


Writing With a Formal Tone

In many types of nonfiction writing, it is important to maintain a formal style and tone throughout your text. A formal tone helps to establish you as a trustworthy authority on your subject.

Certain types of language are considered informal and should be avoided in formal writing.



Informal Language Type	Example
slang	awesome, chill
idioms	up in the air, food for thought
abbreviations	FYI, ASAP, DIY
conversational language	gonna, kinda, sorta
overly simple or imprecise language	some stuff, random things
contractions	didn't, could've, they'll

You can revise informal writing to be more formal by replacing informal language with more accurate and specific language. Study the example below.

Informal: While it's alive, a humpback whale will spend tons of time swimming super long distances.

Formal: The average humpback whale will spend much of its life migrating thousands of miles per year.

Read the informal sentences below, and revise each one to be more formal. Make sure to maintain the original meaning of each sentence. **SAMPLE ANSWERS**

1. The game of chess was invented a really long time ago in India around the 6th century.

The game of chess was invented in India around the 6th century.

2. Pottery is super important to archaeologists because it can tell a lot of stuff about ancient societies.

Pottery can provide valuable insights to archeologists about many different aspects of ancient societies.

3. Popcorn's a fun snack, but did you know you can also pop other grains, like rice and quinoa?

Popcorn is a popular snack, but were you aware that other grains, such as rice and quinoa, can also be popped?

4. The county should build a new skate park ASAP so local kids and teens can hang out there safely.

The county should construct a new skate park soon so that adolescents have a safe place to spend time.

Read the informal sentences below, and revise each one to be more formal. Make sure to maintain the original meaning of each sentence. **SAMPLE ANSWERS**

5. Saving energy can be a piece of cake if you just make some small changes in your habits.

Making small changes in your daily habits can make it easy to save energy.

6. Scientists just found the first multicellular living thing that doesn't need oxygen to stay alive.

Scientists recently discovered the first multicellular organism that does not require oxygen to survive.

7. Should countries with lots of money give more to save special ecosystems like rain forests and coral reefs?

Should wealthy nations contribute more to save unique ecosystems, such as rain forests and coral reefs?

8. Tons of people think that art and music are just as important as reading, math, and science.

Many people believe that art and music are just as vital as reading, math, and science.

9. The ancient Maya were really smart and made lots of inventions in astronomy and farming.

The ancient Maya were an advanced society that made many breakthroughs in astronomy and agriculture.

10. Even though giraffes are way taller than humans, both giraffes and humans have only seven neck bones!

Although giraffes are much taller than humans, both giraffes and humans have only seven neck bones!

11. Playing sports can teach kids different things, including teamwork, perseverance, and confidence.

Playing sports can teach children important life lessons, including teamwork, perseverance, and confidence.

12. There are a bunch of types of herbal teas, and lots of them do good things for your body and health.

There are many types of herbal teas, many of which have positive health benefits.

13. According to some people, a plant-based diet is a no-brainer because it's way better for the environment.

Some people argue that a plant-based diet is the smartest choice because it is better for the environment.

14. Humans aren't the only ones who laugh; a few other kinds of mammals laugh, too!

Humans are not the only creatures who laugh; there are a few other species of mammals that laugh as well!

15. The senators don't see eye-to-eye on some things, but that doesn't mean they don't work together.

The senators may not agree on every issue, but that does not prevent them from cooperating.
