

Formal and informal writing

Name _____ Date _____

English has a number of words, phrases and styles that indicate formal and informal language. Historically, this is partly due to being invaded by the French in 1066 and using both French and English in the country for many years after that. This is also the reason we have different words for animals, and the meat we eat from them (e.g. cow vs. beef, pig vs. pork, sheep vs. mutton).

Exercise 1

Find formal or informal equivalents for the following English words

Formal	Informal
e.g. Residence (noun)	House (noun)
Purchase (verb)	(verb)
(verb)	Tell (verb)
Location (noun)	(noun)
(verb)	Ask (verb)
Provide (verb)	(verb)
(verb)	Say sorry (verb)
Receive (verb)	(verb)
(noun)	Need (noun)
Verify (verb)	
(verb)	Show (verb)

Now think of five of your own:

Formal	Informal

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Exercise 2

Pick a formal or informal task from the list and write the task in the appropriate half of the sheet on page 3. Once you have completed your task, swap with a classmate. Your classmate will re-write your work on the other side of the sheet either formally or informally, using the information from your original. We will share them in the class and see how strange some of these sound!

- A. Formal: an email enquiring about the date and time of a job interview
- B. Formal: a letter of application for a job of your choice
- C. Formal: a letter of complaint about a washing machine that has gone wrong
- D. Formal: an article in a broadsheet newspaper about something in the news

- E. Informal: an informal email to a friend suggesting going out for a coffee
- F. Informal: a blog post about a charity that is important to you
- G. Informal: a postcard home from the holiday of a lifetime
- H. Informal: an article in a tabloid newspaper about celebrity gossip

Extension/Homework:

Write something in the opposite style to that expected. For example, an article about some celebrity gossip, in a very formal style, or a letter of complaint in a very informal style.

Formal

Today in London, Mr David Robert Joseph Beckham, OBE, was seen at a local dining establishment in the presence of his spouse Mrs Victoria Caroline Beckham (née Adams), OBE.

Mr Beckham and his wife had been consuming sustenance and beverages during the evening at a restaurant renowned for the preeminent quality of its comestibles.

It is said that Mr Beckham, OBE, partook of battered haddock and chipped potatoes, with a dessert of tarte aux pommes with lashings of finest Madagascan vanilla iced cream. Mrs Beckham was served a lighter repast.

Informal

Oi! This washer I bought off you last week has only gone an' broke down!!!

Now I can't wash any of my kids' or my hubby's clobber and it's all gone to pot, innit!!!!

What you gotta do, mush, is sort yourselves out and get me a new washer right now!!!! I can't be doing with the hassle of this sort of muck up.

I knew it'd be trouble when the geezers dropped it out the back of the van, and it ain't been right since.

What you gonna do then?

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Informal

Formal

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE		Enlarged bold font indicates main coverage.
READING (50% weighting)		
A1	(a) Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas. (b) Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.	
A2	Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views	
A3	Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.	
A4	Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.	
WRITING (50% weighting)		
A5	(a) Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. (b) Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.	
A6	Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation (must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole).	
SPOKEN LANGUAGE (unweighted)		
A7	Demonstrate presentation skills in a formal setting.	
A8	Listen and respond appropriately to spoken language, including to questions and feedback to presentations.	
A9	Use spoken Standard English effectively in speeches and presentations.	

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS ENGLISH		Enlarged bold font indicates main coverage.
Coverage & range statements provide an indication of the type of content candidates are expected to apply in functional contexts. Relevant content can also be drawn from equivalent National Curriculum levels and the Adult Literacy standards.		
Level 1 Writing skill standard:	Write a range of texts to communicate information, ideas and opinions, using formats and styles suitable for their purpose and audience	
a) Write clearly and coherently, including an appropriate level of detail b) Present information in a logical sequence c) Use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience d) Use correct grammar, including correct and consistent use of tense e) Ensure written work includes generally accurate punctuation and spelling and that meaning is clear		
Level 2 Writing	Write a range of texts, including extended written documents, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	
a) Present information on complex subjects clearly and concisely b) Present information/ideas concisely, logically, and persuasively c) Use a range of writing styles for different purposes d) Use a range of sentence structures, including complex sentences, and paragraphs to organise written communication effectively e) Punctuate written text using commas, apostrophes and inverted commas accurately f) Ensure written work is fit for purpose & audience, with accurate spelling & grammar that supports clear meaning		

References:

Ofqual (2009), *Functional Skills criteria for English: Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, level 1 and level 2.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-criteria-for-english>

DfE (2013), *English Language GCSE subject content and assessment objectives.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-english-language-and-gcse-english-literature-new-content>

Also covers many L2 Adult Literacy Curriculum elements <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf1286>