

Lesson 3: Writing Style

Improving your writing skills allows you to communicate your thoughts and ideas through the written word. You have been writing since you were a young child, though your earliest writings probably didn't make sense to anyone but yourself. Now that you are older, you communicate through writing to your teachers, friends, family, and others. You want all your written communication to be clear and accurate.

Every time you write, you are writing for a particular **audience**. When you write in a journal, you write for yourself and for your future enjoyment, information, and memories. You write most of your school assignments for your teachers. Sometimes you write notes or letters to a friend or to your parents. You may even write an article for your school or church newspaper. Or you may be asked to write a formal paper to present as a project or speech for people outside your school.

You also write for different **purposes**. The three most common writing purposes are to **inform**, to **entertain**, and to **persuade**. Journals are usually written to entertain or inform. School assignments may involve all three purposes. Notes, letters, news articles, and formal presentations often provide information, but some-times they are intended to persuade or even entertain.

A good writer fits his writing style to his or her audience and purpose. Always identify your writing purpose to yourself—to inform, to entertain, or to persuade.

As you practice writing, you will develop a style that “sounds like you.” *Style* is a writer's unique way of putting ideas into writing—the writer's use of **vocabulary**, **diction**, **sentence structure**, and **tone**. Your writing style will have a distinctive feel that makes it personal to you. As good writers write for specific audiences and purposes, they vary their writing style. When you become an adult, you may need to write formally, perhaps for an audience of people who

don't know you. And, of course, you will write informally, like in a note to your best friend or to a favorite cousin. Whatever the audience and style, your writing needs to be clear so that your reader(s) will understand what you are communicating. It should also be as accurate and as interesting as you are able to make it.

Sometimes student writers forget the audience for whom they are writing. A student may, for instance, write too informally in a paper or fail to use complete, grammatical sentences in answering essay-type test questions. In a note to a friend, it may be acceptable to be silly, but if you are writing a note to your teacher to ask for special permission to do something, you need to be polite, as well as use good spelling and grammar.

As with anything you do, the more you practice, the easier it becomes to do it right. You will be able to see your own style develop as you work through this workbook. You will also learn to recognize the writing styles of your friends, as well.

If any man wishes to write in a clear style, let him first be clear in his thoughts.

—Goethe

Definitions

Audience	Person(s) to whom you are writing.
Purpose	Reason you write.
Vocabulary	Words you use in writing.
Diction	Type of grammar and words you use—formal, middle, informal, slang, and jargon.
Sentence Structure	Length and types of sentences you use.
Tone	Attitude you take toward your subject.



QUESTIONS

Directions: Write a sentence that fits the audience and purpose of each situation listed below (some situations specify a spoken answer rather than a written one). Be prepared to defend your writing style for each sentence—vocabulary, diction, sentence structure, and tone.

1. For your journal, write a Bible principle you identified in your Bible reading this week.

2. Ask your mother if you can go to a friend's house. _____

3. Invite a friend to your house for pizza. _____

4. Write a prayer request to share with your class. _____

5. Leave a note for your younger brother, telling him where you put his allowance. _____

6. Prepare an introduction of your pastor for when he speaks in chapel. _____

7. Tell your father you are sorry for not doing your chores. _____

8. Write a note to tell your mother that her best friend called. _____

9. Write a thank you “for being my teacher” note to your Sunday school teacher.
