

## Formal writing

- 1 Look at these writing task types. How formal should each one be? Answer the questions.

an article • a covering letter (for a job application) • an essay  
a letter of complaint • a proposal • a report • a review • a story

Which task type (or types) tends to be ...

- 1 very formal?  
.....
- 2 quite formal or very formal depending on the reader?  
.....
- 3 neutral but with direct questions to engage the reader?  
.....
- 4 neutral but with a wide range of adjectives and adverbs?  
.....
- 5 informal, especially in direct speech?  
.....

## STUDY TIP

A formal style is used in business writing, formal letters and academic writing. Here are some things that you should and shouldn't do when writing in a formal style.

- 1 Do use passive and impersonal structures. (Limit use of *I* as far as possible.)
- 2 Do use formal linkers such as *nevertheless*, *in addition* or *however*.
- 3 Do use strong words like *effective*, *delicious*, *thousands* or *huge*.
- 4 Don't use weak words like *good*, *nice*, *a lot* or *big*.
- 5 Don't use informal language that sounds like speech.
- 6 Don't use contractions.

- 2 Read the Study tip and sentences a–f. Which tips (1–6) has the student not followed?

- a Well, if you ask me, I am the most suitable candidate, aren't I? .....
- b The food was nice but there were some big problems. ....
- c We asked twenty people what they thought of electric cars. ....
- d I think I will be good for your company because I have got a lot of experience. ....
- e I'm very angry. If you don't give me a full refund, I'll take you to court. ....
- f To finish, I think it would be brilliant if the government started promoting electric cars. ....

- 3 Match each text type (1–3) with two sentences (a–f) from 2.

- 1 report .....
- 2 letter of complaint .....
- 3 covering letter .....

- 4 Write the sentences from 3 in a formal style. You may change the order of the words, remove words and replace some words with more formal alternatives.

- 1 report  
.....  
.....
- 2 letter of complaint  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 3 covering letter  
.....  
.....  
.....

- 5 Find a piece of formal writing that your teacher has corrected. Rewrite five of the sentences in a more formal style using the Study tips in 2.

My sentences	My improved sentences