



Email Basics for Students: A Beginner's Guide

Version: April 2026

Target Audience

This guide is written for **students who have little or no experience using email**. It provides clear, step-by-step instructions for setting up an email account, checking messages, and sending replies. Android phone users should note: you already have a Gmail address ready to use.

What is this guide for?

This guide shows you how to find an existing email address, create a new one, and perform basic tasks like reading, writing, and replying to messages. A working email address is required for communicating with your lecturer, receiving announcements, and accessing college services.

Why use this guide instead of figuring it out alone?

- **Save Time:** Learn only the buttons and steps that matter. Skip the confusion.
- **Make a Good Impression:** Create a professional address using your real name.
- **Avoid Common Mistakes:** Understand when to use "Reply" versus "Reply All."
- **Build Confidence:** Handle your email without needing constant help.

Read the sections below to get started.

CONTENTS

1. Finding the Email Address You Might Already Have.....	3
2. Creating a New Email Account.....	3
3. How to Check Your Email.....	5
4. How to Write a New Email.....	5
5. How to Reply to an Email.....	6
Quick Tips for First-Time Email Users.....	7

1. Finding the Email Address You Might Already Have

If you are using an **Android phone**, you created a Google account when you set up the phone. That means you automatically have a **Gmail address** ready to use. You do not need to make a new one unless you want to.

Why does my Android phone need an email?

A Google account is required to download any app from the **Google Play Store**. When you first set up your phone—or when someone at the store helped you—you created this account. You cannot install apps like WhatsApp, Instagram, or Canvas without one. The email address created during that setup is ready to use for college right now.



Figure 1: Gmail icon

- **Android users:** Open the **Gmail** app. Tap your profile picture or the colored circle with your initial in the top right corner. The small gray text under your name is your email address. It likely ends in @gmail.com.
- **iPhone users:** Look for the **Mail** app on your home screen. If you set up an iCloud account, you may have an @icloud.com address. If you are unsure, skip to the next section to create a new one.

Write this address down somewhere. You will need to type it into college forms.

2. Creating a New Email Account

Maybe you want a fresh email address that uses your actual name, or maybe you don't have one at all. Here is how to create one on your phone. The steps are similar whether you have an Android or an iPhone.

Pick an email app:

The three most common free email services are **Gmail**, **Outlook**, and **Yahoo Mail**. For this guide, we will use **Gmail** as the example. Download the Gmail app from the **Play Store** (Android) or **App Store** (iPhone) if you don't already have it.

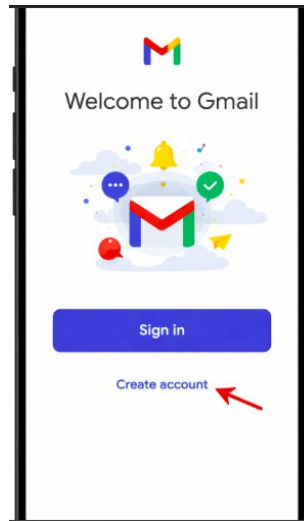


Figure 2: Creating a new account

1. Open the **Gmail** app.
2. Tap the text that says "**Create account**" near the bottom of the screen.
3. Tap "**For myself**".

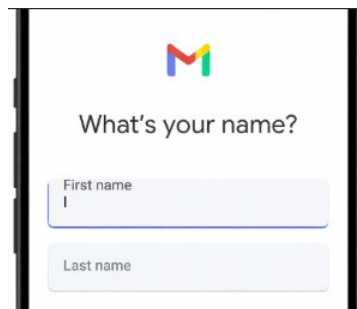


Figure 3: Fill in your information

4. Enter your **first and last name**. Professors will see this name. Use your real name, not a nickname.
5. Choose a **username**. This becomes the part before the "@" symbol. For example, typing alexsmith creates the address alexsmith@gmail.com. If that name is already taken, the phone will suggest adding a number, like alexsmith25.
6. Create a **password**. Write it down in your phone's Notes app so you don't forget it.
7. Follow the remaining steps to enter your birthday and a recovery phone number. This helps you get back in if you forget your password.

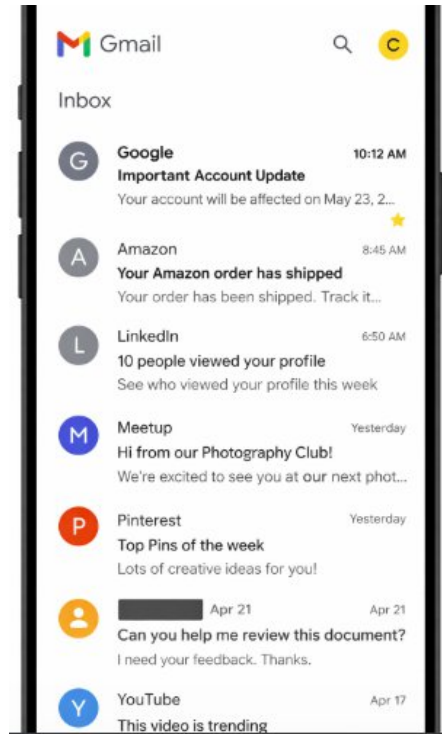


Figure 4: Checking you inbox

When you finish, you will see your new **Inbox**. This is where all your mail will appear.

3. How to Check Your Email

You do not need to type a password every time. The app remembers you.

- **Open the Gmail app** (or whichever email app you use).
- The screen shows your **Inbox**. This is a list of messages people have sent you.
- **Bold text** means the message is new. You have not read it yet.
- **Gray text** means you have already opened the message.

To check for new mail, place your finger **in the middle of the list of emails** and pull down. Let go, and you'll see a spinning circle while it checks.

4. How to Write a New Email

Sending an email is like sending a text message, but you need to add a "Subject" line so the person knows what the email is about.

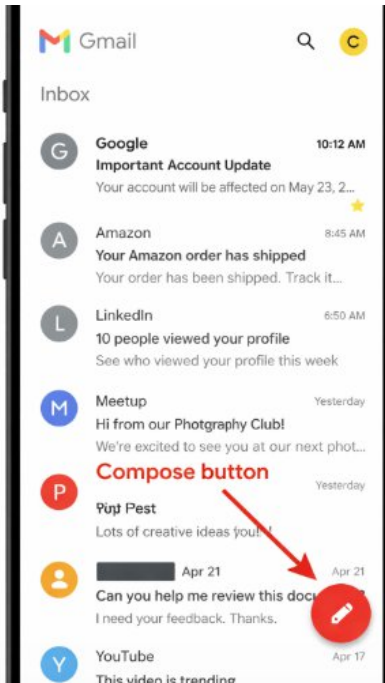


Figure 5: Compose a new email

1. Tap the **Compose** button. It looks like a circle with a pencil inside, usually in the bottom right corner.
2. **To:** Tap here and type the person's email address. If they are saved in your phone's contacts, their name will appear automatically.
3. **Subject:** Type a short title for your message. For example: "Question about Assignment 3" or "Meeting Time".
4. **Message:** Tap the large white space and type what you want to say.
5. Tap the **Paper Airplane icon** (or the word **Send**) in the top right corner to send the message.

5. How to Reply to an Email

When someone sends you an email, you do not need to create a brand new message. You just reply to keep the conversation together.

1. Open the email you received.
2. Scroll to the very **bottom** of the message.
3. You will see two blue buttons.

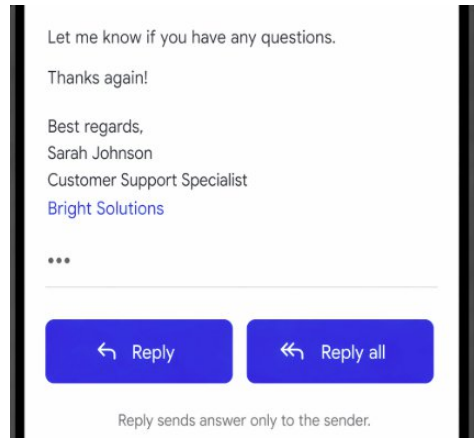


Figure 6: Replying to an email

- o **Reply** (single arrow): Sends your answer only to the person who emailed you. **Use this one.**
 - o **Reply All** (double arrow): Sends your answer to everyone who received the original email. Be careful. If your professor emailed the whole class, this will email everyone.
1. Type your response in the box that appears and tap the **Paper Airplane** to send.

Quick Tips for First-Time Email Users

- **Always add a Subject.** A blank subject makes your email look like junk mail.
- **Emails are not instant texts.** Sometimes a reply takes a few minutes or hours to arrive.
- **Forgot your password?** Tap the "Forgot password?" link on the sign-in screen. A code will be sent to your phone to help you reset it.

You are ready to start emailing. It gets easier every time you do it.