

## Learner Etiquette for the Virtual Classroom

1. **Be prepared.** Read emails carefully to ensure you are aware of any pre-work or special considerations for participation. Ensure that your device meets all of the technical requirements necessary for participation ahead of time (camera enabled, microphone enabled, important plug-ins downloaded, etc.) and [download Zoom](#) ahead of time.
2. **Ensure an appropriate learning environment.** Find a quiet place, free from distracting noise. Dress as you would if you were attending training in-person (business casual recommended). Make sure the space behind you is appropriate and free from distracting visuals as your camera will be enabled. **Tip:** Prepare a glass of water and snacks ahead of time. It can be tempting to attend to other matters when we participate online. Please make sure the space behind you (physical space or virtual Zoom background) is appropriate and free from distracting visuals as your camera will be enabled.
3. **Be respectful.** It is easier to unintentionally say hurtful or disrespectful things without standing face-to-face with someone. It is important to remember that your colleagues and trainers are real people who are affected by the words you say and write. It is essential to keep in mind the feelings and opinions of others, even if they differ from your own. *If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it online either.*
4. **Be aware of strong language, all caps, and exclamation points.** It is easy for written text to be misread and misunderstood. Have you ever sent a text message with good intent but your recipient thought you were being rude? If so, then you've experienced this firsthand. By being cognizant of strong language, you can identify potential confusions before sending messages. **Tip: Read everything out loud before you send it.**
5. **Expect to participate.** The virtual classroom will be designed with your engagement in mind. As such you can expect that you will be asked to participate in small-group discussions, answer polls or knowledge checks, participate in role plays or live demonstrations, practice skills with colleagues, type in the chat box, write on the whiteboard. This will not be the time to check emails or attend to other work. **Tip: Assume that the same standards expected of you as a learner in the classroom apply to the virtual environment.**
6. **Be careful with humor and sarcasm.** Certainly you shouldn't avoid being funny. We love to see your personality shine through. Many of our trainers are exceptionally funny too. But like mentioned in Rule #2, make sure that it is clear you are being funny and not being rude. Emoticons and smileys can be helpful when conveying humor so that it is read correctly. 😊
7. **Yes, grammar and spelling matter.** While shorthand and textspeak can be great for friends. In a professional setting (even online) however, keep it formal. Your written communication should be professional and reflect proper writing style.
8. **Don't post or share (even privately) inappropriate material.** Enough said there.
9. **Be forgiving.** Remember that not everyone will know these rules before posting. Try to be understanding of others when they struggle with written communication. It is very different than simply talking to a person face-to-face.