

# Formal vs Informal

*How do I know if my paper should be formal or informal?*

Types of Informal Writing: reflections, personal opinion, journal, professor says it is informal

Types of Formal Writing: research paper, reports, proposals, critiques, essays, articles, critical thinking essay, MOST COMMON in college papers

## FORMAL WRITING:

- ✓ Do not use contractions
  - "can't, shouldn't, they're" instead use "cannot, should not, they are"
- ✓ Do not use first person language, use third person instead
  - "I feel like the author wants to make us happy."
  - "The author uses a writing technique to promote a happy feeling in her audience."
- ✓ Do not use colloquialisms/writing as if you were speaking (*see colloquialism chart*)
- ✓ Focus on vocabulary
  - Use thesaurus!
  - Avoid broad words "things, stuff, nice, cool"
- ✓ Write in the style your professor indicates on the assignment (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc)
- ✓ Use complex sentences as much as possible
  - Avoid short or choppy sentences

## Common Colloquialisms & Replacements

Kind of → similar to; rather  
Loads/tons/a whole bunch/a lot → very many; numerous  
A couple → a few; a small number  
Sank in → registered; understood  
No clue → oblivious; ignorant  
Start off → to begin  
Not really all that bad → manageable; endurable; tolerable  
Deal with → encounter; resolve  
Kind of thing → a similar item/idea  
Right off the bat → immediately  
Get to → have the opportunity to  
Way more → much more  
Come/coming up with → think of  
Spot on → accurate; exact  
Some sort of → a form of  
Looked into → researched