

Changing rules of formal and informal writing

Writing has generally been more formal and speech more informal. However, these distinctions are beginning to change.

In fact, English used in business situations has started becoming less formal. Many forms (for example, the use of personal pronouns) that were once considered inappropriate in formal writing are now considered perfectly acceptable. Similar changes are being witnessed in the academic field too.

Here is a look at some features that are slowly but steadily making their presence felt in formal writing.

The use of personal letters

The personal pronouns I and we are now quite acceptable in business letters. In fact, businesses are actively promoting this trend because they believe that the use of personal letters will help them personalize the message. The use of I in personal letters is an indication that the writer is willing to take responsibility. We, on the other hand, is used to refer to the company.

Split infinitives

A split infinitive is an expression where an adverb is placed between 'to' and the 'verb'. Some writers still avoid them, but they are also gaining acceptance.

Beginning a sentence with and or but

In the olden days beginning a sentence with the conjunction and or but was considered a serious crime; now they have become acceptable too. However, you must not begin a sentence with a conjunction just for the sake of it. Avoid it if it is possible, but if the situation demands it, don't hesitate to use it.

Contractions

Contractions should be avoided in academic writing. However they are perfectly acceptable in emails and personal business correspondence.