



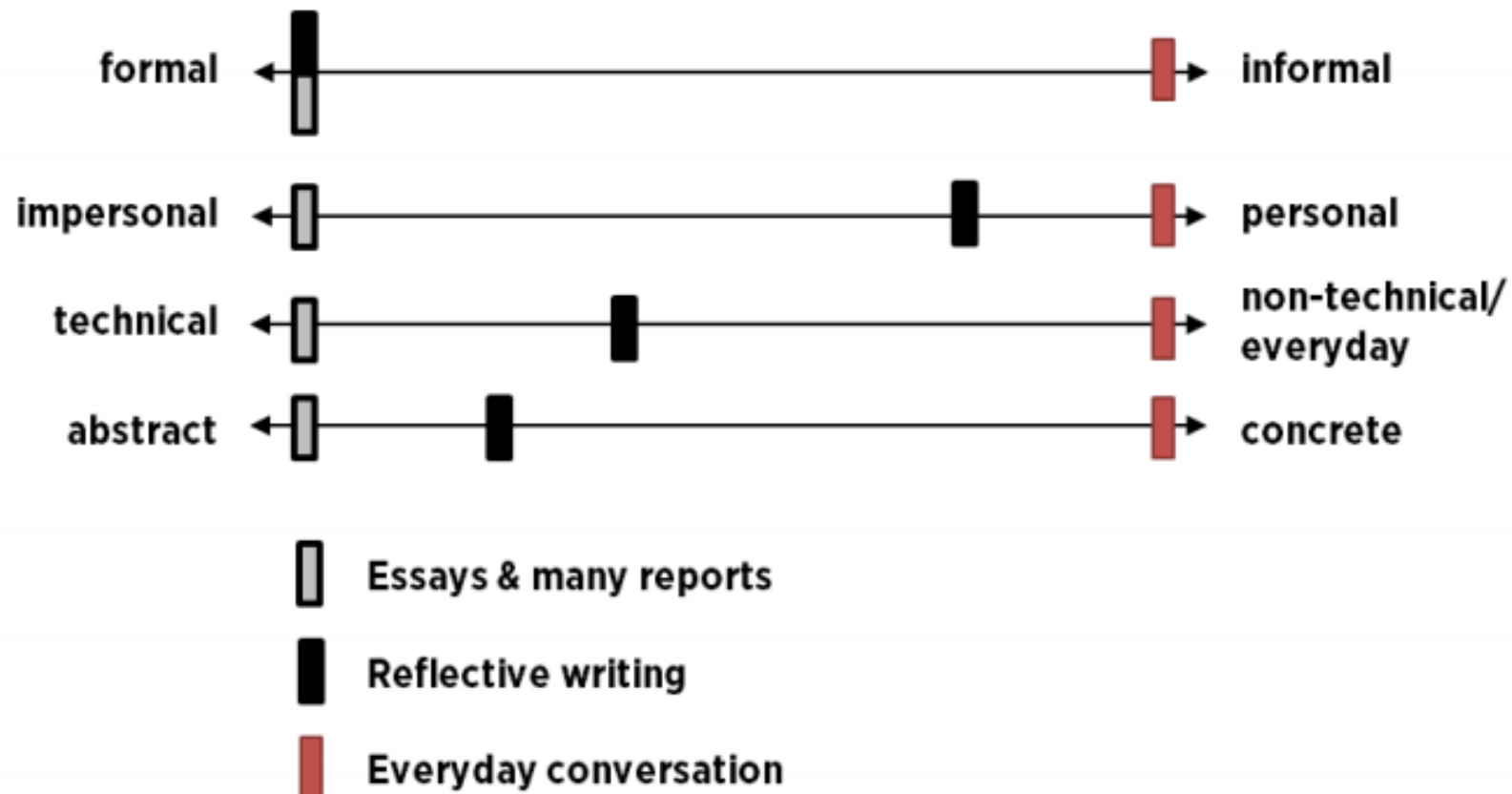
NEW ERA
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Tone and Register

What is register and tone?

○The words tone and register refer to the features of your writing that give it its individual quality or style. For example, your tone could be formal or informal, humorous or serious, depending on the type of piece you are writing. What is especially important is that your tone stays consistent throughout each piece of writing that you produce.

Register and tone



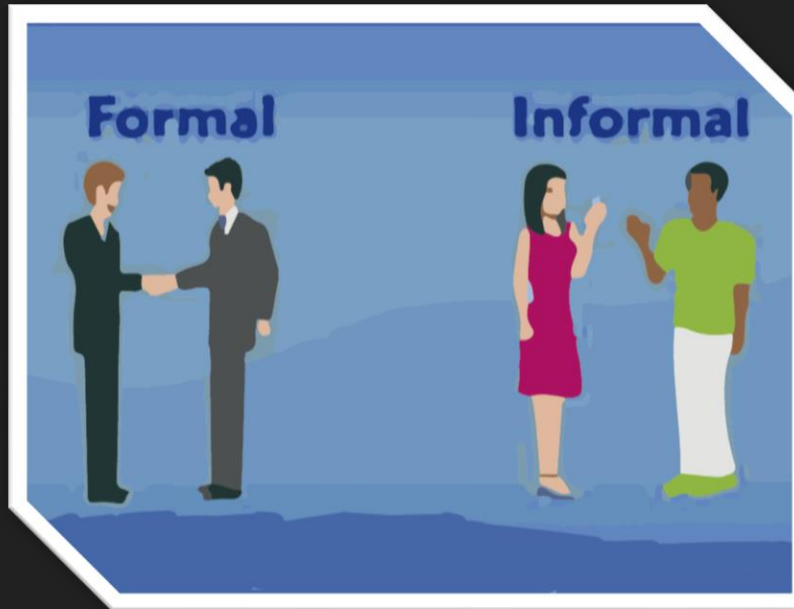
Register

- Register refers to the particular types of language used for particular cases.

Types of Registers

Formal

Informal

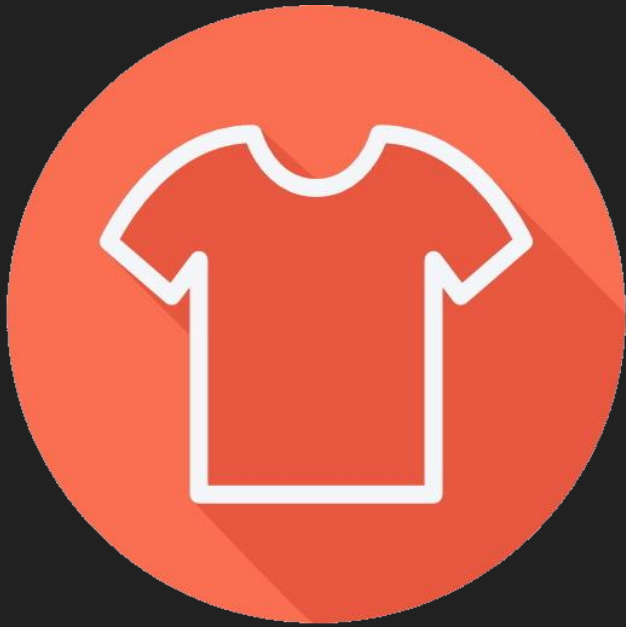


Formal Register

- A formal register uses formal, non-colloquial language only and avoids all kinds of slang.



Informal Register



- An informal register contains slang, everyday expressions and not necessarily a perfect grammar.

Tone



- Shows the general feeling of the writing, conveying different feelings proper to the text, creating different kinds of messages.



Expressed feelings



- Different feelings can be shown depending on the way of writing, such as being angry, calm, personal, engaging, conversational, serious, exciting, among others.



Here are some more points about tone and register:

- Tone and register can apply to both spoken and written expression.
- Depending on purpose and audience, register can be either formal or informal.
- A formal register is achieved by using correct grammar and avoiding colloquialisms, slang or jargon. You would be likely to use a formal register in a report written for your headteacher/principal or in a speech to assembled parents and teachers.
- An informal register would include the use of colloquial expressions and slang and, if appropriate, communicating in a way that does not always use absolutely correct grammatical expression. You are likely to use an informal register when talking to your friends or when you write emails or letters to friends or family.
- A good way of deciding on the purpose of a text that you are required to analyse is to start by identifying the register in which it is written and the audience for whom it is intended.
- The tone of a speech or a piece of writing gives it its distinctive, individual quality: for example, serious, angry, knowledgeable, amusing, ironic, sarcastic, conversational, and so on.
- The particular historical/cultural background in which a text is written may well produce a distinctive tone and register. For example, eighteenth-century prose uses complex sentence structures and vocabulary strongly influenced by Latin whereas contemporary Caribbean poetry is characterised by the grammatical forms of the local dialect.

Exercise

- You will read some extracts and then describe the **tone and register** of each passage (as fully you can) and identify its purpose, the audience for whom it is likely to have been written and any clues that you can find that may suggest the cultural or historical background from which it comes.

Extract 1

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

'My dear Mr Bennet,' said his lady to him one day, 'have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?'

Mr Bennet replied that he had not.

'But it is,' returned she; 'for Mrs Long has just been here, and she told me all about it.'

Mr Bennet made no answer.

'Do you not want to know who has taken it?' cried his wife impatiently.

'You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.'

This was invitation enough.

'Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week.'

Extract 2

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week.