

Register

Languages

Fitting language to the situation, and the levels languages distinguish.

The classic five levels, from most to least formal.

Register	Where	Example
Frozen	Ritual, fixed text	Legal oaths, liturgy
Formal	Speeches, academic writing	'We hereby request...'
Consultative	Professional, with strangers	'Could you help me with...'
Casual	Friends	'Give us a hand?'
Intimate	Close relationships	Private shorthand

Learners are usually taught the consultative register and then sound oddly formal with friends. Both directions of mismatch are noticeable.