

STUDENT HANDOUT: FORMAL AND INFORMAL WRITING

Formal writing	Informal writing
<p>DO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Passive voice 'There are a number of reasons why global warming is important' 2. Making writing clear and to the point 'It is important to realise that global warming will damage the planet, if nothing is done now.' 3. Include some complex sentences 'Because of the extravagance of today, the planet will pay for the consequences tomorrow.' 4. Try using semi-colons 'Global warming is not a new phenomenon; it has been building up for decades.' 5. Metaphors and similes work well in speeches 'Global warming is like losing your job; it only becomes a personal concern when it happens to you.' 6. Use figurative language if it fits the context 7. Use expanded phrases; not contractions 'It is not too late to do something about it.' 8. Use expanded forms of abbreviations: 'For example, The Joint Qualifications Board' 9. Use conjunctions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In addition ○ Nevertheless ○ On the other hand ○ By contrast ○ Although ○ Alternatively 	<p>DO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Address the reader directly: "Dear reader, I'm really glad you've found the time to open this letter." 2. It's okay sometimes to use the kind of words that are more usual in speech than writing: "You don't have to put up with bullying. We'll stick together and make it stop." 3. Contractions sound more natural in certain types of writing eg a talk to fellow students: "It's good to know that we're all going to work together on this." 4. You may use abbreviations such as: "e.g. JCQ, STA, etc, asap" 5. Use and active rather than a passive voice: be bold! "From this day forward, we will all try to do our bit for saving our planet."
<p>Don't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use 'Well' or 'You know' or 'Anyway' or 'Like I just said' or any phrase that sounds like you are having a friendly chat. ○ Use: 'And', 'But', 'Because' or 'So' at the beginning of a sentence. ○ Use exclamation marks ○ Use words like 'nice'; try to be more sophisticated and descriptive in your language ○ Use clichés (e.g. as pretty as a picture) ○ Use contractions: won't, weren't, let's etc 	<p>Don't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don't use overly informal language ○ Don't baffle the reader ○ Do plan the structure carefully