

SECTION 1 – THE FIRST FEW LINES

ASSESSMENT: HOW DO YOU START YOUR EMAILS?

For this self-assessment activity, find the last 5 emails you sent that started a new conversation or topic. Emails that reply to other people’s message won’t work for this assessment. Use the emails to answer the questions below.

NOTE: Longer emails tend to work better for this activity, but it’s OK to use short messages if that’s all you have available.

- Do the subject lines have clear topics? YES / NO / SOMETIMES
- Do the subject lines make it clear why the recipient is getting the email? YES / NO / SOMETIMES
- Do the first lines contain the topic, the purpose, a summary of the key message, and the relevant time frames? YES / NO / SOMETIMES
- (If there are multiple topics) Do the first lines make it clear there are multiple topics in the email? YES / NO / SOMETIMES
- Do you say how many questions are in the message? YES / NO / SOMETIMES
- Is the urgency of the message clear to the recipients? YES / NO / SOMETIMES

THINGS TO CONSIDER

If you circled YES for each question, well done. You start your emails clearly.

If you circled NO, or SOMETIMES for any (or all) of the questions, don’t worry. You’re not doing anything bad or wrong, but your email might not be as effective as you want. Consider what changes you can make to improve the brevity and clarity of your message.

QUESTION: What specific parts of your email introductions do you need to improve? What will you do to improve the next emails you send?

