

Navigating Faculty Office Hours

If you are unsure of what to say during office hours, use this template below for some guidance for how to communicate with your professors. They are here to help and support you.

Hi Professor _____:
(Professor's Name)

My name is _____ and I am in your _____ class that meets
(Name) (Course Name)

on _____ at _____. Thank you for this time – I understand
(Day) (Time)

that we have _____ minutes, correct? I have a few questions about _____.
(Time) (Subject/Topic)

I _____ the _____, but was _____ by
(Verb) (Current subject/Topic) (Confused/Lost/Frustrated)

_____.
(Idea/Theme/Concept)

My first question is :

1a. If immediate explanation is clear, follow up with:

“Thanks, that’s helpful.” Move on to the next question with, “My next question is...”

1b. If immediate answer is not clear, use a follow-up probe such as:

“What does that mean?” or “Can you help me understand the main point?”

2. If second attempt at explanation is not clear, try:

“Can you say that differently?” or “Can you give an example?”

3. If alternative explanations are better but not decidedly clear:

“Is there a page in the textbook or reading (or point in the video, YouTube, lecture notes, etc.) that I can reference for further information?”

Once finished, thank the professor and remind them of your name.