

Lesson Plan: The Art of the Ask – Crafting a Professional Email

Materials Needed:

- A computer with internet access and a word processing program
- Emma's email account
- Pen and paper for brainstorming
- Printout or digital copy of the "Email CSI: The Bad Example"
- Printout or digital copy of the "Anatomy of a Perfect Professional Email" guide
- Printout or digital copy of the "Pre-Flight Checklist" rubric

1. Learning Objectives (The Goal)

By the end of this 60-minute lesson, Emma will be able to:

- Identify the 5 key components of a professional email.
- Analyze an email for appropriate tone, clarity, and professionalism.
- Draft a clear, persuasive, and error-free email to a school principal to request a job shadowing opportunity.

2. Alignment with Standards (The 'Why')

This lesson focuses on real-world application of high school writing and communication standards.

- **Common Core ELA Standard (W.9-10.4):** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **21st Century Skills:** Communication, Professionalism, Digital Literacy.

3. Lesson Activities & Instructional Strategies (The 'How')

Part 1: The Warm-Up - Email CSI (10 minutes)

Goal: To understand why professional communication matters by analyzing a bad example in a fun way.

Instructions:

1. "Emma, you're now a detective for Email CSI: Communication Scene Investigation. Your mission is to examine the following 'crime scene'—a very bad email—and identify at least 5 'violations' or mistakes."
2. Provide Emma with the "Email CSI: The Bad Example" handout below. Discuss her findings. What makes this email so bad? How would a principal react to it?

HANDOUT: Email CSI: The Bad Example

To: principal@highschool.edu

Subject: hey

hi,

i wanna job shadow the art teacher. i like art and im good at it. i saw online u have a good art program. can i come like one day a week or something? i think it would be cool.

let me know asap.

thx, E

Part 2: Guided Instruction - Anatomy of a Perfect Email (15 minutes)

Goal: To learn the specific structure and components of a professional email.

Instructions:

1. Review the "Anatomy of a Perfect Professional Email" guide together.
2. Discuss each component, explaining its purpose. Emphasize the importance of a clear subject line and a polite, formal tone.
3. Brainstorm ideas for Emma's actual email for each section (e.g., What are 3 possible subject lines? What specific skills or interests can she mention in the body?).

HANDOUT: Anatomy of a Perfect Professional Email

1. **The Subject Line:** Clear, specific, and professional. It should summarize the email's purpose.
 - *Example:* Job Shadow Inquiry - Emma [Your Last Name]
2. **The Salutation (Greeting):** Formal and respectful. Always use the person's title and last name.
 - *Example:* Dear Principal [Principal's Last Name],
3. **The Body Paragraphs:**
 - **Paragraph 1 (The Opening):** State who you are and why you are writing in the first sentence.
 - **Paragraph 2 (The 'Why'):** Explain your interest. Why do you want to shadow the art teacher specifically? What do you hope to learn? Show you've done your research.
 - **Paragraph 3 (The 'Ask'):** Clearly and politely state your request. Be specific about your availability (e.g., "one day a week," "Tuesdays or Thursdays").
4. **The Closing:** A polite and professional sign-off.
 - *Example:* Thank you for your time and consideration.
5. **The Signature:** Your full name and contact information.
 - *Example:*
Sincerely,
Emma [Your Last Name]
[Your Phone Number]

[Your Email Address]

Part 3: Independent Application - The First Draft (25 minutes)

Goal: To apply the learned concepts by drafting the actual email.

Instructions:

1. "Now it's your turn to be the writer, not the detective. Using our guide and the ideas we brainstormed, open a word processor and compose your email to the principal."
2. Encourage Emma to focus on getting her ideas down first. She can polish the grammar and spelling in the next step.
3. Be available for questions but allow her to work independently.

4. Assessment Methods (Checking Our Work)

Part 4: The Pre-Flight Checklist (10 minutes)

Goal: To self-assess and refine the draft for clarity, tone, and correctness.

Instructions:

1. Once the draft is complete, provide Emma with the "Pre-Flight Checklist" rubric.
2. Ask her to read her email aloud—this helps catch errors and awkward phrasing.
3. She should then review her draft against the checklist, making edits and improvements. Once every box is checked, the email is ready to be sent!

HANDOUT: Pre-Flight Checklist Rubric

Component	Check-In Question	Yes/No
Subject Line	Is it clear, specific, and professional?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salutation	Did I use the principal's correct title and last name (e.g., "Dear Principal Smith,")?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opening	Did I introduce myself and my purpose for writing in the first two sentences?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Body	Did I explain <i>*why*</i> I am interested in this specific opportunity? Is my tone polite and enthusiastic?	<input type="checkbox"/>
The 'Ask'	Did I clearly state my request and suggest my availability?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closing	Did I include a polite closing (e.g., "Thank you") and my full name and contact info?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proofread	Have I checked for any spelling or grammar errors? (Reading it aloud helps!)	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Extension & Differentiation (Going Further)

For an added challenge: Discuss and draft a potential follow-up email. What would you write if you don't hear back in a week? This reinforces politeness and proactive communication skills.