Formal and informal words 1

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

PRE-INTERMEDIATE | A2-B1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each informal word with its more formal equivalent.

1 ask for	____	a require
2 buy	____	b purchase
3 help	____	c inform
4 need	____	d commence
5 tell	____	e request
6 get	____	f assist
7 start	____	g obtain
8 end	____	h conclude

2 Complete the formal expressions.

assistance | **commence** | **contact** | **enquire** | **inform** | **purchase** | **receive** | **require**

1 _____ further information

2 _____ the office

3 _____ a new ticket

4 _____ at nine o'clock

5 _____ you of a change

6 _____ about the course

7 _____ payment

8 ask for _____

3 Choose the word that suits a formal email.

1 I am writing to *ask for / request* information.

2 Please *tell / inform* us of any changes.

3 The meeting will *start / commence* at ten.

4 You can *get / obtain* a form online.

5 We *need / require* your signature.

6 Please *help / assist* the visitor.

7 The event will *end / conclude* at four.

8 Tickets may be *bought / purchased* online.

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4 Complete the formal notice with words from the box.

assist | commence | contact | inform | obtain | purchase | request | require

Visitors who **1** _____ a parking permit should **2** _____ reception. Staff will **3** _____ applicants which documents they need. You can **4** _____ forms online. If you **5** _____ support, an adviser will **6** _____ you. Guided tours **7** _____ at 10.00. Visitors must **8** _____ tickets in advance.

5 Read the text. Write T (true) or F (false).

Choosing the right style

We usually use informal language with friends and family. Formal language is more common in official letters, applications and notices. Formal words are not always better; the best choice depends on the reader, purpose and situation. A message to a close friend may sound strange if every word is very formal.

1 Informal language is common with friends. T / F

2 Applications often use formal language. T / F

3 Formal words are always better. T / F

4 The reader affects language choice. T / F

5 Purpose is not important. T / F

6 Very formal language can sound odd between friends. T / F

6 Rewrite using the formal word in capitals.

1 Please ask for a copy. **REQUEST** _____

2 We need your address. **REQUIRE** _____

3 The lesson starts at eight. **COMMENCES** _____

4 Tell us about the problem. **INFORM** _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a **70-90 word** formal email requesting information about a course, service or event.

[ ] Use at least eight formal expressions. [ ] Include a polite opening and closing. [ ] State your request clearly.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Informal and formal words

1 **e** 2 **b** 3 **f** 4 **a** 5 **c** 6 **g** 7 **d** 8 **h**

2 Formal expressions

1 **receive** 2 **contact** 3 **purchase** 4 **commence** 5 **inform** 6 **enquire** 7 **require** 8 **assistance**

3 Formal choices

1 **request** 2 **inform** 3 **commence** 4 **obtain**
5 **require** 6 **assist** 7 **conclude** 8 **purchased**

4 Formal notice

1 **require** 2 **contact** 3 **inform** 4 **obtain** 5 **request** 6 **assist** 7 **commence** 8 **purchase**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 **T** 2 **T** 3 **F** 4 **T** 5 **F** 6 **T**

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 Please **request** a copy. 2 We **require** your address. 3 The lesson **commences** at eight. 4 Please **inform** us about the problem.

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check register, politeness, purpose and appropriate closing.