

FORMAL AND INFORMAL ENGLISH

Formal and *informal English* are used for different reasons. For instance, you would probably use informal language when talking to a classmate. You would probably use more formal language when talking to someone to whom you have just been introduced.

8b The most widely used informal expressions are *colloquialisms*. Colloquialisms are the lively words and phrases of everyday speech.

EXAMPLES Sidney was late again, and the coach **bit his head off**.
How surprising! You could **knock me over with a feather!**

8c *Slang* is made-up words or phrases or old words or phrases used in new ways. Slang is highly informal language.

EXAMPLES I'd like to get that CD, but I don't have any **dough**.
Cara is **nuts** about video games.



Colloquialisms and slang can add interest to language. However, they should be used only in the most informal speaking and writing. Do not use colloquialisms or slang in essays, test answers, or written and oral reports.

EXERCISE 2 Using Formal and Informal English

Each sentence below contains an informal word or phrase in italics. On the line after the sentence, replace the word or phrase with one that is more formal.

EX. 1. Working on the school play was *a real blast*.
Working on the school play was quite enjoyable.

1. Bradley started to get upset, but I told him *to chill out*.

2. Can you please *pipe down*? You are going to wake the baby.

3. The new computer game really *blew my mind*.

4. "Don't *trash* the house while I'm gone," Mom told us as she left.

5. Yolanda got an *awesome* new mountain bike for her birthday.

6. Marcie is a *real couch potato*.

7. We needed some new signs, so I *zipped down* to the art store to buy some poster board. _____

8. What a *wicked* good time we had at that party!

9. Jake and Al sat in the cafeteria for hours, *yakking* about last Saturday's football game. _____

10. You can't *blow off* this practice. It's our dress rehearsal!

EXERCISE 3 Using Informal English

On your own paper, rewrite the following overly formal sentences in informal English that you might use with a friend.

- EX. 1. Please extinguish the lights when departing.
1. *Please turn the lights out when you leave.*
1. We scanned the crowd to determine José's precise location.
 2. Please bring proper writing utensils to the examination.
 3. On behalf of my associates, I would like to extend a warm greeting to you and your loved ones.
 4. One can ordinarily readily recognize when someone has uttered an untruth.
 5. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you find yourself desiring someone with whom you may converse.