

01 Email Basics

Introduction

Do you ever feel like the only person who doesn't use email? You don't have to feel left out. More than ever, email is easy to understand and use. In this lesson, you will learn **what email is**, how it compares to **traditional mail**, and **how email addresses are written**. We'll also discuss various **types of email providers**.

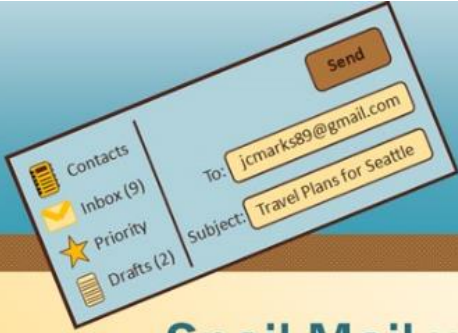
Getting to Know Email

You may know that **email** (electronic mail) is a way to **send and receive messages** across the Internet, but do you know how individual emails are sent, or what they cost, or how email compares to traditional *snail* mail?

To get a better idea of what email is all about, review the graphic (below) and consider how you might benefit from its use.

What is Email?

Email is a way to send and receive digital messages and content over the internet.



Snail Mail vs. Email

Address	Michelle Garcia 202 Cedar Lane Raleigh, NC 27601	mgarcia212@yahoo.com
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your envelop or package is delivered by a mail carrier Received in a home mail box or post office box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your digital message is delivered electronically across the internet through various servers Received online in the Inbox of your email service provider (Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.)
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of 2 days for letters Average of 3-10 days for packages 	Instantly or within a few minutes if servers are busy
Contents	May include packets with documents or packages with larger items	May include attachments for digital documents, files, images, video and more
Costs	The price of stamps or shipping for larger items	Free with internet connection

Understanding Email Addresses

To receive emails, you will need an **email account** and an **email address**. Also, if you want to send emails to other people, you will need to obtain their email addresses. It's important to learn how to write email addresses correctly, because if you do not enter them exactly right your emails will not be delivered or might be delivered to the wrong person.

Email addresses are always written in a standard format that includes a **username**, the **@** (at) symbol, and the **email provider's domain**.

The **username** is the name you choose to identify yourself, and the **email provider** is the website that hosts your email account.

Review the graphic below for examples of how email addresses are written.

grace.ellington@gmail.com

username at email provider

bhubbard522@yahoo.com

Usernames often contain numbers and shortened versions of a name to prevent duplicates

will@gcflearnfree.org

Some businesses and organizations provide emails with their own website domain

About email providers

In the past, people usually received an email account from the same companies that provided their Internet access. For example, if AOL provided your Internet connection, you'd have an AOL email address. While this is still true for some people, today it's increasingly common to use a **free web-based email service**, also known as **webmail**. Anyone can use these services, no matter who provides their Internet access.

Webmail Providers

Today, the top three webmail providers are **Yahoo!**, **Microsoft's Hotmail**, and **Google's Gmail**. These providers are popular because they allow you to access your email account from anywhere with an Internet connection.