

Formal and Informal Functional Language Dominoes

Without looking below, put all the cards that you are given into a big ring by joining phrases which have the same meaning/ function/ purpose.

Hint: The phrases should be in formal/ informal (or informal/ formal) pairs. Make sure that you have matched up the phrases that way.

Check your answers with a photocopy of the cards worksheet. The card in the right hand column has the same function as the card in the right hand column of the next row. The very last card links with the very first one.

Circle the more formal phrase in each pair.

Test each other in pairs:

- Read out two phrases and see if your partner can repeat back the one which is more formal
- Read out a phrase and see if your partner can identify if it is formal or informal
- Read out a phrase and see if your partner can make another version which is more or less formal. Other phrases not below are fine as long as they have the same function but different formality. Help them with sentence starters, key words etc if they get stuck

Play an actual game of dominoes with the cards, starting with seven cards each and taking more if you can't match any of the cards you have with the ones which are on the table. Anyone with no cards left wins the game (even if the whole loop isn't finished).

Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers

Don't cut the cards along the middle between the two columns (so that they have two sides like dominoes).

| | |
|--|---|
| Please find... (that you requested) attached. | How may I help you? |
| What can I do for you? | I look forward to seeing you then. |
| See you then. | Can you do me a favour and tell me...? |
| I would be grateful if you could inform me... | Is it okay for me to...? |
| Might it be possible for me to...? | I'm free... if that's good for you. |
| I am available..., if it is convenient with you. | I look forward to hearing from you. |
| Looking forward to hearing from you. | Any more questions, just let me know. |
| If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. | Cheers. |
| Thank you in advance. | Good morning. ... Corp ...speaking. How may I help you? |
| Hello? | How's it going?/ are things?/ 's life? |
| I hope you are well. | Do you fancy... (with us)? |
| We would like to invite you to... | How are you getting on with...? |
| I was wondering about the progress of... | I reckon you should definitely... |

| | |
|---|---|
| My advice would probably be to... | Please accept our sincerest apologies. |
| Sorry about that. | Sorry, but... |
| We regret to inform you that... | Hi guys |
| To: All staff | Best wishes |
| Sincerely yours | (Make sure you) don't... |
| Please ensure that you refrain from... | Dear Mr Case |
| Hi Alex | May I introduce my colleague...? |
| This is... | I'm... |
| Please allow me to introduce myself,... | I am very grateful for... |
| Thanks for... | I'm afraid I was not completely satisfied with... |
| ... was totally unacceptable. | Here's... (you asked for). |

Brainstorming stage

Without looking above for now, brainstorm suitable phrases into the categories below, with a mix of different levels of formality if possible. Sometimes more than two phrases from the cards fit in one category below, and many other phrases not above are also suitable.

Answering the telephone**Email opening greeting (= the very first thing)****Introducing yourself****Social English/ Friendly phrases****Thanking****Offers****Requests****Enquiries/ Asking for information****Asking for permission****Making arrangements (fixing meetings, etc)**

Invitations

Checking progress

Advice/ Recommendations/ Suggestions/ Feedback

Making complaints

Apologies

Giving bad news

Instructions/ Commands/ Demanding action

Talking about documents (attachments etc)

Introducing other people

Email closing greeting (= the thing just before the writer's name at the bottom)

Mentioning future contact

Look at the cards to check your answers, starting with mixed up cards again. Then brainstorm more, e.g. ones with medium formality. You will get one point for each correct phrase which isn't on the cards and which no other team got. Even small changes are fine.

Written by Alex Case for UsingEnglish.com © 2017