

Summary of Style

Style is a writer's particular approach to arranging words and sentences that reflects both an author's taste and purpose. Style is usually measured by the **degree of formality** in an author's use of **sentences, diction** and **tone**.

	Formal	Moderate	Colloquial
Sentences	- relatively long and involved; likely to make considerable use of parallel, balanced, and subordinated clauses; no fragments or comma splices	- of medium length, averaging between fifteen and twenty-five words; mostly standard structure but with some parallelism and occasionally balanced and subordinated clauses; fragments and comma splices are rare	- short, simple structures; mainly subject-verb-object order; almost no use of parallel, balanced or subordinated clauses; fragments and comma splices are common
Diction	- extensive vocabulary, some use of learned and abstract words; no slang; almost no contractions or clipped words; sophisticated use of figures of speech	- ranges from learned to colloquial but mostly popular words; both abstract and concrete diction; occasional contractions and clipped words; may contain some inconspicuous slang	- diction limited to popular and colloquial words, frequent contractions and clipped words; frequent use of utility words; more slang than in moderate style; almost no use of figures of speech except cliché
Tone	- always a serious attitude toward an important subject; may be either subjective or objective and informative or affective; no attempt to establish closeness with reader, who is almost never addressed as "you"; personality of the writer not conspicuous; whole tone usually dignified and impersonal	- attitude toward subject may be serious or light, objective or subjective, informative or affective; relationship with reader close but seldom intimate; writer sometimes refers to himself or herself as "I" and to reader as "you", but the range of moderate style is so broad that it can vary from semiformal to semi-colloquial	- attitude toward subject may be serious or light but is usually subjective; close, usually intimate, relation with reader, who is nearly always addressed as "you"; whole tone is that of informal conversation
Uses	- a restricted style used chiefly for scholarly or technical writing for experts, or for essays and speeches that aim at eloquence or inspiration; a distinguished style, but not one for everyday use or practical affairs	- the broadest and most usable style for expository and argumentative writing and for all but the most formal of public speeches; the prevailing style in non-technical books and magazines, in newspaper reports and editorials, in college lectures and discussions, and in all student writing except some fiction	- light, chatty writing as in letters to close friends of the same age; on the whole, a style that is inappropriate to most high school and university writing except fiction and dialogue