

FORMAL AND INFORMAL WORDS

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Abstract. The article addresses the current issue of using formal and informal communication styles in English. It highlights the key characteristics and specifics of these registers. Some common examples of misuse are provided, along with suggestions for improving communication style. Non-adherence to these guidelines can negatively affect both oral and written communication.

Key words: Formal and informal communication styles, main characteristics of styles, English language.

ФОРМАЛЬНЫЕ И НЕФОРМАЛЬНЫЕ СЛОВА

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается актуальный вопрос использования формального и неформального стилей общения в английском языке. Освещены ключевые характеристики и особенности этих регистров. Приводятся некоторые распространенные примеры неправильного использования, а также предложения по улучшению стиля общения. Несоблюдение этих рекомендаций может негативно повлиять как на устное, так и на письменное общение.

Ключевые слова: Формальный и неформальный стили общения, основные характеристики стилей, английский язык.

Speech styles exist in all languages, and English is no exception. Mastering these styles is essential for anyone aiming to speak the language as naturally as native speakers. Language is part of one's image, much like attire. Just as a bank employee wouldn't wear a tracksuit to work, and an evening dress would look out of place on a beach, one must choose the appropriate communication style. Every English learner should master various conversation styles, as even the strictest official owns pajamas, and every fashionable lady has comfortable shoes along with her high heels. Similarly, one should have a range of expressions and use them according to the situation.

Formal English: The language of business and science, used in formal settings like conferences, presentations, business communications, documents, and scientific articles. To ensure your speech sounds formal, follow these rules:

1. **Avoid contractions:** Use full forms of words (e.g., "I am" instead of "I'm", "I do not" instead of "I don't"). However, possessive expressions (e.g., "the company's manager") are acceptable.

2. **Avoid phrasal verbs:** Use standard verbs instead (e.g., "increase" instead of "went up").

3. **Avoid slang and colloquialisms:** Use formal expressions (e.g., "How are you doing?" instead of "What's up?").

4. **Build complex expressions:** Develop your thoughts fully, support them with clear arguments, and maintain a cause-and-effect relationship between sentences.

5. **Use technical terminology:** Use industry-specific vocabulary (e.g., "audit financial report" instead of "check financial report").

6. **Avoid the word "I":** In business letters, avoid phrases like "I think" or "In my opinion". Speak on behalf of your company.

7. **Use complex grammar:** Employ passive voice and other formal grammatical constructions more frequently (e.g., "You are invited to the conference" instead of "We invite you to the conference").

Examples of Formal vs. Informal Words:

- Go up (informal) – increase (formal)
- Find out (informal) – discover (formal)
- Set up (informal) – establish (formal)
- Free (informal) – release (formal)
- Show (informal) – demonstrate (formal)
- Seem (informal) – appear (formal)
- Keep (informal) – retain (formal)
- But (informal) – however (formal)
- So (informal) – therefore (formal)
- To sum up (informal) – to conclude (formal)
- Just wanted to let you know... (informal) – I am writing to inform you... (formal)
- Hope to hear from you soon (informal) – I am looking forward to hearing from you (formal)
- Call me if you need anything (informal) – Please do not hesitate to contact me (formal)

To differentiate informal words from formal ones, a reliable dictionary is a valuable resource. For instance, the Oxford Learner's Dictionary marks informal words with a "slang" note. Informal words can vary depending on cultural, historical, or fashion influences, making them sometimes difficult to identify. Abbreviations and contractions are often considered informal.

Identifying Informal and Formal Words:

1. **Academic Context:**
 - Academic books and papers usually employ formal language, characterized by technical terms, titles, and pronouns.
2. **Contextual Differences:**
 - Informal words often have different meanings based on context. They may have vague or multiple meanings, unlike the more precise formal words.
3. **Suffixes:**
 - Formal words frequently end with suffixes such as -tion, -sion, -ment, etc.
4. **Latinate Roots:**
 - Words with Latin roots are often formal.
5. **First-Person Usage:**

○ Informal language typically uses first-person pronouns, except in autobiographical sketches.

6. Word Length:

○ Shorter words are generally informal.

By paying attention to these characteristics, one can more easily distinguish between formal and informal words.

In summary, formal language is marked by precise, well-developed expressions, technical terminology, avoidance of personal pronouns like "I", and the use of complex grammar. This ensures your communication is appropriate for business and scientific contexts.

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