Speech Language

*What is meant by language?*

Language deals with the words and phrases you choose to present an idea and how you put these together. Different situations call for different levels of formality. Informal situations, such as a dinner with friends, call for informal language. Formal situations, such as a job interview, call for more formal language. What is considered “proper English” should be used in the more formal settings.

*What does language have to do with the senior boards speech?*

Your audience is expecting professional language use, which means no profanity or slang. Additionally, your audience is looking for the language appropriate to your topic; this shows mastery in your topic area. For example, a student who has made pottery for their senior project will use words such as *the wheel, glaze* and *the kiln.*

*How do I know when to use more formal language?*

Language usage is largely intuitive, but everyone can benefit from thinking consciously about word choice. Below is an illustration of the formality continuum. Just as in writing, different situations call for more or less formality.

*Casual situations with friends Conversation with teachers Senior Boards*

Informal Formal



Giving a formal speech or interviewing for a job? Remember to omit slang and profanity. Neither one belongs in a formal setting.

**Practice**

1) Reword the following phrase for the different scenarios:

**That was a good movie.**

* Telling your friends after the movie.
* Telling your grandparents over dinner.
* Telling your teacher before class.
* Telling your classmates in a speech assignment.

1. Place the following words where they belong on the formality continuum.

Informal Formal

Outgoing Brutal Swine

Gregarious Arduous Oinker

Chatty Hard Pig

 YOUR TURN

Prepare a speech for your class on someone who has influenced your life. Think consciously about your language choices. Aim for a more professional-sounding speech.