Choose Words for Your Audience

Use academic English or informal conversation for the situation

Name: _____ Date: _____

Part 1: Which kind of language fits?

Words can change with your audience and purpose. Academic English helps you explain or present learning clearly. Informal conversation can sound natural with friends. Respectful language is important in many situations, but respectful does not always mean academic.

Code key

A = Academic English
I = Informal conversation
E = Either can fit if it is clear and respectful

Try it

Read each situation. Write A, I, or E in the blank.

Situation card	Your code
1. You explain to your class how a seed grows into a plant.	
2. You ask a friend to play kickball at recess.	
3. You tell the librarian that you cannot find a library book.	
4. You tell your cousin about a funny game you played at home.	

Choose one situation above. What audience or purpose helped you decide? Write the number and your reason.

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Part 2: Say the message two ways

Partner rehearsal: Your message must mean the same thing in both spaces. First, say it to a friend. Next, say it to the class during a short garden update. You may use different words, but keep the main idea.

Message to share

The class garden needs water today. Ask for help after recess.

Plan before you speak

Use a friendly, natural voice with a friend. Use clear, complete ideas for the class update.

Rehearsal space 1 - Friend

Write words you could say.

Rehearsal space 2 - Class audience

Write words you could say.

Listener checklist Listen to your partner. Check one box for each.

I heard...	Yes	Not yet
the same main message both times		
words that fit the friend		
clear words that fit the class audience		

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Answer key and teaching notes

Materials supplied: student situation cards, message prompt, two rehearsal spaces, and listener checklist. **Additionally needed:** pencils; optional clipboards. Arrange partners so each student can hear the other. No external sources are used; all situations are original classroom simulations.

Exact setup: Print one student copy per child. Place students in pairs after Part 1. Tell each pair to take turns as Speaker and Listener. The Listener checks the checklist after hearing both versions, then partners switch roles. Allow students to speak from their written notes or from memory.

Teaching script: “Today we will choose language for an audience and purpose. Academic English can help us explain learning clearly. Informal conversation can fit friends. Respect matters in both kinds of speaking. Listen for the same main message, even when the words change.” Read each Part 1 card aloud once if needed. Before Part 2 say, “Your class version does not have to sound fancy. It needs to be clear for the class audience.”

Observation method: During partner rehearsals, listen to each student once. Record: M = keeps the main message; F = friend version fits; C = class version is clear and audience-aware. Mark +, developing, or not yet. Confer by asking, “Who will hear this? What could you change so they understand?” Do not require one exact wording or treat formality as the only sign of academic English.

1. Codes: 1-A: explaining a science idea to the class calls for clear academic English. 2-I: a friend at recess is an informal conversation. 3-E: either academic English or a clear, respectful everyday statement can fit a librarian interaction. 4-I: talking with a cousin at home is informal. **Reason response:** accept a reasonable audience/purpose explanation, such as “I chose 1 because I am explaining learning to the class.”

2. Oral task sample: Friend: “Hey, our garden needs water. Can you help after recess?” Class: “Our class garden needs water today. Please help us water it after recess.” Accept other responses that keep the need for water and request for help after recess. A student may use a respectful friend version or a somewhat informal class version if the audience can understand; score the fit, clarity, and preserved meaning.

Checklist scoring: Each listener checks based on what was heard. For teacher assessment, proficient work includes all three: same main message, a plausible friend version, and a clear class version. If a student says nearly identical versions, ask for one purposeful audience change, such as adding a greeting, using “our class garden,” or making the request clearer.