

Formal vs. Informal Writing (based on <http://writingguide.geneseo.edu/?pg=topics/formalinformal.html>, <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/608/02/>, <http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=62045>, and <http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/writingcenter/WAC/informaltoformal.html>)

## WHAT IS FORMAL WRITING?

Formal writing should be used in situations which require restraint, documentation, and seriousness.

Examples of formal writing include: applications for jobs or admission to programs, articles or books on academic subjects, papers for classes or conference presentations, and letters or memos to employers and/or clients.

Style acceptable in formal writing includes: official or specialized language, restraint in tone (avoiding the imperative, remaining detached), impersonal language, absence of second person pronouns, and citations of information.

### Formal writing is NOT:

- stodgy, stilted prose which sounds like it is meant to impress a 19<sup>th</sup>-century emperor. Formal writing is still easily readable.
- full of multi-syllable words designed to display an excellent vocabulary. The object of all communication is understandability, not amazement.

Example of formal writing: from Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 238-39.

In 1924 J. Spencer Love built the Piedmont Heights mill village and the Pioneer Plant of Burlington Mills, the first in a chain of factories that within fifty years would become the largest textile manufacturing firm in the world. Love's founding of the mill and village brought together a cast of characters that embodied the central theme of the 1920s, a struggle to reconcile the traditions of mill workers' lives and work with postwar technology and cultural innovation. Spencer Love typified the "new mill man," seeking his fortune through experimentation with new yarns, modern machinery, and novel management methods. He was aided during the early years of his career by James Copland, Sr., a plant supervisor of great technical skill and ceaseless energy and ambition. Across the street from the Pioneer Plant stood the main institution of the mill village, the Glen Hope Baptist Church. There Preacher George Washington Swinney held the pulpit for forty years, ministering to his congregation and accumulating souls as Love accumulated mills. Swinney preached the values of old-time religion, but he, too, used new technologies, broadcasting services over the radio and driving thousands of miles through the Piedmont to appear at revivals. Icy Norman, raised on a North Carolina farm, worked at the Pioneer Plant for forty-seven years and prayed at Glen Hope even longer. Finally, there was Dr. Carroll Lupton, a skilled physician and a keen witness to mill village life, whose observations, tempered by the memories of Piedmont Heights villagers, provide a penetrating view of how one community dealt with the upheavals of the postwar years.

## WHAT IS INFORMAL WRITING?

Informal writing should be used in situations which reflect a high level of comfort, familiarity, and relaxation.

Examples of informal writing include: dialogue/conversations, blogs, outlines, email, and letters to friends.

Style acceptable in informal writing includes: colloquialisms, contractions, first and second person pronouns, and abbreviations.

**Informal writing is NOT:**

- grammatically incorrect writing, or a style suited to texting or tweeting. These are more like conversations, not like writing, and should be avoided in written assignments.
- writing which omits capitalization. This is confusing and should be avoided even in emails among close friends.
- using swearwords or rude expressions.

Example of informal writing: from <http://statesboromainstreetmarket.locallygrown.net/>

**Ordering Options:** Unlike other co-ops, buying clubs, or CSAs where everyone gets the same box of stuff (and you don't know what you're getting until you get it), with Locally Grown you get to order what you want, in the quantities that you want, from the farms that you want. The weekly email lists the produce, milled products, fresh flowers, and artisan goods available that week, and you can browse the items on this website before you place your order.