your teacher, a good subject line would be "Math Assignment (date)" or whatever the name of the assignment is. These are not required to fill out in order to send an email, but are very helpful if you know how to use them.

WRITING EMAILS - CONT

Tips For Your Introduction

   Most of the time, the way you begin an email sets the tone for the rest of your message. It's important to understand who you're talking to. If it's school faculty or a potential job offer, you want to keep it more professional than if you were emailing your classmate. The following are some introductions that may help get you started:

Introduction Phrase	Meaning & Intended Audience
To whom it may concern,	This is good if you're sending a general question, and not to a specific person
Good morning / afternoon,**	These phrases are fairly universal and work as a conversation starter **If you know the name of the person you're reaching out to, it's respectful to add their name at the end of this followed by a comma**
Dear (name),	Using this is more traditional, it's a little more personal than professional, so if you're writing a sincere and emotional email it may help to introduce the topic more than the others. However, it does not mean if you use this, the email automatically becomes emotional.
Hello (name),	This is an objective and respectful way to start a conversation with someone you either do or don't know. It can be universal and you may have received one with this!

Formatting Your Main Message

   Since this is the entire reason you're sending an email in the first place, this is the most important part. It's best to start out with your main idea, and go into more details if needed. What you don't want, is to send a lengthy and in depth description that may create a lot of confusion. Emails are beneficial mostly for sending general information and asking a few questions, but if there's a longer conversation that you need, it might be better to schedule a phone or video call.
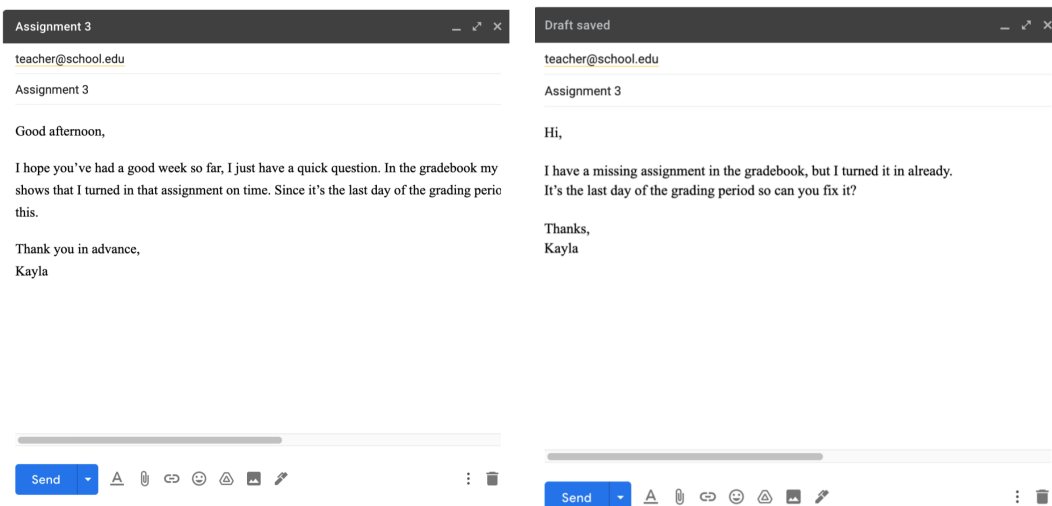
WRITING EMAILS - CONT

Let's run through an example.

It's the last Friday afternoon of the grading period. Kayla has an assignment that shows it's missing. However, she checks on Google Classroom and sees that it was submitted on time. The only way to reach her teacher is through an email. Which message should she send?

OPTION A   **OR**   **OPTION B**

OPTION A:

Assignment 3	_ ⤢ ✕

teacher@school.edu

Assignment 3

Good afternoon,

I hope you've had a good week so far, I just have a quick question. In the gradebook my shows that I turned in that assignment on time. Since it's the last day of the grading perio this.

Thank you in advance,
Kayla

Send

OPTION B:

Draft saved	_ ⤢ ✕

teacher@school.edu

Assignment 3

Hi,

I have a missing assignment in the gradebook, but I turned it in already. It's the last day of the grading period so can you fix it?

Thanks,
Kayla

Send

Really, both of these options ask the same question. Notice the subject line on both emails are titled "Assignment 3", which is simple and shows what the email will talk about. The main difference is that one of them shows more professionalism and respect for an authority figure. The correct option is OPTION A. The email on the left presents both a personal and professional tone, while asking the question clear and short. On the other hand, "Option B" removes any type of personal connection and gets straight to the question. While it's shorter, that doesn't necessarily make it the most professional. Ideally, you want to understand your role in the situation and offer any help, especially since you're asking a question and hope to get an answer.

WRITING EMAILS - CONT

<u>Closing Out the Message</u>

One last thing before you send out that email: how should you end it? The ending of an email that includes usually a short phrase and your name is known as a signature. You're "signing" your email and letting the recipient know that it's the end of your email. This is also a polite and friendly way to complete your message. Below are a few examples of good and general ideas to use for your email signature.

- Best,
- Sincerely,
- Thank you in advance,
- Thank you for your consideration,
- Thank you,
- Respectfully,
- Regards,
- With gratitude,

Like most things in life, practice makes perfect. Emails can be very useful when it comes to asking questions outside of class. As a current college student, finding ways to make my emails personal and professional can be challenging. With this outline, you should be on your way to sending emails without being stressed about saying the right thing. I have complete confidence that you'll do great. In case you're still a little worried, I'll leave you with these last few bonus tips:

- Use your full name: Let your recipient know who you are and make sure not to use nicknames or shortened names.
- Don't use emojis or abbreviations: You want to spell things out fully and keep it professional to maintain clarity.
- Know your audience: If you're writing to a teacher or future job, it's going to be more formal than a friend or relative.
- Business Hours: Standard business hours are 8am-5pm Monday through Friday in your respective time zone. Keep emails within this time frame unless it's an emergency. Staying in that time frame will help your likelihood of getting a solid response in a timely manner.
- #1: Breathe! Emails are simply conversations online. Most of the time, the way you'd talk to the recipient in person or over the phone is a good indicator of how formal you need to be. Don't stress, and just send the email!

VIRTUAL FATIGUE

Hidden in south side Seattle, a legendary 17-year-old basketball phenom was hoping for a chance at Gonzaga University. Equipped with an incredible coach and a team built for perfection, it was an ideal sports college for him. He was the president of a stocks club at his high school and had an internship with the Seattle Seahawks, showing how his passions intertwined itself in his life. With an impressive basketball career and an equally loaded extracurricular resume on his plate, getting into college seemed like a breeze to him.

"He's not motivated anymore… Young people like to make plans for the future, and it's difficult to do that when they don't know how long this new way of life will last…" - Perez

Week after week without basketball, internship experience, or simply his friends, the fire of passion from the flourishing student dimmed after every Zoom meeting he had to attend. Naps became more frequent, and routines like his meal plans became obsolete.

Patricia Perez, PhD is a child development specialist who often consults with youth like the thriving Gonzaga hopeful. With a blind-sided hit from a global pandemic, his plans were put on hold as his school, sports, and internships came to a stop. He isn't the only one, and Perez makes it clear that the remote learning environment causes struggles for many students. With the ongoing lack of friends, teachers, and activities in a physical campus, academic motivation and social development spiral as well. Among those missing pieces, mental health services are also put aside with the shutdown of schools. Whether mental health care be through friends or a counselor, there are still many who rely on schools for their own safety.

VIRTUAL FATIGUE: WORK-BASED BURNOUT

"Just because you take breaks doesn't mean you're broken" - Curtis Tyrone Jones

Although it may not be a formal or medical diagnosis, "Zoom fatigue" continues to be a very real situation for many people, students and adults alike. Work-based burnout occurs all the time for people working in service-based careers. However, experts suggest that job burnout can hold actual underlying conditions such as depression or anxiety, so online learning can have its benefits, but as with many seemingly good things, there is a cost. Despite the sudden and disruptive shift to exclusive online learning, students are still constantly expected to maintain the same level of performance in their work and studies. The hidden truth is that the pandemic has affected everybody's lives, no matter how accustomed to "burnout" people seem to be. Everybody experiences physical stress in work already, but online settings bring new mental and psychological stresses onto the table. Rather than just worrying about the clothes people wear, people had to consider their background view and noise.

One place where burnout is evident is through the US college admission process for 2020. Angel Pérez, CEO of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling tells how "colleges and universities are reinventing a process that hasn't changed in over fifty years in the span of a couple months … and they don't have another choice". With the closure of campuses all around the nation, students submit less applications since they don't actually get to see campus. Others are in such financial states that it isn't worth the gamble to invest money into something that is so unknown. The removal of ACT or SAT's "reality check" gives students uncertainty and even a sense of false hope in a time where people need it the most.

What's most important to understand is that you are not alone.

"ZOOM FATIGUE" STRATEGIES

Online interaction demands much more intently on conversations and active cognitive functions to absorb information. For example, in a classroom setting, students can ask each other quick questions in the class. However, during a video call, interacting with others is nearly impossible unless one musters the courage to send a private chat or interrupt the class and awkwardly finds a moment to ask clarifying questions. In real life, people don't tend to focus on one object for hours on end. In a zoom class, the computer screen is something that requires all of one's attention, or lots of important information can be left out. However, there are many ways to reduce distractions and make sitting online less exhausting and stressful.

1. If you don't need to, you can turn off your camera!

One of the most simple things to do in an online setting is to just relax a bit and not worry about what's going on around you. You might not even notice, but most of the time, people tend to focus on other people's faces and backgrounds! The brain processes all of the visual environmental cues around them at the same time. Not worrying about your own camera or others can help reduce onscreen stimuli.

2. Avoid multitasking.

According to Harvard Business Review, multitasking can cost one up to 40% of productive time and lead to lots of memory issues. Focusing attention into a video call with 100% may seem less ideal as an empty google search bar tempts you at the corner of your eye, but doing so closes off certain parts of your brain. Switching between tasks and doing multiple things at once cuts into performance.

"ZOOM FATIGUE" STRATEGIES - CONT

3. Incorporate breaks into daily living.
This strategy stretches beyond online situations; learning when to rest and take breaks is important for anybody in athletics, STEM, or many parts of life. Giving yourself time to completely remove yourself from a screen and cool down with a drink or fresh air allows your eyes and more importantly, your brain, to rest.

4. Improve your work environment.
Sometimes many people get tired of video calls because they seem to be in the same spot all the time for hours on end. Especially for work-at-home employees, online meetings seem like an infinite struggle. There are many things you can do to find a balance of comfortability and freshness:

- physically move somewhere else (outside, in the kitchen, etc.)
- play new music or try a new alarm in the morning
- invest in things like succulents or fidget toys

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIES

Organization:
While juggling academics, extracurriculars, and everyday commitments or responsibilities, staying organized is the easiest way of lowering stress levels.

- keep a calendar, journal, stress worksheets, etc.
- constantly clean your workspace (it cleans the mind!)
- learn to prioritize and work efficiently

Healthy Routines:
Consistency is crucial in maintaining a healthy lifestyle; it eventually transfers into a higher quality experience. Likewise, it doesn't hurt to try new things to spice up a totally monotonous and packed schedule.

- exercise! (brief 10-minute walk, yoga sessions, online gym)
- sleep (recommend 7 to 9 hours for young adults)
- dieting (avoid snacking at late hours, "comfort foods", or even abstaining for too long… eat well and eat enough)

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIES - CONT

Support:
Staying social and talking to others, whether it be friends, family, or medical professionals is one of the easiest stress management techniques to incorporate in life.

- participate in clubs or extracurriculars
- seeking help or time with others, even if it's online
- take breaks to check in with yourself

Resources:
24/7 hotlines, apps, and online spaces are easy and quick ways to access support for any concerns or issues. Many are anonymous and care about you first, not their reputation.

- SAMHSA: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Suicide Prenvetion Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Apps: Pacifica, 7 Cups, Talkspace

MENTAL HEALTH FAQS

Q: What does "mental illness" actually mean?
A: In short, mental illnesses are health conditions that often disrupt one's thoughts, emotions, relationships, and daily routines. Different types lie in a spectrum of severity from fairly mild (phobias) to serious mental illnesses like schizophrenia. What is important to understand, however, that mental illnesses do not define a person's character, intelligence, or general makeup. Just like how other diseases like diabetes is a pancreatic disorder, mental illness is a condition in the brain.

Q: What causes mental illness? Is it common?
A: For decades, experts could never pinpoint if there ever was a singular particular cause for mental illness. With lots of research backing them, the general consensus is that mental illness is usually a combination of many factors which can include inherited genes, psychological or emotional problems from traumatic events, or general exposure to environment stressors. There are many types of mental illnesses, and millions of Americans are affected by it. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 1 in every 5 adults in America experience mental illness and 1 in every 5 children between the ages of 13 to 18 will eventually develop one. This may seem concerning, but mental health is just as important as physical health. In recent days, more and more doctors are pushing to increase the awareness and understanding of it.

Q: What are common signs or symptoms of mental illness?
A: As stated before, there are always many indicators for different types of illnesses, including age or environment conditions. However, the most common signs can include:
- depression
- anxiety
- anger or irritability
- loneliness, isolation, withdrawal
- loss of appetite
- difficulty sleeping

TUTOR TIPS

Tutoring is not always helpful. Impressions can make or break experiences, and I, along with many others, have given up on tutoring after a bad experience. At the same time, after working firsthand with 826LA, a volunteer community service program focused on tutoring and helping students in the South Central Los Angeles area, I know how much of an impact a positive tutoring experience can affect the mentality of a student. A positive tutoring experience can only occur when the tutor cooperates with the learner just as much as the student is willing to cooperate with the tutor, and here are some steps to achieve that.

First of all, let's discuss what tutoring is. Personally, I define tutoring as academic support to fit the needs of progressing students who feel they could use some extra help to understand concepts learned in class. Keep in mind that those who are excelling in class may also utilize tutoring to keep their mind sharp, and many do. The negative stereotype that only people who need help go to tutoring can be very discouraging to those who may have had tutoring recommended towards them. Tutoring can also be found anywhere, and over the past year, many people have found tutors that work online over video calls such as Zoom or Skype.

TUTOR TIPS - CONT

There are many students that may struggle to learn in the traditional classroom environment and feel that they would benefit from some extra assistance in a one-on-one setting. The traditional classroom setting consists of large classrooms, and the teachers have a hard time accommodating the needs of each individual student. School is already a stressful environment for students, and if they do not receive the attention they need to succeed, it can become very frustrating. Also, teachers often struggle with obtaining a realistic gauge of the level of their students' understanding due to the amount of students they may have to teach simultaneously. Furthermore, students may be fearful of asking questions because they do not want to seem "stupid" to their peers. Despite most schools occurring online over the past year, these issues are still relevant. This is where tutoring comes in. Tutoring is usually one-on-one and both the tutor and the students have each other's full attention throughout the learning period. The one-on-one factor eliminates distractions and creates a much less stressful environment. Students can be themselves and not have to worry about saying a wrong answer as no one will judge them. The one-on-one factor also enables tutors to shape their way of teaching to better fit the learning style of the student; this is nearly impossible for a teacher with a multitude of students to achieve. Tutoring is a safe space intended solely for improvement, but, as stated earlier, the session can only be positive if the tutor keeps several things in mind.

TUTOR TIPS - CONT

Most importantly, the tutor has to be able to adapt to how the students learn best. In other words, tutors should not just be teaching the material but also how to understand the material that was discussed in class and, in a broader sense, the process of learning overall. A tutor should always keep in mind that each person learns differently and through different methods. Some like to learn visually and having someone write out how they come to their answer can be a huge help. Others may like to learn audibly and find it easier to understand information by listening to someone else explain it. Some may just need a little bit of extra practice, but it is important that a tutor is able to recognize and cooperate with their student on what works as well as what does not work.

Another thing to keep in mind as a tutor is that the student is actually learning and not just going through the motions. The student should be able to understand what they went over and carry it into the classroom setting. At the end of the day, the grades are earned in class and not in tutoring. Furthermore, it is crucial that the student does not rely upon tutoring too heavily to the point where they would slack off in class. Tutoring is meant to be assistance and never the main source of education because the teachers are the ones making the tests, not the tutors.

TUTOR TIPS - CONT

If the student responds really well with tutoring and starts to achieve good and satisfactory grades, keep in mind that the student may become lazy. They may feel that they may not need tutoring anymore after seeing a near-perfect score on a quiz or test. They may even consider tutoring a waste of time at this point. For tutoring to be successful, it should become established at the beginning that coming on a regular basis is crucial. The mind should always stay sharp; and even if the student may not have an exam to study for, it is never too early to begin reviewing.

Another tip that can go a long way with the student is to become comfortable with one another. They should look forward to tutoring as well as catching up with a friend. Something I utilized when volunteering with 826 LA was starting off with a couple of ice breaker questions to get to know one another. Keep in mind that a tutor should remain somewhat professional at the same time. It's perfectly fine, and even encouraged, to make the session fun but never go too far as the main focus of tutoring is to learn. Also, if tutoring sessions feel a little awkward at the beginning, there is no need to worry. Many people are shy when first meeting someone, but with time, people get comfortable with one another.

TUTOR TIPS - CONT

Speaking of which, the last tip I have for tutors is to be patient. As corny as it sounds, you can't rush greatness. Students may not understand topics right away and that is perfectly fine. Try explaining it in a different way, or even walk the student through the process of solving the problem. When the student feels they understand the topic, try to formulate a practice problem and let the student try to solve it before providing any extra assistance. Practice problems are a great way to not only gauge the level of understanding on a topic but also figure out what learning techniques work best with the given individual.

Tutoring is truly a beautiful thing when it is done correctly. Nothing makes a tutor happier than to see their students' hard work pay off. Students are coming to you for help, so do your best to try and fulfill those needs. It's okay that you may not understand what the student needs help with either. These students are trying their best, and at the same time, you are doing your best as well. I am sure with these tips in the back of your head, you will become a fantastic tutor and help students of all levels reach their full potential to achieve the success that they deserve.

TUTOR TIPS - CONT

Below is a chart (a great technique for visual learners) to better help organize the information of tips for tutors listed above.

Adaptability	Each student learns differently, so they should also be taught differently
Communication	Check-in with your students to ensure that they actually understand what is being taught
Thorough teaching	Do not just show the answer, but walk students through how you achieved the answer as well as surrounding topics of the question. Practice problems are a great technique to ensure thorough teaching
Consistency	Tutoring will work best if it is consistent. If there is a lot of time between tutoring sessions, one can become lazy, and tutors may even forget the way of teaching that works best with a student
Comfortability	Essential for a smooth tutoring experience. Enables communication to occur much easier
Patience	Students may not understand things the first try. That is perfectly OK. Try to figure out other alternatives to explain the topic to see if the student may better understand.

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