

## Degrees of Formality (or Stylistic Varieties) in English<sup>1</sup>

<i>Style</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
<b>VERY FORMAL</b>	Extremely distant, rigid (or frozen). Found in written instructions, such as public notices.
↕	E.g., Distinguished patrons are requested to ascend to the second floor.
<b>FORMAL</b>	Relatively stiff, cold, polite, impersonal.
↕	E.g., Overtime emoluments are not available for employees who are non-residents.
<b>NEUTRAL</b> (Normal)	Median or unmarked language, bearing no obvious colouring.
↕	
<b>INFORMAL</b>	Relatively relaxed, warm, rude, friendly.
↕	E.g., Staff members who don't live in can't get paid overtime.
<b>VERY INFORMAL</b> [also called casual or familiar, or colloquial (if it is spoken language)]	Intimate, casual, or hearty – often slangy – language used between very close friends (esp. of similar age) or members of a family, or used when speakers don't need to bother about what the listener (or reader) might think about his choice of language.

<sup>1</sup> Taken (slightly adapted) from Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). A comprehensive grammar of the English language (pp. 26-27). London: Longman.