Please think about these two examples in terms of meeting the expectations of the respective readers. (NOTE: The italicized To:/From:/Date: information was printed out by the email system; it is not typed into the message body by the author.)

To: Prof. Severus Snape
From: George Weasley
Date: April 1, 2005
Subject: (WR227 Weasley, George) Approval request for Potions term paper

Dear Prof. Snape:

Please approve my choice of topics for my Potions class: “The Process of Brewing Butterbeer”. As you know, I have a long-standing interest in – and familiarity with – the elixirs served by local establishments like the Three Broomsticks. But I will not rely solely on my history for success with my paper.

This particular topic will give me experience brewing complex potions under difficult circumstances. I will conduct extensive research in the Hogwarts library and in the field. I will carefully quantify the ingredients I include, and will accurately describe the spells I use during the transformation process. I will conduct rigid quality-control validations with selected groups of fellow students, ensuring that every ounce of the 50 gallons of potion I create is perfect.

Please notify me of your approval as soon as you can.

Sincerely,

George Weasley
To: N. E. Student  
From: Brian B. Egan  
Date: April 11, 2019  
Subject: (WR227 Egan, Brian) Please do your WR227 reading

Dear Ms. Student:

I would like to offer you the opportunity to get above-average grades in WR227 by making a very small investment of your time: just complete every reading assignment.

By doing your reading, you will become familiar with topics that I may not have time to present in detail during the class period. In addition, you will hear the material in someone else’s (Markel’s or another author’s) “voice,” which should alleviate the boredom you experience while listening to me.

Taking in the material by reading it will also help you to learn through a learning style other than listening. If you are one of the many students who learn best through reading, the payback from the short time spent reading will be enormous.

The reading assignment will also allow you to absorb the material at your own pace, rather than in the real-time environment of the lecture. You can re-read sections for added understanding, and skim through material you already feel that you know.

If you do the reading, you also will be prepared for the inevitable quiz that I will spring on you when you expect it the least.

In short, doing your reading assignments has the benefits of learning extra information, in a different learning medium, at your own pace, while preparing for the quiz. Compared to the small cost, it’s a bargain! I urge you to do every reading assignment on or before its due date.

With regards,

Prof. Egan