

Boost Free Lessons - Year 10 English

Lesson 8: Adapting Language for Purpose and Context

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

How would the same message change across three forms?

Message: the excursion has been moved from Thursday to Friday.

1. The **facts** stay fixed. What changes is form, register and what you lead with.
2. **Text message to a parent:** brief, informal, leads with the new date because that is what affects them.
3. **Email to staff:** formal, includes the reason and any action required, since colleagues need to respond.
4. **Formal letter to the venue:** most formal, includes booking references and confirms the change in writing.

The facts are identical. Register, length and the order of information all change with the audience.

Worked Example 2

Rewrite this for a formal audience.

Hey, just letting you know we've had to push the excursion back a day, hope that's not a hassle.

1. Identify the informal markers: *Hey, just letting you know*, contractions, *a hassle*.
2. Replace the greeting and remove the contractions.
3. Replace vague phrasing with precise information, including the actual dates.
4. Formal does not mean longer. It means precise, complete and impersonal.

Model: Dear Ms Halloran, I am writing to advise that the excursion has been rescheduled from Thursday 14 to Friday 15 March. Please let me know if this creates any difficulty.

Remember: The **facts** stay fixed; register, length and order change. Ask what this audience needs first, and how much they already know.



Question 1: Name the register you would use for each of the following.

1. A text message to a friend

2. An email to a teacher

3. A formal letter to a council

4. A social media post for the school

5. A speech at assembly

6. A caption on a school newsletter photo

7. A report submitted for assessment

8. A note left on a kitchen bench



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

Hey all, quick one, we've had to move the excursion to Friday. Ground was flooded so there was heaps of drama. Same buses, just meet at the front gate in the arvo instead. Sorry!

1. Identify three informal features in the passage.

2. Who is the likely audience? Explain how you can tell.

3. What information would need to be added for a formal audience?

4. Rewrite the passage as a formal email.

5. What would be lost in the formal version?



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. Write a message about a cancelled event for a friend.

2. Rewrite it as a formal notice.

3. Explain three things that change when register becomes more formal.

4. Why is formal language not always the better choice?





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Answers and Model Responses: Adapting Language for Purpose and Context**Question 1**

1. Very informal: contractions, slang, abbreviations acceptable.
2. Semi-formal: full sentences, polite greeting, no slang.
3. Formal: no contractions, precise detail, impersonal tone.
4. Informal but public: friendly, brief, no slang that could confuse.
5. Semi-formal and spoken: signposted structure, direct address.
6. Brief and warm: one sentence, present tense.
7. Formal and objective: no first person unless permitted, evidence cited.
8. Very informal: fragments and abbreviations acceptable.

Question 2

1. Any three of: *Hey all*, contractions such as *we've*, *heaps*, the abbreviation *arvo*, exclamation marks.
2. Students or a peer group, because the writer uses slang and assumes shared knowledge of the event.
3. The full date, the venue, the new time, and who to contact with questions.
4. Model: Dear parents and carers, please note that the Year 10 excursion has been moved to Friday 15 March. Buses will depart from the front gate at 8.15 am. Please contact the office if this creates any difficulty.
5. The warmth and immediacy. The informal version sounds like a person speaking, which suits an audience that already knows the context.

Question 3

1. Model response: Hey, footy's off this arvo, ground's flooded. Next week instead.
2. Model response: Please note that this afternoon's fixture has been cancelled due to ground conditions. It has been rescheduled for the following week.
3. Contractions are removed, vocabulary becomes more precise, and the tone becomes impersonal, often replacing *you* and *I* with the subject itself.
4. Formal language creates distance. For a familiar audience it can sound cold or evasive, and it usually takes longer to read.

