



Caption: Accessible Digital Environments Banner

Accessibility Tip: Email

Gmail doesn't have a lot of features in terms of formatting, but there are five things you can do to make your emails not only look better, but be far more user-friendly too!

1: Subject Lines

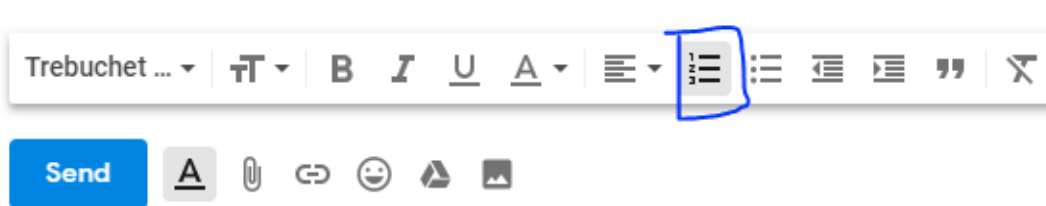
When writing a subject line, make sure to state the topic of the message and main idea. For instance:

Accessibility Tip: Formatting Google Docs or Instructional Support Training Sessions

In contrast, "See the attached file" would not be an adequate subject line.

2: Lists of Items

When making a list of items, use the list tool function from the message toolbar.



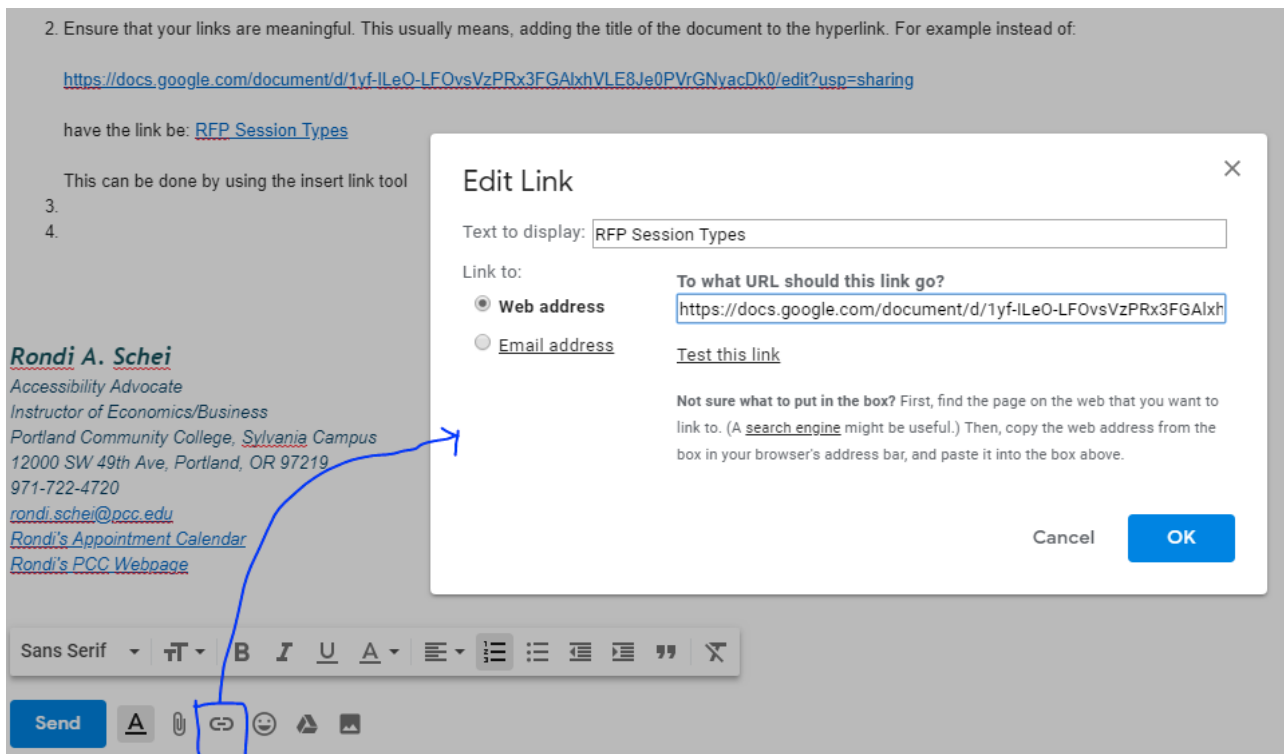
Caption: Image of Gmail message toolbar with the ordered list tool circled.

This is also great way to chunk information for increased readability and comprehension.

3: Meaningful Links

Ensure that your links are meaningful. This usually means, adding the title of the document to the hyperlink. For example:

Instead of a full URL like "<https://www.pcc.edu/instructional-support/accessibility/accessibility-tutorials/>," have the link read as "[Designing Online Content](#)." This can be done by using the insert link function:



Caption: image of Gmail toolbar with the Insert Link button circled and the Edit Link pop-up window.

Note: If you want to create line breaks between bullet points without messing up your numbering, use Shift + Enter instead of just Enter.

4: Inserting Images

Images in Gmail are tricky since you can't add alternative text like you can in Word or Google Docs. But, if you provide a brief caption directly under the image by using "shift + enter," then important images will be described for readers. The caption can use smaller font if you wish. See examples under the images above.

Also, images should not be the primary content of your email. If the image includes text, then that text needs to be expressed in the body of the email. Images should complement the content instead. In addition, they should all have some small caption (see item 4 above).

5: Using Color

Color is one way of adding some visual interest to an email. However, there are a few things you should consider:

1. Make sure the color you choose has enough color contrast (i.e. dark enough). If you are in doubt, a great free checking tool is [Colour Contrast Analyser](#).
2. Color shouldn't be used alone as emphasis. Instead, use bold and/or italics to emphasize key words or phrases. You can add color, but be sure to bold or italicize too. :)
3. It is probably best to limit yourself to about two additional color choices.

We on the Accessible Digital Environments Committee (ADEC) wish you all...Happy Emailing! :)

Best,

Rondi Schei
Accessibility Advocate - Online Learning
ADEC Co-chair
rondi.schei@pcc.edu