

# Writing styles

- When writing a letter or an email, the writing style plays a very important role, especially when you are trying to impress a potential employer.
- There are two main writing styles: **Formal** and **Informal**. The choice of tone, words and the way they are put together will vary between the two styles.
- **Formal writing** is used when we do not know who the person we are writing to is. It is used when writing for academic and professional purposes.
- **Informal writing** is used for personal and casual conversation. In an informal writing style, personal and emotional tone is used and the recipient is directly referred by the words 'you' or 'your'. It is used when writing personal emails, text messages and letters to friends and family.

## What is the difference?

	<b>Formal Writing</b>	<b>Informal writing</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	A formal writing style is needed when applying for jobs, work experience and when you are writing to someone you do not know	An informal writing style is used when we are writing for a personal or casual reason to a friend or family member
<b>Sentences</b>	Should be long and should not use abbreviations	Short and simple
<b>Personal pronoun</b>	Third person	First person
<b>Tone</b>	Professional and polite	Personal and friendly

## Activity

Study the below example emails and tick the box that you think is the most **formal**. Look out for differences that are both obvious and subtle. Write down four differences.

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Candidate 1:**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I want to apply for the role you're offering in your company. It sounds great. I have worked in an office before and it was great.

**Candidate 2:**

6<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to apply for the advertised role with your firm. I am a hard worker, with strong leadership and team work skills and a proven track record in budget and IT management, which are all qualities that you have listed in the job briefing. Please do find my CV attached for more information.

**Based on the two emails, which candidate you would offer the job to. Why?**

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## Tips for writing formal emails with confidence

- 1. Know your audience.** The way you address a potential employer, teacher or work colleague is very different to the way you speak to a friend online.
- 2. Start with a name.** Do you know the person by name? If so it is always best to address a person by name. 'Dear Susan' would be appropriate for someone you haven't met, whereas 'Hi Susan' is more suitable for a familiar contact or a person you talk to regularly.
- 3. Keep it short.** The workplace is a busy environment. It is best to make your point quickly. However avoid coming across as rude with one word answers.
- 4. Sign-off.** If you opened with 'Dear Sir/Madam' the correct formal sign-off is 'Yours faithfully', whereas a message to 'Mr Davies' should end with 'Yours sincerely'. Less formal sign-offs include a simple 'Thank you' or 'Many thanks'.
- 5. Check your tone.** Occasionally what you write doesn't always come across in the same way as if you had spoken. Before you hit send, double check you haven't been blunt or too casual.
- 6. Check for errors.** Double and triple check for any spelling or grammatical mistakes.



## Activity: Writing your own formal email.

Looking at the below template and the Word for Work word bank write your own formal email asking a for work experience for your dream job.

**Subject:**

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**Email text:**

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Formal writing	
<b>Subject</b>	<p>Your subject and email address are the first thing the person you are sending your email to will see.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State your name and that you are looking for work experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Greeting</b>	<p>This is a formal email so it starts like a letter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use 'Dear Sir or Madam' if you don't know who you are emailing</li> <li>• Use 'Dear X' if you know their full name</li> </ul>
<b>First paragraph</b>	<p>Introduce yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your name</li> <li>• Why are you writing</li> <li>• Why would you like work experience at this company?</li> </ul>
<b>Second paragraph</b>	<p>Your second paragraph should describe what you have to offer and why you want the job</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mention specific skills you have</li> <li>• Talk about what you would like to do when you leave school</li> <li>• Describe why you would like work experience at this company.</li> </ul>
<b>Third paragraph</b>	<p>Conclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclude by thanking the business for their time</li> <li>• Make sure to include your contact details</li> </ul>
<b>Sign-off</b>	<p>Choose your sign-off carefully.</p>

- Yours faithfully: if you do not know the name of the person you're writing to
- Yours sincerely: if you know the name of the person you're writing to
- Kind regards: this is less formal than 'Yours sincerely' but still acceptable

## Words for Work Word Bank

### Introductions

I hope you are well.

I am writing to...

...enquire about

...confirm

...comment on

...apply for

### Requesting action

Please could you...?

I would be grateful if you could...

Would it be possible to...?

Although I know what a busy time this is for you, I was wondering if...

Giving or asking for additional information

I am attaching...

Here is a brief summary/description of...