



Email Replies

Module Five Worksheet

By Michael Fiore

**Website: <http://www.DigitalRomanceInc.com>
Email: support@digitalromanceinc.com**

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Email Replies

You've got an email from a guy who seems great, and you want to send an awesome reply. There are things to say, and things to avoid, that I'll show you in this worksheet to keep the responses coming.

First, we'll look at three guidelines for great email, and then I'll show you some samples of what really works.

1. Answer/Ask Questions

Make sure you answer any questions he's asked you right at the start of your email. Hopefully, this great guy has shown you that he took the time to read your profile, and his message includes a few questions beyond How are you?

After you answer, it's your turn to ask him a relevant question or two. Peruse his profile (or the rest of his email message) to come up with something good.

A well-written profile will give you plenty of material, but not every guy has a great profile. If nothing obvious comes to you, here are a few fall-back ideas:

- Ask about a local sports rivalry if you follow sports, even a little, and see that he does, too
- Ask about where he'll visit next, if he mentions that he loves to travel
- Ask him about the movies/music/literature he likes; you'll get BONUS points if you have a similar interest/like and can get specific

If there's really nothing in his profile that leads you to ask a good question, use what I call "Bait Questions." For example:

- If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would it be?
- If a genie granted you three wishes, what would you ask for and why?
- When was the last time you felt truly, undeniably, ridiculously happy?
- What did you want to be when you were growing up?

2. Keep It Brief

Emails through online dating are supposed to get the conversation started, but they aren't supposed to BE the entire conversation. Keep your message somewhat brief and to the point—a few sentences, not a few pages—especially for the first few messages.

Think of this like a tennis match. His email started the game. Now you lob the ball back to his side of the court. Answer his question, ask one of your own, and maybe include a small tidbit of information about your day or something. Hit send, and now it's his turn to reply.

After a few volleys, if you like how the conversation is going, it's time to move out of the dating site.

3. Check Yo'self

In the excitement of talking to a potential match, it's easy to fire off a quick email reply. However, I can't stress enough how important it is to take a minute to proofread before hitting send.

- Double check your spelling, especially for tricky words
- Make sure you're clearly communicating; re-write anything that's vague or confusing
- Your grammar and punctuation don't have to be perfect, but at least use some!
- Just as you're judging his communication through a semi-critical lens, a great guy is doing the same thing to yours. First impressions count, even in email.

Sample Emails

Sample 1: Follows Directions

Hey, I read and liked your profile & your pretty pictures of course =) To answer your profile question, the last great book I read was The Great Gatsby. Had to brush up before seeing the movie, LOL. Check me out. I hope that you like my profile, too. BTW, I am Steve, it's nice to meet you.

Since he took the time to answer the profile question, Shannon read his profile. She thought he looked cute in his photos, so she replied with a simple email volley back to him:

Hi Steve, I'm Shannon. The Great Gatsby is one of my favorites. I'm curious what you thought of the movie? Warning: I'm a big fan of Baz Luhrmann so that should factor into your reply. haha

Sample 2: Conversation Stall

Hi! I must tell you that I think you have a killer smile. Hope you are having a great day! - David

Okay, this guy did NOT follow directions and also didn't provide much for Shannon to respond to in his lame first email. However, she was intrigued by his picture, so she clicked over to his profile and found not only a good-looking guy, but someone who had enough content to warrant a reply.

Hey David. Thanks for the compliment. I see from your profile you went to WSU. I have to tell you that, as a UW grad, it was iffy whether I'd reply to you. But you have a killer smile as well, so I gave you the benefit of the doubt. Any bets on who will win this year's Apple Cup? - Shannon

Shannon has now opened up the door to a conversation about their rival colleges.

Sample 3: Too Many Questions

Hello there. Your photos caught my eye and I checked out your profile and knew after the first few sentences I had to write you! A pretty woman who likes great literature AND hikes? Wow. To answer your question, the last great book I read (re-read actually) was The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell. Have you read it? If so, what did you think? Regarding hiking, I just took my niece and nephew up to the Ice Caves. Not a difficult hike but certainly a fun one. Have you done that hike? If not, that might be something to plan :) You mention having a wicked sense of humor. Do you ever go to stand up shows? What about improv? I've been wanting to try my hand at improv and would love a fun person to do that with! Hope to hear back soon, Scott

Scott asked five questions in his first email. Whoa. But Shannon liked his upbeat tone, and after checking out his profile (well-written) and his photos (quite handsome) she decided to write back.

Hi Scott! I have read The Tipping Point and enjoyed it. In fact, I've read all of Gladwell's stuff and always learn from his point of view. I have an autographed copy of his last book, a prized possession after I stood in line for hours at a book signing. That's actually a funny story; maybe I will tell you sometime :)

I used to attend open mic nights and stand up quite a bit in my 20s, but realize I haven't much lately. I know he gets a bad rap, but I saw Sinbad live a long time ago and he was great. Who has been your favorite comedian to see live? - Shannon

If Shannon answered every single question Scott asked, her response would be too lengthy and convoluted. She chose two questions to answer, re-focusing the conversation without seeming like she was ignoring what he asked.

Sample 4: Poorly Written

hey. . . u r a very pretty lady. don't read much, haha. wanna get a drink sometime?

Shannon had already read this guy's profile and sent him a wink because she thought they had things in common, plus he was good looking. But this lame email warrants no response. NEXT!

Sample 5: Out Of Age Range

Good afternoon! My name is Thomas and I enjoyed reading your profile. As an English professor, your question about the last great book I read compelled me to write you. While I do enjoy the convenience of technology, reading is one of my lifelong favorite pastimes. I use my Kindle when I travel, but nothing compares to the feel of turning a book page with my hand. The last book I read that I consider great would have to be A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini. I think I prefer it over The Kite Runner. Have you had a chance to read either? I'm always up to discuss literature with a smart lady :)

Shannon liked this email because he followed directions and he appears to be smart and well-read. After viewing his profile, she was a little bummed to see he was five years older than her ideal age range. However, because of his approach, she decided to send him an email response.

Hello Thomas, thank you for your email. My name is Shannon. I am a big fan of Hosseini. We may have a debate on our hands, though. I think The Kite Runner was a superior story. I am always up to discuss literature with an intelligent man :)

Deciding who to respond to is a personal decision. But use the Judgment Matrix from the previous worksheet to assist in your decision process, and the samples here, and pretty soon it will become second nature.