
FORMAL & INFORMAL ENGLISH

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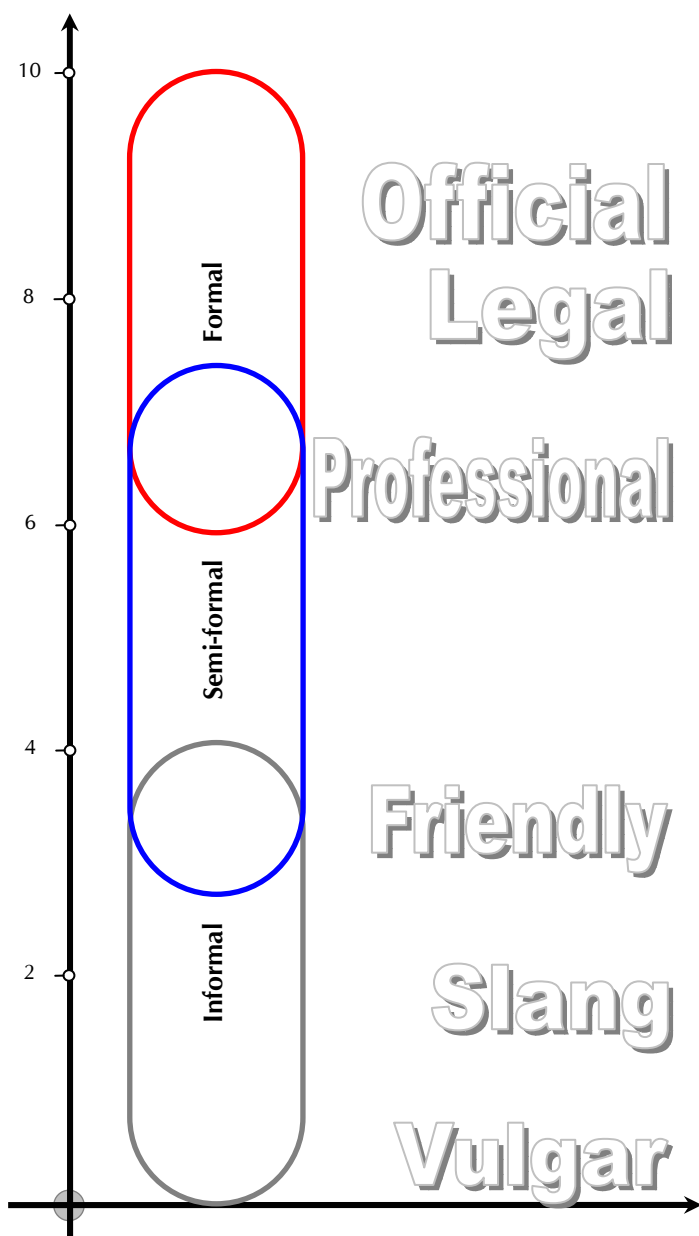
Language Styles

There are three main language styles:

1. Formal
2. Semi-Formal
3. Informal

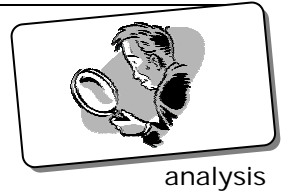
The diagram below illustrates how these styles are rated on a scale of 0 to 10.

Diagram of Formal & Informal English

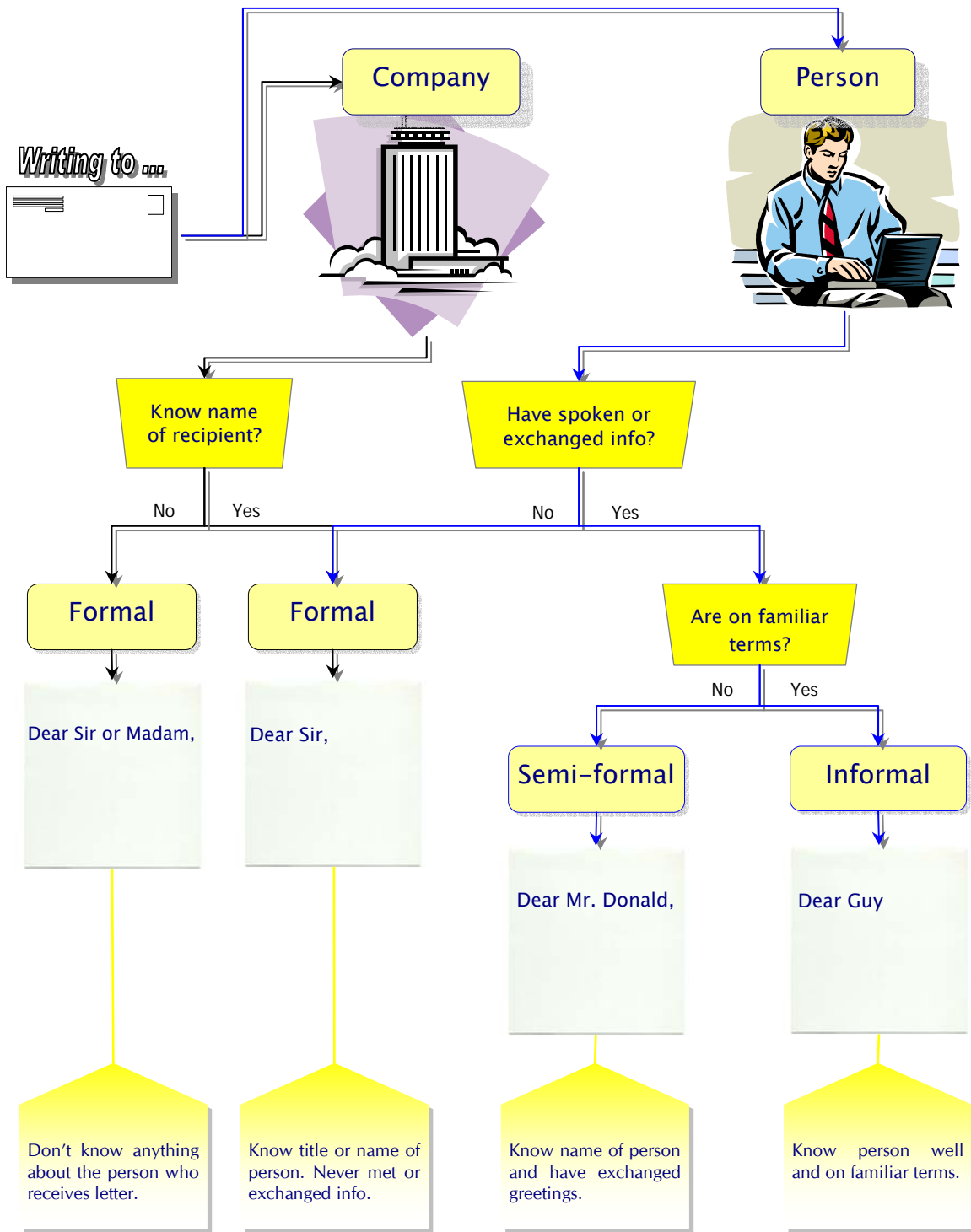


Rules of Language Styles

The following rules apply to both *written* and *spoken* English.



Language Style: Rules



Different Styles between Informal & Formal English

The follow examples illustrate the main differences between informal and formal English.



1. Active & Passive Voice

Ex.

Our technician repaired the fault on 12th June.
Now it's your turn to pay us.

← Informal

Although the fault was repaired on 12th June,
payment for this intervention has still not been
received.

← Formal

2. Verb Form: Phrasal Verbs & Latinate

Ex.

The company laid him off because he didn't
work much.

← Informal

His insufficient production conducted to his
dismissal.

← Formal

3. Language: Direct & Formulaic

Ex.

I'm sorry but ...
I'm happy to say that ...

← Informal

We regret to inform you that ...
We have pleasure in announcing that ...

← Formal

4. Use of Slang

Ex.

He had to get some money out of a hole in the
wall ...

← Informal

He withdrew the amount from an ATM.

← Formal

5. Personal Form & Nominators

Ex.

If you lose it, then please contact us as soon as possible.

← Informal

Any loss of this document should be reported immediately ...

← Formal

6. Linking Words

Ex.

The bank can't find the payment you say you've made.

← Informal

Notwithstanding that the payment has been sent the bank fails to acknowledge it.

← Formal

7. Revitalised Sentences

Ex.

Anybody or any company.

← Informal

... any natural person who, and any legal entity which ...

← Formal

8. Modal Usage

Ex.

If you need any help give us a call.

← Informal

Should you require any assistance, please feel free to contact us ...

← Formal

9. Singular & Plural Person

Ex.

I can help you to solve this problem. Call me!

← Informal

We can assist in the resolution of this matter. Contact us on our toll-free number.

← Formal

Dictionary of Formal & Informal English

Type	Informal	Formal
Prep.	About ...	Regarding / Concerning ...
Idiom	Agree with ...	Be bound by ...
Conj.	And	As well as ...
Idiom	Bearing in mind	Reference being made to ...
Conj.	Because ...	As a result of / due to (the fact) ...
Verb	Begin	Commence
Conj.	But	While / Whereas
Adj.	Careful / Cautious	Prudential
Verb	Carry out	Effect
Verb	Check	Verify
Adj.	Enough	Sufficient
Verb	Fill me in	Inform / Tell
Verb	Find out	Ascertain
Verb	Follow	Duly observe
Verb	Get	Receive
Verb	Get in touch	Contact
Verb	Go over	Exceed
Verb	Has to be	Shall be
Verb	Have to give	Submit
Conj.	If ...	Should ...
Conj.	If ... or not.	Whether ... or not.
Idiom	If you don't ...	Failing / Failure to...
Idiom	If you've got any questions ...	Should you have any queries ...
Idiom	In accordance with ...	Pursuant to
Idiom	In the red	Overdrawn
Verb	Involve	Entail
Idiom	Lost	Inadvertently mislaid
Verb	Make sure	Ensure
Adj.	Many	Several / Numerous
Verb	Order	Authorise
Verb	Pay	Settle
Idiom	Put in writing	Provide written confirmation
Idiom	Sorry!	We regret ...
Verb	Supply	Furnish
Verb	Take away	Withdraw
Verb	Tell	Disclose
Verb	Trusted	Entrusted
Idiom	We don't want to do this ...	This a course of action we are anxious to avoid ...
Idiom	We'll call the law ...	We will have no alternative but involving our legal ...
Idiom	When we get ...	On receipt
Idiom	Whenever we like ...	Without prior notice ...
Verb	Write (e.g. Cheque)	Issue (e.g. Cheque)
Verb	Written	Shown / Indicated

EXERCISE 1

Insert formal expression which correspond to the ones in brackets.

1. I _____ to _____ you that our prices have _____. (sorry - tell - gone up)
2. This is _____ to _____ that costs have risen. (because)
3. Unfortunately, I have to _____ you that I _____ not _____ to _____ the meeting. (tell - can't - come to)
4. _____ some brochures describing our products. (Here [in this letter] are)
5. We have _____ to increase our prices. (had)
6. You are 90 days past due on invoice #2792, please _____ as soon as possible. (pay up)
7. Please write _____ any _____ (if you've got - questions)
8. Your account is _____. (in the red)



EXERCISE 2

Transform the following sentences from *informal* to *formal* English.

9. We are not going to renew the sole representative agreement again because you haven't produced enough business for us.
10. The machine should work because it has been tested.
11. Our bank has told us that you haven't made this month's payment.
12. We can't send you the engineering blueprints on disk until the full joint-venture agreement is signed in full next month.
13. We're too busy to go to London for the meeting in this period. Can you come over here?
14. Your client didn't complete the documents properly. Please get him to do it and then send them back to us as soon as possible.
15. If you've got any problems give me a call.
16. There's a problem on the computer system. It won't work between 10 and 12pm tomorrow.
17. This is because we think it's necessary.
18. We'll help you if you need it.
19. If we don't receive payment we'll call our lawyers.
20. We'll give you 8 days to solve this problem.



Summary of Differences between Formal & Informal English

	Informal	Formal
1.	Active Voice	Passive Voice
2.	Phrasal Verbs	Latinate Verbs
3.	Direct Language	Formulaic Language
4.	Possible use of Slang	No use of Slang
5.	Personal Form	Nominator
6.	Little use of Conjunctions	Linking Words
7.	Few Revitalised Sentences	Revitalised Sentences
8.	Direct Style	Modal Usage
9.	1 st Person Singular	1 st Person Plural