

that, increasingly, formal reports writers use contractions and active-voice verbs. Today, report writers try to avoid awkward third-person references to themselves as *the researchers* or *the authors* because it sounds stilted and outdated.

	<b>Informal Writing Style</b>	<b>Formal Writing Style</b>
<b>Appropriate Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short, routine reports</li> <li>• Reports for familiar audiences</li> <li>• Noncontroversial reports</li> <li>• Internal use reports</li> <li>• Internal announcements and invitations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lengthy, formal reports and proposals</li> <li>• Research studies</li> <li>• Controversial or complex reports</li> <li>• External use reports</li> <li>• Formal Invitations</li> </ul>
<b>Overall Effect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly tone</li> <li>• Relationship building</li> <li>• Casual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectivity and accuracy</li> <li>• Sense of professionalism and fairness</li> <li>• Professional distance between writer and reader</li> </ul>
<b>Writing Style Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of first-person pronouns (<i>I, we, me, my, us, our</i>)</li> <li>• Use of contractions (<i>can't, don't</i>)</li> <li>• Emphasis on active-voice verbs (<i>I conducted the study</i>)</li> <li>• Shorter sentences</li> <li>• Familiar words</li> <li>• Conversational language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of third person (<i>the researcher, the writer</i>) (depends on the circumstances)</li> <li>• Absence of contractions (<i>cannot, do not</i>)</li> <li>• Use of passive-voice verbs (<i>the study was conducted</i>)</li> <li>• Professional, respectful language</li> <li>• Absence of humor and figures of speech</li> <li>• Elimination of "editorializing" (author's opinions and perceptions)</li> </ul>

Figure 9.3: Report-Writing Styles

## 9-2: Report Formats and Heading Levels

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2

Describe typical report formats and understand the significance of effective headings.

The overall design of a formatted report should be visually appealing and professional looking. The report's design should include a hierarchy of meaningful headings that highlight major points, allowing readers to see the flow of ideas. Many corporations use templates or reporting software to standardize the look of their report in terms of formats and heading levels.