

Name: _____

Informal vs. Formal Writing

Writing done for friends or people you know well is often informal. Informal writing can be appropriate for relaxed and lighthearted topics or when you want to sound friendly and personal.

Most writing done for school, work, or adult audiences should be formal. Formal writing shows respect and is appropriate for serious topics or when you want to convey impersonal authority on a subject.

Formal tones and styles tend to use more complex sentence structures and vocabulary while avoiding informal language. The table below shows some of the most common kinds of informal language.

kind of informal language	examples
abbreviations	FYI, OMG, ASAP, info, max
contractions	can't, that's, they've, we'll
idioms	blow off steam, it rings a bell
nonstandard English	ain't, gotcha, wanna
slang	bestie, chill, mid, for real
imprecise or vague vocabulary	really old, super nice, stuff, things

We're gonna check out the caves later. → Later, we will explore the caves.

informal

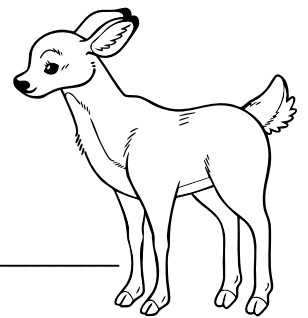
formal

Rewrite the sentences to be more formal. Be careful not to change the overall meaning.

1. Get a load of those deer hanging around the campsite!

2. Can't we just chill a bit before we keep hiking?

3. This trail's sorta nuts! There's a million different hard parts.



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4. My BFF snapped some photos of this weird-looking tree.

5. There's lots of stuff to do, but Ellis thinks everything's lame.

6. The real bumpy ground is super bad for the wrong kind of bikes.

7. Does the guy in charge got any info on the canyon's age?

8. Crossing the whole lake is a piece of cake for legit swimmers.

9. I've never seen such nice views IRL before.

10. It rained cats and dogs the last day, but we still had a blast!

ANSWER KEY

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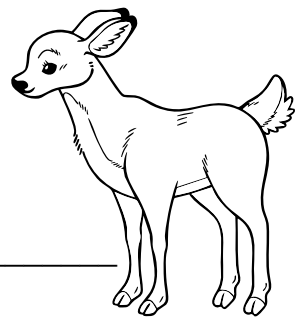
We're gonna check out the caves later. → Later, we will explore the caves.
informal *formal*

Answers will vary but must remove some or all of the informal language. Examples are given.

Rewrite the sentences to be more formal. Be careful not to change the overall meaning.

1. Get a load of those deer hanging around the campsite!

It is amazing to see deer gathering so close to the campsite.



2. Can't we just chill a bit before we keep hiking?

Perhaps we could rest a bit before we continue hiking?

3. This trail's sorta nuts! There's a million different hard parts.

There are many difficult portions of the trail that make it challenging.

ANSWER KEY

Informal vs. Formal Writing

Answers will vary but must remove some or all of the informal language. Examples are given.

4. My BFF snapped some photos of this weird-looking tree.

My best friend took some photographs of an unusual tree.

5. There's lots of stuff to do, but Ellis thinks everything's lame.

There are plenty of activities, but Ellis thinks they are all boring.

6. The real bumpy ground is super bad for the wrong kind of bikes.

The uneven ground can severely damage inappropriate bicycles.

7. Does the guy in charge got any info on the canyon's age?

Does the guide have any information about the age of the canyon?

8. Crossing the whole lake is a piece of cake for legit swimmers.

Accomplished swimmers can easily cross the entire lake.

9. I've never seen such nice views IRL before.

I have never seen such stunning views in person before.

10. It rained cats and dogs the last day, but we still had a blast!

Despite the terrible rain on the final day, we still enjoyed ourselves.