

How to Improve Your Writing Style – Methodentraining für die Klassen 10–13

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M 1 How to write a good text – some tips

How to write a good text

When writing a text, you want the reader to understand your thoughts. Therefore there is no sense in using complicated words and over long sentences. If you do not know what you mean to say, spend the time thinking about a new, powerful argument rather than writing a confusing or boring sentence. A good writing style starts with clear and structured thoughts.



How to choose your words

Use effective, clear words rather than pompous, long words. _____ (1)

Avoid repeating the same word in the same paragraph. _____ (2)

How to build your sentences

Keep sentences relatively short. Use subclauses, participles and gerunds. _____ (3)

How to organise your paragraphs

Avoid paragraphs that contain only one long sentence. _____ (4)

If your paragraph is as long as a page, split it into smaller paragraphs.

Use some connectives¹ to show how one sentence refers to the next one in a paragraph. _____ (5)

¹ **connective:** linking word, e.g. although, therefore, yet

Task

Where do the sentences a)–e) fit in? Read the text and fill in the correct letters in the gaps.

- Every few lines, a full stop gives the reader time to breathe before reading your next idea.
- This way the reader can follow your train of thought and concentrate on your argument clearly.
- This is a means to vary the sentence structure and shorten your text.
- What makes it difficult for the reader?
- Otherwise, the reader might find the text boring.

M 2 Using the right register¹ – formal vs informal English

Good writing starts with choosing the appropriate register.

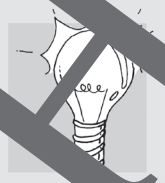
Who is going to read your text? – Using the right register

People you don't know very well, e.g. your teacher, your boss.

→ Use *formal* English.

People you know well, e.g. your friends, your classmates, your parents.

→ Use *informal* English.



Task 1

- a) What is typical of formal and informal English? Fill in the table with correct words and phrases from the box. Some examples are given.
- b) Try to find more examples for formal vs informal English and write them in the empty lines.

*child Send it soon! ... and ... disagree.
cannot on top of it all to drop a line definitely*

Formal English	Informal English
Abbreviations and contractions	
	can't
Verbs	
to send somebody a note	
Nouns and phrases	
	kid
	Rubbish!
Connectives	
Furthermore, moreover ...	
Emphasis words	
	very, really
Letter and email expressions	
Please send it at your earliest convenience.	

¹ **register:** die Sprachebene

Task 2

Would you write in formal or informal English in the situations below?
Tick the correct box.

Situation	Formal English	Informal English
a) You would like to share how your day at school was with your best friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) You would like to discuss a topic in an exam paper.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) You would like to apply for a job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) You would like to complain about the headphones you have bought.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) You would like to chat with a classmate about a new film.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) You would like to let your parents know what is happening on the class trip via email.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Task 3

Olivia plans to apply for a summer job at Ms Thompson's shop. Rewrite her email in formal English.

Hello Ms Thompson,
I'm looking for a summer job, and my dad kept his ear open. He's told me you're always looking for somebody to help out at your shop. Well, I could be in the right place at the right time! How come? It's pretty good at being on time and giving a hand. Last summer, I was a waitress and I got on well with all kinds of people. Call me if you want me to come round for a chat!
Yours,
Olivia Walker



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V

M 3 Hero for a day – understanding an article

Find out how people in San Francisco realised a five-year-old's dream to help his superhero for a day.

Batkid saves San Francisco as charity makes a wish come true

Thousands volunteer to help five-year-old leukaemia patient battle The Riddler and Penguin on a day of realised dreams

San Francisco was beset by a wave of crime on Friday, as a woman was taken hostage and tied to cable car tracks, a criminal calling himself the Riddler attempted to rob a bank vault, and a miscreant known as Penguin generally made a nuisance of himself in the downtown area.

Happily, each incident was staged: an attempt on the part of the charity Make-A-Wish to give five-year-old Miles Scott, who is recovering from leukaemia, a memorable day assisting his favourite superhero.



© picture alliance/AP

San Francisco's mayor and police were among thousands involved in an extraordinary day that gripped the city and caught the attention of the white house. Miles's day began with a fraught message from police chief Greg Suhr, alerting "Batkid" to the various criminal activities and pleading with him to assist. Miles acquiesced, and was collected by a man dressed as Batman who was driving a vehicle which bore a passing resemblance to the Batmobile.

With little time to waste, the pair hurried to the Grand Hyatt in San Francisco's Union Square, where an unnamed woman had been tied up on cable car tracks with what appeared to be an improvised explosive device strapped to her back.



© picture alliance/AP

A large crowd had gathered at the scene as Batkid arrived and sprinted over to the woman. After a tense few moments a cheer went up as Batkid managed to free the woman from her bonds. The device did not detonate.

Less than an hour later, Batkid was summoned back to Union Square, where a criminal mastermind known as The Riddler was attempting to rob a bank vault.

Batkid successfully downed the villain, despite significant disadvantages in height and strength, and The Riddler was taken away in a San Francisco police department truck. SFPD did not immediately respond to questions regarding charges against The Riddler.

Later, Batkid apprehended a known felon called Penguin before being handed the key to the city by an understandably grateful mayor. The stunt gripped the city: "This has turned into a full blown phenomenon," said Suhr, the police chief.

Miles received a made up newspaper front.

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