

Email Interview Template

When reaching out to sources by email, it's important to do so professionally. Additionally, there are several elements you'll want to make sure are in your email. Below is a standard email template that can be used when reaching out to sources for quotes or information as you work on your articles or other media content in this class.

Your email should include the following, in the order indicated:

1. **An appropriate subject line.** This is the subject that appears in the recipient's inbox, and will likely be the first thing your email recipient sees when they receive your email.
2. **An appropriate salutation.** This is your greeting for the person you're emailing. You should address them by name and make sure to spell it correctly. Usually addressing a source by first name is fine, though it's a good idea to use their formal title if they're a licensed professional or in a position of authority (e.g., Dr. Bennings, President Bennings, etc.). Do not include "Dear," etc., or designations like "Mr." or "Mrs." Just use their name.
3. **An appropriate introduction.** Open your email by telling the recipient who you are and what you're doing. Keep it simple and direct. Note that not everyone enjoys reading their emails, and that some people – yours truly included – get dozens if not hundreds of new emails every day. The less they have to dig to understand why you're writing, the better.
4. **Your questions.** Listing them is fine. Again, keep them clear, direct and simple. Unless you're simply writing to clarify some background information – "Is this correct? I just want to verify" – remember to ask your questions in such a way that the source can't simply answer with a short statement of fact (e.g., "Admission is \$10") or with a simple "yes" or "no." I almost always add a final question asking if there's anything else they'd like to say.
5. **Your deadline.** THIS IS IMPORTANT. Make sure to ask directly for a response by a certain date, leaving yourself enough lead time that you can actually use the information they provide you with by your deadline. In this class, as we have little time between most assignments, it's a good idea to start with a date no further out than two days from the day you send the email.
6. **An appropriate closing.** Thank your source for their time and include your contact information, offering them an alternative means of responding if they prefer not to answer by email. It's often a good idea to ask them to direct you to a more appropriate source if they feel they can't or shouldn't answer for some reason.

On the following page is a basic email template you can use for your interviews in this class (and beyond, if you want to). Simply replace the [spaces] with your information. The template can generally be adjusted to fit your personal needs, but for this class the minimum elements indicated here must appear as required for your assignments.

Generally speaking, journalists reach out to many sources several times a day for information, and email, due to its convenience, has become the go-to method for most initial contacts. However, the method used often depends on the work in question and different people have their preferred methods of working. A phone call is often much faster at producing results, for example, and might be preferable in breaking news or broadcast contexts, where the timing is more essential.

The goal with any email assignments in this class is simply to get you more comfortable reaching out to sources in a professional way through practice.

Subject: Questions for a news article about [article subject here]

[Name],

I am a student journalist writing an article about [article subject] for Kellogg Community College's student newspaper, the Bruin News, and I was hoping you could answer a few questions so I could quote you in my article. Could you send me answers to the following questions?

1. [Question 1]
2. [Question 2]
3. [Question 3]
4. Any thing else you think I should know about [the subject]?

My deadline is approaching fast. If you could respond by [day and date], that would be ideal. If there is another source you think would be good to talk to, please send me their contact information and I'll reach out to them as well.

I can be reached at [your email address] or [269-XXX-XXXX]. I look forward to your reply.

Thank you!

[Your first and last name]
The Bruin News