A general guide to netiquette - the online communication tools in this MOOC enable you to discuss related topics to deepen your understanding of the MOOC's content and to get and give help to other participants. The guidelines for how to communicate using these online communication tools is called netiquette. Think of it as etiquette for the internet.

Participating in online discussions takes some getting used to. The first few times you participate, you may feel nervous about sharing your ideas publicly. The more you take part, the more comfortable you become using online communication tools and the more you will benefit from your participation. So let's talk about general politeness. An online discussion, like a face-to-face discussion, is a personal exchange of information.

It can, however, take place over an extended period of time. Say, one or two days, a week. Maybe more. This means you can either respond immediately to discussion points or take some time to respond after reflection.

Ideas and impressions are written rather than spoken, so you don't have the advantage of body language to help you interpret meaning. Therefore it's important to remember the following points - be polite and avoid bad language, acknowledge people's contributions, respect other people's point of view, be non-judgemental and supportive, be aware of cultural differences, and finally, be careful with humour and sarcasm.