



# Netiquette Guide

One of the support documents you might want to provide for your learners is some information about netiquette. Many people have heard the term “netiquette,” but not everyone will have a deep understating of what it means. Learners may also have conflicting ideas about what good netiquette includes. Much like culture, netiquette can often mean different things to different people based on their own unique experiences.

As a course facilitator you should familiarize yourself with netiquette and establish your own ideas about what good and bad netiquette looks like. Clearly communicate any netiquette expectations that you have for the class, and be consistent and quick to let learners know when you feel a guideline has been breached. Here are a few tips for facilitators:

- Rules for participation and expectations should be established early in the course. Detailed and clear instructions for posting should be provided. Questions that learners must answer should be clear and answerable and provide the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions.
- Language learners will need adequate time to reflect on and craft succinct and meaningful responses and comments. Appropriate time should be allotted in the course for learners to process language.

- It is not a good idea to use an open discussion forum to provide individual language feedback or to correct language mistakes. This may deter further participation in discussion. Offer language feedback through one-to-one channels of communication.

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The following is a guide for netiquette that you can use and distribute to your own learners. You might consider using this guide in a language learning activity at the start of a course, in order to make sure the content is read and that the concept of netiquette is understood. You might ask learners to pair up and contribute additional netiquette tips, or you might ask them to make a list of four or five additional tips, including one “fake tip” that others in the class need to identify.



# Netiquette Guide

This guide provides general information about netiquette. Information in this guide can be shared with your learners when they begin to make posts online.

## WHY NETIQUETTE?

- Netiquette refers to “Network Etiquette.”
- Communicating online is different from communicating face-to-face. Body language and tone of voice are absent when communicating online, so an extra amount of care must be taken when communicating to ensure that you are not misinterpreted.
- In the educational setting, behaviour online reflects who a person is, their willingness to learn, attitude to learning, and motivation to learn.

## BASIC NETIQUETTE RULES FOR ONLINE PARTICIPATION

- Keep in mind that online communication makes connections between actual people and not just names on a screen. Polite language and respect for the individual receiving the communication is key.
- Consider if the post being made is professional or private, and keep in mind who will be reading the message.
- Read and edit posts before sending them. Compose them in a MS Word document first, if it helps. Posts should be edited for content, tone, spelling, and grammar.
- Keep posts short, precise, and clear.
- Use your post to add to the discussion. “I agree” is not a useful comment unless it is followed by an explanation of why.
- Ask clear questions. Questions help to clarify information included in posts.
- Have patience with other participants. Not everyone posting online has the same knowledge level of the content or technology.



**WHEN MAKING POSTS ONLINE, AVOID THE FOLLOWING:**

- Capitalizing entire words or using too many exclamation points. This is considered “shouting.” Emoticons are useful but should be used in moderation in an educational or professional setting.
- Assuming that information in the post is common knowledge. This could apply to technical language, special abbreviations, and cultural norms.
- Plagiarizing. Credit should always be given when referring to or quoting someone else’s idea or work.
- Posting mean or inflammatory comments. (This is referred to as “flaming.”) Posts should not criticize a person or comment. Any responses to such a posting should be done through private email and not on discussion boards.

For more information see the book [Netiquette](#) by Virginia Shea.

