

Advice: How Do I Ask My Professor To Do Something Differently?
(also known as: How can I get my way???)

1. Be reasonable. If you're angry or upset, find a way to express yourself clearly, or wait until you've calmed down.
2. Speak to the professor outside of class—either before or after class or during office hours. Class time is often very limited, and a professor is likely to be unhappy if that time is not spent productively.
3. Build your good reputation. Do the work, regularly. Try to do it the way the professor asks. Go to the professor's office hours to show that you really are trying to do well, and are not just trying to be annoying, water down the course or the professor's expectations, or to gain some personal advantage or special treatment for yourself.
4. Have an alternative to propose. Don't just complain that you don't like to or don't want to do something. Think about why the professor is asking you to do something in a certain way, and see if you can meet that purpose by your alternative.
5. Be polite. Listen carefully to what your professor says. Do not interrupt. Do not raise your voice.
6. Thank your professor for listening, regardless of whether the professor agrees to your idea or not. When you've said your speech, don't press the issue by repeating yourself. The professor may need to think about it. If you become obnoxious about it, the professor will probably presume that you're asking for reasons which are not academically valid.
7. Make sure that you've approached the professor at a time when he or she has enough time to listen. Come at the beginning of the office hour, not at the end, when the professor may be leaving for his or her next commitment.

Things not to do:

1. Waste class time. Class time belongs to all students, not just you.
2. Insult your professor, or say that professor is unreasonable, unfair, or a bad teacher. (It may be true, but you're not going to get anywhere by saying it!)
3. Talk to your neighbor about your grievance during class, so that you miss all or part of what the professor is teaching.
4. Leave all your work until the last minute, and ask the professor to make it easier on you when you were irresponsible.
5. Complain that the material is too difficult and therefore should not be learned. Education is not always easy—that's why it's valuable!
6. Repeatedly ask: "Is this going to be on the test?" Your teacher wouldn't be teaching it if it weren't.
7. Skip class, then complain to the professor afterward.
8. Drop the class without ever talking to the professor to try to resolve your issue.
9. Whine about how hard you work, or how many hours you stayed up late studying.
10. Ask for special treatment just for you.
11. Use profanity, swear words, or other inappropriate language.
12. Shout, raise your voice, or lose your temper. (If you're going to lose it, excuse yourself and come back later.)
13. Use drugs or alcohol before talking to the prof.
14. Threaten your professor, or act out physically or violently.