

Easy Guidelines to Formal Writing

1. Avoid using first-person pronouns (I, ME, MY, WE, US, etc.).

Incorrect: I think that we need to reform Korea's educational system for two reasons.

Correct: Korea's educational system needs to be reformed for two reasons.

2. Avoid addressing readers as YOU.

Incorrect: Smoking is bad for your health. Therefore, you should not smoke.

Correct: Smoking is bad for people's health. Therefore, they should not smoke.

3. Avoid the use of contractions.

Incorrect: can't, isn't

Correct: can not, is not

4. Avoid colloquialism and slang expressions. Don't write like you speak. It's too informal.

Incorrect: He has lots of reasons for justifying his actions.

Correct: He has several reasons for justifying his actions.

5. Avoid abbreviated versions of words.

Incorrect: photo, &

Correct: photograph, and (The abbreviations *e.g.*, *i.e.*, and *etc.* are parenthetical and should be used accordingly)

6. Avoid the overuse of short and simple sentences.

Incorrect: *The Old Man and the Sea* is the title of a book. Ernest Hemingway wrote it. He is famous.
He is from America.

Correct: *The Old Man and the Sea* was written by Ernest Hemingway, a famous American writer.

7. Avoid stage directions. Do not begin an essay by telling the reader what the paper will discuss.

Incorrect: This paper is going to talk about how Postechians experience great difficulty in writing English essays.

Correct: Postechians experience great difficulty in writing English for several reasons.

8. Avoid imperative voice (=commands/orders).

Incorrect: Don't sit and watch TV. Advertisements have a negative influence on people's lives.

Correct: People should not sit and watch TV as advertisements have a negative influence

9. Avoid the use of questions, especially rhetorical questions.

Incorrect: Many people believe that coffee is poor for your health. Did you know that coffee also has many benefits?

Correct: Many people believe that coffee is unhealthy; however, coffee has many benefits.

10. Avoid starting sentences with conjunctions (And, But, So).

Incorrect: King Sejong thought that one may earn a country with the sword. **But** one must rule the country with knowledge.

Correct: King Sejong thought that one may earn a country with the sword, but one must rule the country with knowledge.

11. Avoid weak words such as NICE, GOOD and BAD.

Weak: There are many good things about eating a large breakfast.

Strong: Eating a large breakfast has numerous benefits.

12. Avoid awkward-sounding sentences in the singular by writing them in the plural.

Awkward: A student must check his or her work before he or she leaves the lab.

Strong: Students must check their work before they leave the lab.

13. Use words with precision. Write concisely to express your meaning as fully as you can.

Weak: These rules will make your English writing get much better than before.

Strong: These rules will improve your English writing.

14. Use the following rules for writing titles and numbers.

- a. Use "quotation marks" around the titles of **poems, essays, articles, songs, and chapters of books**.

Example: Kim So-wol wrote the poem "Azaleas."

- b. Underline or *italicize* the title of **books, journals, magazines, newspapers and movies**:

Example: Titanic, Catcher in the Rye

- **Numbers ten or less are spelled out.**
- **Spell out numbers above ten unless there is a series of numbers or writing the number involves using more than two words.**

a. It consists of three fields.

b. I have sixty-three books in my library.

c. My cousin has 207 books in his library.

d. Of the group surveyed, 78 students had studied French and 123 had studied English for three or more years.

e. This paper has given me a thousand helpful hints for my writing.

***SUPPORT EVERYTHING YOU WRITE WITH REASONS AND EXAMPLES.**