

GRAMMATICAL AND SYNTACTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL WRITING

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Abstract. *Grammatical and syntactic features play a significant role in distinguishing formal and informal writing. This article explores the key grammatical structures and syntactic patterns that characterize these two modes of written communication. Through a comparative analysis of representative texts, the study examines sentence length, complexity, clause relationships, verb forms, and levels of explicitness. The findings reveal that formal writing tends to employ complex sentence structures, passive constructions, nominalization, and precise grammatical organization to achieve clarity and objectivity. In contrast, informal writing favors shorter sentences, active voice, contractions, and simplified syntax, reflecting a more personal and conversational style. The study highlights how grammatical and syntactic choices are shaped by communicative purpose, audience, and context, and emphasizes the importance of adapting writing style to different communicative situations.*

Key words: *Grammatical features, syntactic characteristics, formal writing, informal writing, sentence complexity, clause structure, written discourse, language variation.*

Formal and informal writing represent two major styles of written communication, each shaped by its communicative purpose, audience, and context. Grammatical and syntactic choices play a central role in distinguishing these styles and determining how meaning is conveyed.

Formal writing is typically associated with academic, professional, and official contexts, while informal writing is common in personal correspondence, online communication, and creative expression.

This article examines the grammatical and syntactic characteristics that define formal and informal writing and explains how these features contribute to effective communication.

Formal writing is characterized by strict adherence to standard grammatical rules and conventions. One prominent feature is the frequent use of complex grammatical structures, including subordinate clauses and extended noun phrases. Such structures allow writers to present detailed information and nuanced arguments. Passive voice is commonly employed to emphasize processes or results rather than the agent, contributing to an objective tone. Formal writing is used in, academic papers, reports, official letters professional emails, legal documents, etc. Its grammar and syntax aim for clarity, objectivity, and precision. Standard grammar rules strictly followed, no slang, dialect, or casual abbreviations, correct verb tenses and subject–verb agreement.

Another important grammatical feature of formal writing is nominalization, where verbs or adjectives are transformed into nouns (e.g., *analyze* → *analysis*, *important* → *importance*).

Nominalization increases information density and supports abstract reasoning. Formal writing also avoids contractions, colloquial expressions, and personal pronouns, favoring precise verb forms and impersonal constructions.

Syntactically, formal writing tends to use longer sentences with clear hierarchical organization. Sentences often contain multiple clauses arranged logically through subordination rather than coordination. Logical connectors such as *however*, *therefore*, *moreover*, and *consequently* are widely used to signal relationships between ideas. Sentence openings are frequently varied to maintain coherence and textual flow, often beginning with adverbial phrases or dependent clauses.

Parallelism is another key syntactic feature of formal writing. Repeating similar grammatical structures enhances clarity and rhetorical balance, especially in arguments and lists.

These syntactic strategies contribute to coherence, precision, and academic credibility.

In contrast, informal writing prioritizes ease of communication and personal expression.

Grammatically, it often includes simple sentence structures, contractions (*don't*, *it's*), and colloquial vocabulary. Active voice is preferred, and first- and second-person pronouns (*I*, *you*) are commonly used to establish a direct connection with the reader.

Informal writing frequently tolerates grammatical deviations that would be unacceptable in formal contexts, such as sentence fragments or ellipsis. These features reflect spoken language patterns and contribute to a conversational tone. Verb tenses are generally straightforward, and modal verbs are used to express attitude and emotion rather than obligation or formality.

The syntax of informal writing is generally short, flexible, and less rigid. Coordination using conjunctions like *and*, *but*, and *so* is more common than subordination. Sentences may begin with conjunctions or end with prepositions, reflecting natural speech patterns. Repetition and parallel phrasing are often used for emphasis rather than structural balance.

Informal writing also allows greater freedom in punctuation, including the use of exclamation marks, dashes, and parentheses. In digital contexts, syntactic structure may be further simplified, and meaning may be supported by emojis, abbreviations, or unconventional formatting.

A comparison of formal and informal writing highlights how grammatical and syntactic features align with communicative goals. Formal writing emphasizes clarity, objectivity, and logical progression through complex grammar and structured syntax. Informal writing, by contrast, values immediacy, expressiveness, and interpersonal connection, achieved through simplified grammar and flexible syntax.

These differences are not absolute; rather, they exist on a continuum. Many contemporary texts, such as blogs or opinion pieces, combine elements of both styles. Skilled writers adapt their grammatical and syntactic choices to suit the specific context and audience. Understanding the grammatical and syntactic distinctions between formal and informal writing is essential for language learners and professional writers. Explicit instruction in these differences can improve stylistic awareness and communicative effectiveness. Writers who can consciously shift between styles demonstrate higher levels of linguistic competence and adaptability. Grammatical and syntactic characteristics are key factors that differentiate formal and informal writing.

While formal writing relies on complex structures, precise grammar, and logical syntax, informal writing favors simplicity, flexibility, and conversational patterns. Recognizing and applying these distinctions enables writers to communicate effectively across a wide range of social and professional contexts.

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