



Hello and welcome to Study English. I'm Margot Politis.

Today on Study English, we're going to look at some of the features of formal, written English.

In our clip, we'll hear from a man who believes that drinking water is the key to being healthy and living a long time.

He's going to talk about how he came to his conclusion, and how he tried to get some support for his project.

How does nature do it? What keeps body cells going and how can we improve on that process so that we eliminate disease altogether and we live a long and healthy life? I don't think death and disease is inevitable.

We stumbled on the fact that they weren't actually getting rid of carbon dioxide out of their bodies, they were neutralising the carbon dioxide in their bodies, and we found out it was from the water they were drinking.

When we looked at these animals and saw what they were doing, it was exactly as we'd hypothesised and that was a great feeling. A real feeling of elation.

I tried and I tried and I tried to be conventional in that sense. I went to one hundred people. I wrote one thousand letters. I spoke to the Australian Academy of Science. I spoke to the American Academy of Science. I spoke to hospitals. I spoke to professors of medicine, because I wanted to do work independently. I couldn't get anywhere, so I had to do it other ways.

This is a food substance, this is something that's been drunk for thousands of years. This is probably where the mythology of the fountain of youth came from. There would have been natural springs somewhere bubbling out magnesium bicarbonate at an alkaline pH value. And people that drank these springs lived longer.



But I want everybody to have the opportunity to live a long and healthy life, and that's been my life's work, and we're getting somewhere, we're getting somewhere.

One of the most important areas for students to master is the difference between *informal* spoken language and *formal* written English, including academic language.



There are many differences between formal and informal English.

Firstly, in written language, *all words must be spelt correctly*. There should be no words in written English that you can't find in a dictionary.

Another important difference is that *contractions are not used* in formal written English. We only use contractions in written English if we're trying to represent the way that people speak.



- All words must be spelt correctly.

The clip we've heard today is, of course, spoken English. Listen to part of it again and see if you can identify the features of informal English.

But I want everybody to have the opportunity to live a long and healthy life, and that's been my life's work, and we're getting somewhere, we're getting somewhere.

When Dr Beckett is speaking he uses a number of *contractions*.

He says 'That's been my life's work', and 'We're getting somewhere'.

'That's' is short for 'that is', and 'we're' is short for 'we are'.

So if we were writing these statements, we'd write:

'That has been my life's work.'

'We are getting somewhere.'

There are many common contractions. By using them in your spoken language, you will sound more natural. But be careful to write them out in full in formal situations. Watch for 'not' words like:

'couldn't, could not',

'wouldn't, would not',

'shouldn't, should not',

'won't, will not',

and 'don't, do not'.



Another common feature of informal English is the use of *phrasal verbs*, or two word verbs.

Phrasal verbs consist of a 'verb' and a 'preposition'. They are commonly used in spoken English, and their meanings are idiomatic, giving the verb a special, new meaning.

Listen for some phrasal verbs in this clip.



We stumbled on the fact that they weren't actually getting rid of carbon dioxide out of their bodies. They were neutralising the carbon dioxide in their bodies, and we found out it was from the water they were drinking.

This is probably where the mythology of the fountain of youth came from.

He uses the phrasal verbs "stumbled on", 'get rid of', 'found out' and 'came from'.

In formal written English, it's best to use single word verbs.

So instead of saying:

'They weren't *getting rid* of carbon dioxide',

we would write:

'They weren't *eliminating* carbon dioxide',

and then we'd get rid of the contraction, so it would read:

'They *were not eliminating* carbon dioxide.

Instead of saying:

'We *found out* it was from the water',

we would write:

'We *discovered* it was from the water'.

'This is probably where the myth *came from*.'

'This is probably where the myth *originated*.'



Let's look at some other examples of common phrasal verbs.

Instead of 'look into', we would write 'investigate'.

Instead of 'cut down', we would write 'reduce'.

'Keep on' could be 'continue'.

'Point out' could be 'indicate.'

All of these words are more formal than using phrasal verbs.

look into	investigate
cut down	reduce
keep on	continue
point out	indicate

Another important part of formal written English, is understanding how to use *conjunctions*.

'Short sentences' are less formal than 'compound or complex sentences'. If you can, it's good to try to link short sentences together.

Listen to this clip, then we'll try to turn it into good formal English using *coordinating conjunctions*.

I went to one hundred people. I wrote a thousand letters. I spoke to the Australian Academy of Science. I spoke to the American Academy of Science. I spoke to hospitals. I spoke to professors of Medicine, because I wanted to do work independently. I couldn't get anywhere.

He uses a number of simple sentences in a row.

I spoke to the Australian Academy of Science.
I spoke to the American Academy of Science.
I spoke to hospitals.
I spoke to professors of Medicine.

These could become:

'I spoke to the Australian Academy of Science, the American Academy of Science *and* hospitals.
I *also* spoke to professors of Medicine.'

There are some rules to be aware of when you're using conjunctions.

In formal English, we don't start sentences with coordinating conjunctions.

Words like 'and' and 'but' are joining words. They are not used to begin sentences.

Listen to Dr Beckett again. Notice how he uses conjunctions to start his sentences.



There would have been natural springs somewhere bubbling out magnesium bicarbonate at an alkaline pH value. And people that drank these springs lived longer. But I want everybody to have the opportunity to live a long and healthy life, and that's been my life's work.

He uses the word 'and' to begin a sentence.

If we were writing a formal report or essay, we would have to find other words to replace 'and'.

We could begin the sentence with:

'Furthermore',

'In addition', or

'Moreover'.

We could replace the word 'but' with the word 'however'.

You should make lists of these alternative words, so you use a variety of them in your written language.

It's important to avoid repetition in your formal written English.

Of course repetition can be used to add emphasis in spoken English.

You might hear people say things like 'I really, really like that'.

But in formal academic writing, you should find other ways of adding emphasis.

Listen to the way Russell uses repetition.

I tried and I tried and I tried to be conventional in that sense. I went to one hundred people. I wrote one thousand letters. I spoke to the Australian Academy of Science. I spoke to the American Academy of Science. I spoke to hospitals. I spoke to professors of medicine, because I wanted to do work independently. I couldn't get anywhere.



Russell says 'I tried and I tried and I tried.'

To make this sentence more formal, you could either just drop the repeated verb, or use an *adverb* like 'repeatedly'.

We could just write:

'I tried.'



or,

'I tried repeatedly.'

Another way you can make your language more formal is to use the prefix 're-' to indicate a repeated action. This doesn't apply to all verbs.

Look at this sentence.

'He *played and played* the song *again and again*.'

We could write formally:

He *replayed* the song *repeatedly*.

And why don't you try practising ways of making spoken language more formal, or looking at ways that you can take formal, written language, and turn it into conversational English!

That's all for today, I hope I'll see you next time on Study English. Bye bye.

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