

Format and structure

Booster 6: Informal language and informal text types

Key learning

Shortened forms of words (contractions), such as 'don't', 'won't' and 'can't', are examples of informal language. Try to avoid using these in your written work, especially if you are writing a formal text. If you do use one of these words, simply replace it with the two words it is made of, for example replace 'don't' with 'do not' or 'I've' with 'I have'. You can use informal language in informal writing such as emails to friends and family, text messages, diary entries, as well as in everyday speech and notes.

Worked example:

Correct the contractions in the following sentences if necessary. Note the context in brackets.

- (a) The café isn't closed. (email to your boss)
- (b) Make sure you don't go to the café when it's closing. (email to a friend)
- (c) They haven't had time to wash all the dishes. (note from a co-worker)
- (d) You'll end up clearing tables, which isn't your job. (text message from a friend)
- (e) I'd like to apply for this position because I've got experience. (application to join the team)

Answers:

- (a) The café **is not** closed.
An email to your boss is formal so you should not use a contraction here.
- (b) Make sure that you **don't** go to the café when **it's** closing.
An email to a friend is informal so you can use contractions here.
- (c) They **haven't** had time to wash all the dishes.
A note from a co-worker is informal.
- (d) **You'll** end up clearing tables, which **isn't** your job.
A text message from a friend is informal.
- (e) **I would** like to apply for this position because **I have** got experience.
A job application letter is formal so you should not use a contraction here.

Your turn:

Make a list of six contractions (two words joined by an apostrophe) you regularly use and write out the full version of the phrase.

Contraction	Full version