

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.

