

## Final Tips on Formality

A good way to spot informalities in a formal paper is to use the "find" function on your computer's word-processor. (On Microsoft Word, you can find this option under the "edit" selection of the menu bar.) You can take informal terms one at a time, words like *you*, *didn't*, *got*, *kids*, and so on, and have the computer locate each time they appear in your draft. Then you can replace them with a more formal term. You can even spot contractions by searching for partial bits of words ('ll, 've, n't, etc.) that frequently appear at the end of common contractions like *we'll*, *could've*, and *shouldn't*. This technique is a great way to locate informalities in your formal essays.

Signs of informality:	Signs of formality
<b>Uses contractions:</b> <i>don't, I'll, should've, she'll.</i>	<b>Avoids contractions:</b> <i>do not, I will, should have, she will.</i>
<b>First person pronouns appear frequently:</b> <i>I, we, ours, me, my, mine.</i>	<b>Rarely uses first person pronouns</b> , perhaps only once or twice in a paper (or not at all).
<b>Second person pronouns:</b> <i>you, your, yours</i> (Note that directly addressing the reader in the conclusion or opening sometimes works quite well in informal papers).	<b>Avoids all second person pronouns</b> unless specifically addressing a single reader.
<b>Mixes informal abbreviations into text:</b> <i>my prof, the teach, the Vols' last game.</i>	<b>Writes out words fully:</b> <i>my professor, the teacher, the Volunteers' last game.</i>
<b>Simple sentence structure:</b> might begin sentence with conjunction or use intentional sentence fragments for rhetorical effect.	<b>Complex sentence structure:</b> avoids sentence fragments or sentences starting with conjunctions.
<b>Simple vocabulary:</b> tends toward concrete, physical, Germanic vocabulary: <i>sweet, whip, sit, crash, eat, weather, break</i> , etc.	<b>More complex vocabulary:</b> tends to use abstract or Greek/Latin vocabulary: <i>saccharine, flagellate, recline, collide, ingest, meteorology, fragment</i>
<b>Nonstandard spellings:</b> <i>gotcha, sweet thang, nite-time, sorta, kinda, that feller o'er there</i> , confuses the word <i>of</i> when <i>have</i> would be standard, i.e., <i>I could of done that.</i>	<b>Standardized spellings:</b> <i>sweet thing, night time, sort of, kind of, that fellow over there, I could have done that.</i>
<b>Slang words, informal phrases:</b> <i>ain't, 24-7, ok, okay, o.k., a lot, lots, lots of</i> , etc.	<b>Avoids slang terms:</b> <i>is not, all the time, acceptable, many, several</i>
<b>Colloquial words:</b> <i>kids, kiddies, buddy, gal, dude</i>	<b>Replaces colloquial words:</b> <i>children, friend, girl, fellow</i>
<b>Tends to use "Got":</b> <i>I got you a present. He got drunk and went driving, so then my car got hit.</i>	<b>Replaces "Got":</b> <i>I bought you a present. He became drunk, so then my car was hit</i>
<b>Uses melodramatic emphasis:</b> might try typing in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS or <b>bold print</b> or using extra punctuation marks!!! What????	<b>Avoids melodrama:</b> emphasizes certain words with italics, but usually uses sentence structure to emphasize a word. Reserves exclamation marks for special purposes.