

# Formal vs. Informal English

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 10



## Quick Review

**Formal English** uses complete sentences, no contractions, and precise vocabulary — fit for letters to teachers, school reports, and speeches. **Informal English** uses contractions, slang, and a friendly tone — fit for texts, journals, and chats with friends. The same idea sounds very different depending on the audience.

## PRACTICE

Choose the version, word, or audience that **BEST** matches the formality described.

- Which sentence is **BEST** suited for a letter to the school principal?
  - Hey, I just wanted to say thanks for letting us do the bake sale!
  - Thank you so much — that bake sale was awesome!
  - Thanks for letting us run that bake sale, it was super fun!
  - Thank you for granting our class permission to host the bake sale last Friday.
- Which word would **BEST** replace *got* to make this sentence more formal?  
*Our team got first place at the science fair.*
  - snagged
  - earned
  - grabbed
  - scored
- Which is the **BEST** informal version for a text to a friend?  
Formal: *I will not be able to attend the party because I have prior commitments.*
  - Can't make the party — got stuff going on. Sorry!
  - I regret to inform you that I am unable to attend.
  - Unfortunately, my schedule does not permit attendance.
  - It is with regret that I shall be absent from your gathering.
- Which version is **MOST APPROPRIATE** for a school news report?
  - So the principal is pretty psyched about the new gym.
  - The principal said she's super happy about the gym.
  - Principal Ramirez announced that she is pleased with the new gymnasium.
  - Principal Ramirez is, like, totally thrilled with the new gym!



5. Which sentence BEST replaces *kids* with a more formal word for a class essay?  
*Many kids in our school enjoy the art program.*
- A. Many students in our school enjoy the art program.
  - B. Many youngsters in our school enjoy the art program.
  - C. Many little ones in our school enjoy the art program.
  - D. Many tots in our school enjoy the art program.
6. Which is the BEST FORMAL version of this informal sentence?  
*Yo, the show was kinda boring, NGL.*
- A. Honestly, the show was a little boring.
  - B. I was a bit bored at the show.
  - C. Frankly speaking, the performance was not very engaging.
  - D. I have to admit, the performance was not particularly engaging.
7. Which audience MOST CALLS for FORMAL English?
- A. A group chat with your soccer team.
  - B. A journal entry only you will read.
  - C. A text reminder to a sibling.
  - D. An email asking a museum director for a class field-trip visit.
8. Which contraction makes a sentence INFORMAL?
- A. The students wrote essays.
  - B. The students will write essays.
  - C. The students'll write essays.
  - D. The students are writing essays.
9. Which sentence is the BEST formal opening for a letter to the editor of a newspaper?
- A. To Whom It May Concern: I am writing to express concern about the proposed closure of our local library.
  - B. Hey there — I just wanted to drop a note about the library!
  - C. What's up? I think you should hear about our library.
  - D. Hi! Sooo, the library thing is a big deal.
10. Which informal word would BEST replace *annoying* in a text to a friend (not for school)?
- A. irksome
  - B. a pain
  - C. vexing
  - D. displeasing



## Answer Keys

- 1  A  B  C  D
- 2  A  B  C  D
- 3  A  B  C  D
- 4  A  B  C  D
- 5  A  B  C  D


- 6  A  B  C  D
- 7  A  B  C  D
- 8  A  B  C  D
- 9  A  B  C  D
- 10  A  B  C  D

### Explanations

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1. D  | D uses a complete sentence, no contractions, no slang ( <i>granting permission, host</i> ), and a precise event reference. A starts with <i>Hey</i> (slang). B uses <i>awesome</i> (slang). C uses <i>super fun</i> and a comma splice.  |
| 2. B  | B — <i>earned</i> is the formal, precise verb (it implies merit). <i>Snagged, grabbed, and scored</i> are all informal/slangy synonyms more at home in a text or sportscast than in a formal report.   |
| 3. A  | A uses contractions ( <i>can't</i> ), informal vocabulary ( <i>stuff</i> ), a dash, and a friendly closing — all natural for a text. B, C, and D are all FORMAL versions, just rephrased.  |
| 4. C  | C uses the principal's full name and title, the verb <i>announced</i> , no contractions, no slang, and the formal noun <i>gymnasium</i> . A uses <i>so</i> and <i>psyched</i> . B uses <i>super happy</i> and a contraction. D uses <i>like, totally</i> , and an exclamation. |
| 5. A  | A — <i>students</i> is the precise, formal noun for school-aged learners. <i>Youngsters, little ones, and tots</i> are informal and also wrong-aged for a 5th-grade essay (they suggest very small children).  |
| 6. D  | D uses no contractions, no slang ( <i>NGL = not gonna lie</i> ), and the precise word <i>engaging</i> . C is also formal but uses <i>frankly speaking</i> , which is wordy filler. A and B keep informal markers ( <i>honestly, a bit</i> ) and don't fully shift register.    |
| 7. D  | D — writing to an unfamiliar adult in a professional role (museum director) calls for full formal English. A, B, and C are all settings where informal English is appropriate.   |
| 8. C  | C — <i>students'll</i> contracts <i>students will</i> , an unusual contraction that signals very informal speech-like writing. A, B, and D are all standard formal sentences.  |
| 9. A  | A uses a formal salutation ( <i>To Whom It May Concern</i> ), no contractions, and precise vocabulary ( <i>express concern, proposed closure</i> ). B, C, and D all open with informal greetings and slang.  |
| 10. B | B — <i>a pain</i> is the everyday informal expression a friend would actually text. <i>Irksome, vexing, and displeasing</i> are all formal synonyms that would sound oddly stiff in a friendly text.   |



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