**Informative Writing: Putting Notes into an Outline**

**Formal Style**

In formal style, you avoid contractions, abbreviations, and slang (text language). You write in the ***third person*** perspective **(*Do* *not use me, my, or I.)***, and your tone is neutral, polite, and impersonal. Formal style can be found in textbooks and many other informational non-fictional texts such as encyclopedias. Do not use “fancy” fonts. Times New Roman is standard. Spell out numbers under 100, unless it is part of a date such as January **29**, 2015.

**Third Person Perspective:** Narrator gives information and is neutral. This perspective directs the reader’s attention to the subject being discussed. Third person **personal pronouns**: he, she, it, they, him, her, them, his, her, hers, its, their, and theirs.

**Examples**

**Formal**

The United States is a magnificent country located within the continent of North America. It has a population of 316.1 million people. America, as it is commonly known, is often called “the land of the free, home of the brave.” Within its vast territory, you will find areas ranging from flat land to mountainous, and temperatures dipping well below zero to scorching hot. There are many natural resources and a wide variety of job opportunities for those who reside there. Citizens enjoy celebrating holidays, and pass down many traditions from one generation to the next. In addition, there are many things to do and see should you ever get the opportunity to visit the exciting, wondrous land.

***Word Choice can make or break your essay; right click on words for synonyms.***

**Informal**

We’re learning about a country in social studies doing an activity called Secret Adventures. Mrs. Sitze is our teacher. My country is the United States. It’s a cool place. I’m going to share lots of facts with you about it. I sure hope you like this informative essay and learn a bunch. It was fun, but kinda hard getting it all together for the assignment Ms. Doglio gave us.

**Features of Informational Writing:** *Good informative writing . . .*

* introduces a main idea and develops it with facts and details.
* gives important information about a specific topic in an organized way.
* Summarizes/paraphrases information from a variety of different sources.
* draws a conclusion based on the facts and information presented.
* uses transition words to connect ideas.

**Paraphrasing** is simply putting things in your own words. If you’re typing from your notes, this should be easy. Use quotes if you copy anything from a source, and say where you got it from, or who said it. Do not plagiarize; it is actually illegal.

**Transition Words**

To help your readers link ideas, you need to add transitions—words and phrases that show the relationship between ideas and events. Use a comma after a transition word.

**Introduction**

Begin with a thesis statement; it will tell the reader what your paper is about. Include a few **general statements** letting us in on what you are going to discuss. It should be at least four sentences long, and no sentences should start with the same word. Try not to give away too many details, but you should report the population and tell what continent your country is located within.

**Body Paragrahs/Subtopics** (Organizing facts is essential: Use an outline.)

In addition to the required subtopic, choose 3 or more others from the listed. Use research from print and internet sources to find facts. Write down your sources. Include title and author or webpage. Your first sentence of any paragraph should not contain a pronoun. Example: Do not say: There are many jobs there. Be careful with subtopics; if you’re going to give a lot of information about something particular (ex. Chinese New Year), it will need its own paragraph. Obviously, you won’t be able to include everything about your country, so try to choose things you think will interest the reader, and give some detail.

**Conclusion**

Your conclusion should not give any new facts or information, but should draw a conclusion from the facts you presented. It should contain at least 4 good sentences summing it all up. Save your best statement for last. A quote could be used. Do not say, “I hope you liked my report, that’s all for now, over and out amigo,” or any other informal type of ending. Make your last sentence an excellent one, and one that will leave an impression and stay with the reader.

**Works Cited**

Where did you get your information? Write down your sources. Be careful, especially on the internet. There are many reliable sources, but there are also a lot that are either outdated or inaccurate in what they report. Additionally, if someone you know has been to the country you are writing about, you could interview them to get information. They may even have artifacts for you to share in your presentation.