Email Essentials

For Lifelong Learners

Cochise College
Center for Lifelong Learning

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Expectations

Discover the magic of email with our "Email Essentials: Mastering the Digital Mailbox" class! In just three hours, you'll embark on a friendly journey into the world of email, perfect for adults with limited tech skills. We'll cover everything from logging in and sending emails to managing your inbox and attaching files. With hands-on activities and humorous guidance, you'll gain the confidence you need to navigate the digital mailbox. But here's the best part: in the final hour, you'll dive into your own email account with the support of our patient instructor. Join us and embrace the email era with a smile!

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Email Essentials

Introduction

Email Basics

Email, short for "electronic mail," is a quick and easy way to send messages across the internet. Just like sending a letter through the post office, but much faster, email lets you send notes, photos, and documents to anyone in the world with an email address. It's an essential tool for keeping in touch with friends, family, and colleagues. With email, you can communicate anytime, whether for personal reasons or work. In this class, we'll explore how to set up an email account, write emails, and keep your inbox organized and secure. Let's dive into the digital world of communication!

Here are a few vocabulary words to get you started.

Inbox: Think of your inbox as your digital mailbox. It's where all the emails you receive are collected. When someone sends you an email, it lands in your inbox until you read, reply to, or organize it.

Sent Items: Your "Sent Items" folder is like a record of all the messages you've sent to others. It helps you keep track of what you've communicated to people. It's like a copy of the letters you've sent in the past.

Attachments: Attachments are documents, images, or other content that you can send with your emails. Just like attaching a photo to a letter, you can attach files to your email to share information.

Compose: To "compose" an email is like writing a digital letter. It's where you create your message, add the recipient's email address, a subject line (which is like a title for your letter), and the main content of your email.

Reply: When you receive an email and want to respond, you can hit the "Reply" button. This is like having a conversation in writing. Your response goes back to the person, or people, who sent you the original message.

Forward: Sometimes, you might want to share an email you received with someone else. Clicking "Forward" allows you to send that email to another person, just like sharing a book or a story with a friend.

CC (Carbon Copy) and BCC (Blind Carbon Copy): These are options you can use when sending an email to multiple people. CC lets everyone know who the email was sent to, while BCC hides the recipient list. It's like sending an invitation to a party and deciding whether to show the guest list to everyone or keep it private.

Subject Line: The subject line is like the title of a book. It gives a quick idea of what your email is about. It's important to make it clear and relevant so that the recipient knows what to expect.

Signature: Your email signature is like a digital business card. It usually includes your name, contact information, and maybe a brief message. It's a handy way to share your details at the end of each email.

Now that we've got the hang of some email lingo, it's time to dive into the email system we'll be using for our class labs. I've whipped up a nifty Webmail system exclusively for our class – it's email that you can access right from your web browser. Let's kick things off by logging into your personal webmail account.

ACTIVITY 1: OPEN WEBMAIL

1. Enter *Chrome* in the *Search* bar in the lower left corner of the screen.
2. Click the **GOOGLE CHROME** icon in the search results.
3. After the browser opens, enter *georgeself.com:2096* in the address bar at the top of the window.
4. Enter the email address and password you were given at the start of the class.
5. Click **ROUNDCUBE** to open the webmail application.
6. Congratulations! You now possess a (fake) email account.

Manage Email

Message Priority

ACTIVITY 2: DISPLAY PRIORITY

Occasionally, messages are sent with high priority. To see the priority, activate that function.
1. Click the gear icon at the top of the email list, just left of the *Subject* title.
2. Look for **PRIORITY** and click it.
3. Click **SAVE** to reveal the *Message Priority* column.

Basic Reading Functions

ACTIVITY 3: READ A MESSAGE

1. Find the message with the subject *Java Jive and Gossip Galore!*. Hover your cursor over the subject, and then double-click it to open the message.
2. In the reading pane, you'll see arrows in the top-right corner. Click the forward (➔) and back (⬅) arrows to move through your messages like pages in a book.
3. When you're ready to go back to the inbox, click once on **INBOX**, and your list of messages will reappear.

ACTIVITY 4: RECIPIENT LISTS

Many "To" Recipients.
1. In the Java Jive message, look at the sender (missy35@grself.com). Notice that there are many recipients for this message.

Many "Carbon Copy" (CC) Recipients.

2. Next, open the message with the subject Reconnect with the "Community Crusaders" – Reunion on July 13 and 14! Notice that this message is from brandy24@basv316.com, to george@georgeself.com, and a lot of CC addresses.

"Blind Carbon Copy" (BCC) Recipients.
3. Another message titled Join Us for an Important Neighborhood Watch Meeting has piqued your curiosity.
4. This message, sent from sammy36@cochisewebworx.com to george@georgeself.com, used a sneaky feature called Blind Carbon Copy (BCC). Sammy included you in the BCC list, so you received the message. However, the identities of other recipients are hidden.

ACTIVITY 5: ATTACHMENTS

As you explore your webmail, a message with an exciting subject, Get Ready for a Wild and Woolly White Elephant Sale! has caught your eye. It's time to check it out.
1. Click the subject of the message to read the message.
2. Inside this message, you'll find an attachment called **WHITE ELEPHANT SALE**. Click on it to see what it contains.
3. When you're done with the attachment, click the **X**, or the word **CLOSE**, in the top-right corner of the window.
4. Finally, click **INBOX** in the folder pane to return to the Inbox.

Delete, Archive, and Store Messages

One important task for managing the email in your inbox is to delete unwanted email and archiving the rest. Ideally, your inbox should have zero, or only a few, messages. Here is why.

Deleting Emails

Reduce Clutter: Deleting unnecessary emails helps keep your inbox clean and easy to navigate.

Save Storage Space: Emails can take up storage space in your account. Deleting them frees up space for new messages.

Protect Privacy: Removing sensitive or outdated emails reduces the risk of your personal information falling into the wrong hands if your account is ever compromised.

Archiving Emails

Preserve Important Information: Archiving is like storing important documents in a safe place. Instead of deleting, you can archive emails to keep a record of them without cluttering your inbox.

Easily Retrieve: Archived emails are still accessible but are out of your main inbox. You can search and find them when needed.

Organize for the Long Term: Archive emails by year or category to maintain a well-organized email history.

ACTIVITY 6: DELETE MESSAGES

Here is how to delete a message from your webmail.
1. Look for the message with the subject **GET READY FOR A WILD AND WOOLY WHITE ELEPHANT SALE** and click on it.
2. Locate the **DELETE** button on the toolbar, represented by a *trash can* icon, and click that button.
3. The message disappears completely, as if it was never there.

ACTIVITY 7: ARCHIVE MESSAGES

Archiving messages is a great way to control the inbox.
1. Look for the message with the subject **JAVA JIVE AND GOSSIP GALORE!** and click it.
2. Locate the **ARCHIVE** button on the toolbar, represented by a *file box* icon, and click that button.
3. The message seems to disappear, but it has just been filed away.
4. Click **ARCHIVE** in the folders pane and there is your message, safe and sound!

ACTIVITY 8: STORE A MESSAGE

These steps create a folder dedicated to food-related messages in your webmail.
1. Look for a **GEAR** icon at the bottom of the folder pane and click it to access customization options.
2. Inside the *Settings* pane, click the **MANAGE FOLDERS** option.
3. Click the **+** (plus) icon at the bottom of the folders pane to create a new folder.
    a. A window for creating a new folder will appear.
    b. Name your new folder *Food* in the designated space.
    c. Leave other options at their default settings.
    d. Click the **SAVE** button to create your new folder.
4. To go back to your inbox, click the **MAIL** icon in the top menu bar.
5. To move *Gardening Shenanigans Ahead* to the food folder, drag and drop it into the folder.
6. Here is another way to move a message to a folder.
    a. Click the message *Get Ready to Veg Out at the Farmers' Market* then click **MORE** (three dots in the top menu bar).
    b. Select **MOVE TO...** from the options that appear.
    c. Choose the **FOOD** folder as its new destination from the menu.
7. To see your collection of culinary messages, click on the **FOOD** folder.
8. Click on the **INBOX** to return.

Highlight Messages

Messages can be highlighted by marking them with a flag or showing them as unread.

ACTIVITY 9: HIGHLIGHT MESSAGES

1. Click the **INBOX** in the folder pane.
2. Look for the message with the subject **JOIN US FOR AN IMPORTANT NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEETING** and click on it.

3. In the menu bar, click **MARK → AS FLAGGED** to activate a *red flag* for this message.
4. Look for the message with the subject **RECONNECT WITH THE "COMMUNITY CRUSADERS" - REUNION ON JULY 13 AND 14!** and click on it.
5. In the menu bar, click **MARK → AS UNREAD** to mark this message as unread.

Send and Receive Emails

ACTIVITY 10: COMPOSE A MESSAGE

Here is how to create a new email message.
1. Click the **COMPOSE** link at the top of your email page.
2. In the To box, enter *george@georgeself.com*.
3. Click the **ADD CC** button and enter *missy35@grself.com*.
4. In the subject field, type *Important File* to catch their attention.
5. Write a brief message to your classmate that contains your thoughts, insights, or anything you'd like. Remember, concise messages can be powerful.
6. Click the **ATTACH A FILE** button on the right side of the compose screen, then find and select the file named *Jumping Frog* from the *Student Files* folder.
7. To send your email, click the **SEND** button in the top menu bar.

Email Etiquette

In digital communication, where words travel through invisible pathways, it is essential to adhere to a few common rules of email etiquette.

✓ It's important to recognize the impact of a good subject line. Make sure your subject line is both clear and descriptive, acting as an unmistakable beacon for the reader. Steer clear of vague or deceptive subject lines, as they can lead to confusion for those receiving your message.

✓ As you embark on your email quest, begin with a courteous and respectful greeting. Address the recipient by their name, using "Dear [Recipient's Name]" or "Hello [Recipient's Name]" for a touch of warmth. Should the situation call for a more casual tone, try a simple "Hi." In cases where the recipient's name is unknown, a general greeting such as "Hello" or "To Whom It May Concern" is typical.

✓ As you weave your message, remember that the tone you adopt holds great power. Maintain a respectful and professional demeanor throughout. Choose your words carefully, employing proper language and structure. Avoid the use of ALL CAPITAL letters, as this can be perceived as shouting. Be mindful of your tone, ensuring it aligns with the intentions of your message.

✓ To conclude your correspondence, add a digital signature that normally includes your name, contact information, and any relevant titles or affiliations. For personal email messages, a simple "Best regards" followed by your name is adequate.

✓ Email is a fast-paced communication system. Endeavor to reply promptly to emails, especially those that require immediate attention. Even if a complete response is not yet possible, acknowledge the email and provide the sender with an estimated time for a more detailed reply. Show them that their message has not gone unnoticed.

✓ When sending emails to multiple people, be careful with the "CC" (carbon copy) and "BCC" (blind carbon copy) options. Keep in mind that everyone can see who's in the "CC" field. Also, make it a habit to double-check the recipient list before hitting "Send." This precaution can prevent the common mistake of accidentally sharing private information with the whole company.

Embracing these email etiquette guidelines will help you communicate with grace and finesse.

Spam and Phishing

As you work with email, you will encounter spam and phishing messages. These digital tricksters seek to deceive you and may lead to severe penalties.

Spam messages clutter your inbox. They often promise riches, miracles, or secrets. But beware, they are innocent-looking messages that bring trouble.

✓ Watch out for mysterious senders with odd names or email addresses.
✓ Be cautious of unsolicited offers that sound too good to be true.
✓ Avoid clicking on any suspicious links or downloading unexpected attachments.

To defeat spam, remember this advice: *When in doubt, throw it out!*

Phishing is a message that is designed to steal secrets. These messages often masquerade as trusted entities, like banks or government agencies.

✓ Double-check the sender's email address. Phishers may use sneaky tricks to mimic real organizations.
✓ Beware of urgent messages that demand immediate action or threaten consequences.
✓ Never share personal information like passwords or financial details through email.

To defeat phishing, remember this advice: Verify before you reply!

Dealing with Spam and Phishing

Here are tips to help protect you from spam and phishing.

✓ Use your email's "spam" or "junk" button to cast unwanted messages into the abyss. This keeps your inbox pristine.
✓ When in doubt, delete suspicious emails without opening them. It's better to be safe than sorry.
✓ If you receive an email requesting sensitive information, contact the organization directly through official channels to confirm its legitimacy.

Remember, in the world of email, knowledge is your greatest weapon. Stay vigilant, and your inbox will remain a place of safety.

ACTIVITY 11: SCAMS

Beware the Nigerian Prince Scam
1. Open the message with the subject *business /cooperation*.
2. If you receive an email that contains spelling or grammatical errors, be cautious.

3. Any promise of a stranger sharing a large sum of money, especially a million dollars, should raise suspicion.
4. In this case, **DELETE** the *business/cooperation* email to protect yourself.

Watch Out for Phishing Scams
1. Open the message with the subject *Account Temporarily Suspended*.
2. Emails with subjects like this one are often phishing scams trying to impersonate legitimate companies.
3. Examine the sender's email address and the website link for any subtle errors or inconsistencies.
4. Hover your mouse pointer over the provided link to see its true destination before clicking.
5. These scams often create a sense of urgency to manipulate you.
6. To stay safe, **DELETE** the *Account Temporarily Suspended* email.

Use Contacts and the Calendar

Use The Contact List for Email Addresses

In your email service, you have a valuable tool called "Contacts." Think of it as your digital Rolodex, where you can store and manage the email addresses and contact information of people you frequently communicate with. Here's how to get started with it.

ACTIVITY 12: CONTACTS

Create and manage email contacts.
1. Click the **FOOD** folder in the left panel of your email application.
2. Double-click on the message with the subject *Gardening Shenanigans Ahead*.
3. Look for a plus sign (**+**) next to Nate's email address and click it to add Nate to your address book.
4. Click **CONTACTS** in the top menu bar to view your contact list.
5. Click Nate's name in your contact list to reveal his details.
6. Edit Nate's Contact Information:
   a. Click **EDIT CONTACT**.
   b. Provide the following information:
      i. **First Name**: Nate
      ii. **Last Name**: Featherstone
      iii. **Mobile Phone**: (520) 555-3867
   c. Click **SAVE** to save Nate's contact details.
7. Click **MAIL** in the top menu bar to go back to your email inbox.

Compose a Message to Nate
1. Click **COMPOSE**.
2. In the left panel, select **PERSONAL ADDRESSES**.
3. Double-click **NATE FEATHERSTONE** to open a message to him.
4. Compose Your Message:
   a. In the subject field, type `Hello`.
   b. In the email body, write `I'm just saying Hi!`
5. Click **SEND** to send your message to Nate.

Use the Calendar for Scheduling

In addition to sending emails, your email service includes a calendar feature that allows you to schedule and manage appointments, events, and tasks. Using the calendar feature in your email service can help you stay organized, plan your day, and ensure you don't miss important meetings or events. It's a valuable tool for both personal and professional scheduling.

ACTIVITY 13: CALENDAR

1. Double-click on the message with the subjectg *Reconnect with the Community Crusaders* in the *Inbox*.
2. Click the **MORE** button in the message menu bar.
3. From the options that appear, select **SAVE AS EVENT**. This transforms the message into an event.
4. Click the **START DATE** and choose the date *July 13* from the calendar.
5. Check the **ALL DAY** option box to make this event last the entire day.
6. Click **END DATE** and select *July 14* to determine when the event ends.
7. Click the **SAVE** button to confirm and save the event in your calendar.
8. Click **CALENDAR** in the top menu bar to access your calendar.
9. In the left panel, find the date you selected and check for the presence of your event on that day.

Settings

All email clients offer settings that you can adjust to match your personal preferences. This activity introduces you to a few of the more useful settings.

ACTIVITY 14: SETTINGS

1. Click the **SETTINGS** link (it has a gear icon) in the main menu bar at the top of the browser window.
2. Click **PREFERENCES → USER INTERFACE**.
   a. Explore the various time and date formats. Choose one that you prefer.
3. Click **PREFERENCES → MAILBOX VIEW**.
   a. Explore the various options for *On request for return receipt*. Choose one that you prefer.
4. Click **PREFERENCES → COMPOSING MESSAGES**.
   a. For *Compose HTML Messages*, choose **ALWAYS, EXCEPT WHEN REPLYING TO PLAIN TEXT**.
   b. For *When replying*, choose **START NEW MESSAGE ABOVE THE QUOTE**.
   c. Click **SAVE**.
5. Click **PREFERENCES → CONTACTS**.
   a. Explore the options for *Sorting column*.
6. Click **PREFERENCES → SPECIAL FOLDERS**.
   a. For *Divide archive by*, choose **YEAR**.
   b. Click **SAVE**.
7. Click **IDENTITIES → [NAME]**.
   a. Enter a display name that combines the user's first name with a dummy last name, like `George Self`.

b. Click **HTML SIGNATURE**.
c. In the signature box, enter some text like:
   George Self
   (520) 555-1234
d. Click **SAVE**
8. Click the **MAIL** link in the main menu bar at the top of the browser window.
9. Click **COMPOSE**.
    a. Notice the email message now has a human-readable *From* address and a nice signature block. It is also set to compose an HTML rather than plain text message.
10. Click **CANCEL** in the top menu bar.
11. Click **DISCARD** in the popup box.

More Than Just Webmail: Desktop Email Clients

While webmail offers a convenient way to access your email from any device with internet access, there are also "desktop email clients" like Outlook and Thunderbird that you can install directly onto your computer. These programs offer several benefits over webmail, such as:

Offline access: Unlike webmail, which requires an internet connection, desktop clients allow you to download and manage your emails even when you're offline. This can be helpful if you travel frequently or have limited internet access.

More features and customization: Desktop clients typically offer more features than webmail, such as advanced filtering options, calendars, and contact management tools. They also allow for greater customization, so you can personalize your email experience to suit your needs.

Increased security: Desktop clients often have additional security features, such as password encryption and two-factor authentication, which can help to protect your email account from unauthorized access.

However, it's important to note that desktop clients also have some drawbacks:

Software installation and updates: You need to install the software on each computer you want to access your email from, and you may need to update the software periodically.

Learning curve: Desktop clients can have a steeper learning curve than webmail, especially for users who are new to computers.

Compatibility: Not all desktop clients are compatible with all operating systems, so you may need to choose a different client if you switch computers.

Ultimately, the best choice for you will depend on your individual needs and preferences. If you're looking for a simple and convenient way to access your email from anywhere, webmail may be a good option. However, if you need offline access, more features, and increased security, a desktop client may be a better choice.

There are many desktop clients available, but two popular ones are Outlook and Thunderbird. The following illustration is a screen capture of Thunderbird displaying one of the email accounts used in this class.
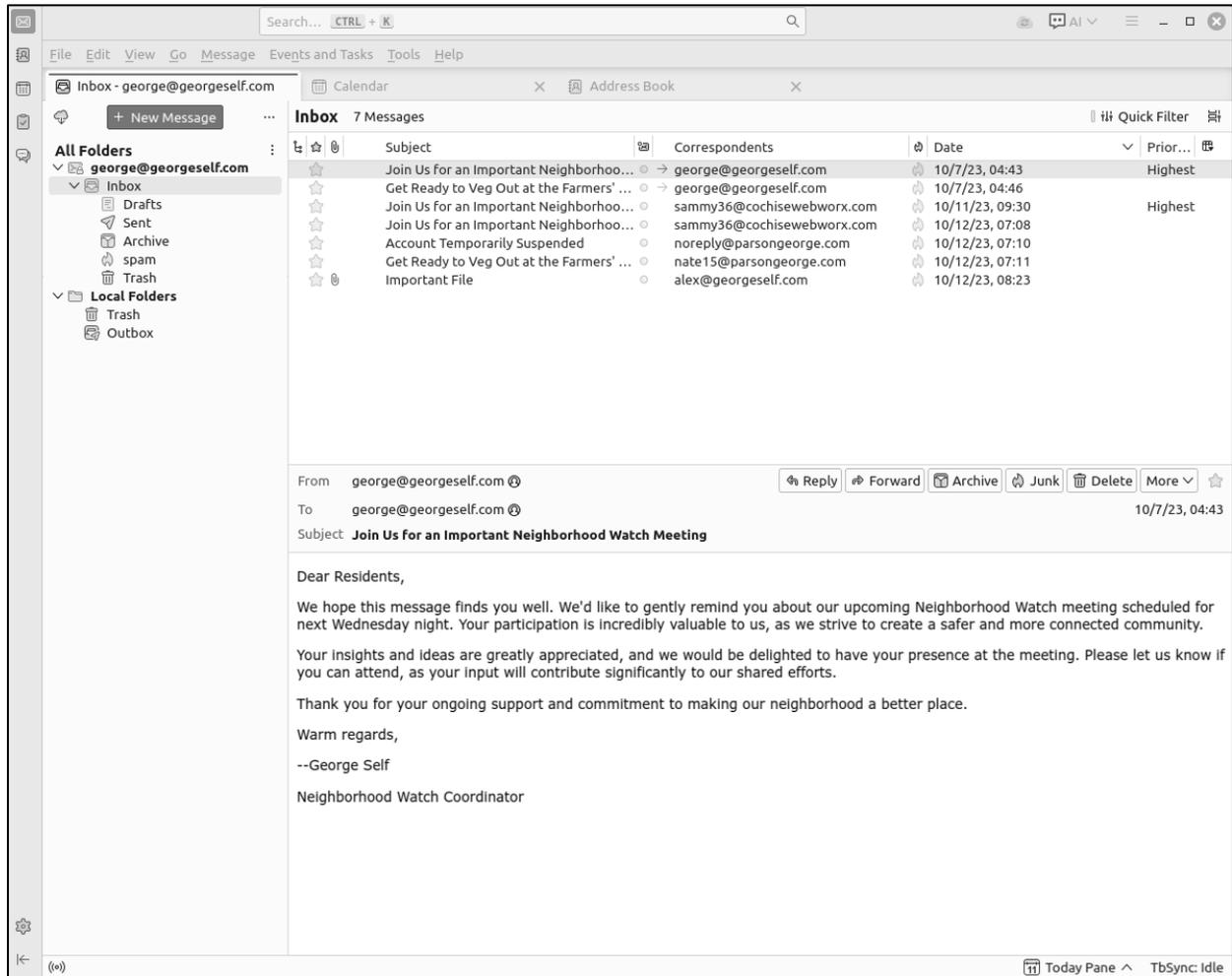
One important function in any desktop email client is the capability to effortlessly add and handle multiple email accounts. Although the exact steps may vary slightly among different email clients, the process is generally similar.

The following illustration is a screen capture of Outlook displaying one of the email accounts used in this class.
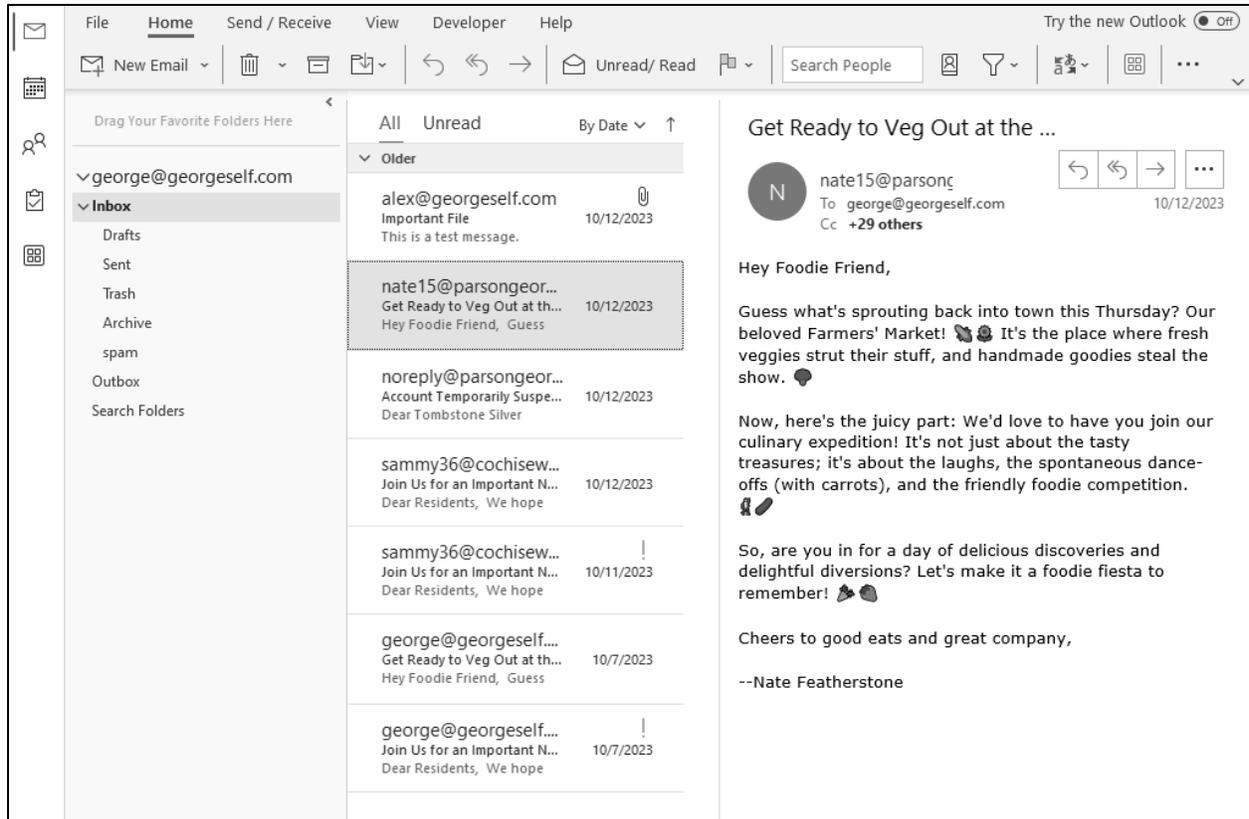
Final Thoughts

In this class on email basics, we covered the essential skills needed to navigate the digital world of communication. We learned how to set up an email account, write emails, and manage our inbox efficiently. Remember, your inbox is like a digital mailbox, and you can send notes, photos, and documents to anyone with an email address.

We also explored email etiquette, emphasizing the importance of clear subject lines, respectful greetings, maintaining a professional tone, and using proper signatures. Prompt responses and careful use of the "CC" and "BCC" options were highlighted as well.

To protect yourself from spam and phishing, always be cautious of suspicious emails, especially those promising riches or demanding immediate action. When in doubt, delete or report them. And remember, knowledge is your greatest weapon in the world of email.

We also introduced the use of contacts to manage frequently used email addresses and explored the calendar feature to schedule and manage events efficiently.

Now that you've gained these skills, don't hesitate to use them in your personal and professional life. Email is a powerful tool for staying connected with friends, family, and colleagues. So, dive into the digital world of communication with confidence and enjoy the benefits it brings!