

Using Informal Language

Consider using with *Voyages in English 2011*
Grade 3—Chapter 7, Lesson 3 or Lesson 6
Grade 4—Chapter 6, Lesson 6



Teach

Explain to students that informal language is the kind we use in everyday speech and conversation. Informal language can vary depending on the country, region, profession, and age of the speaker. Guide students to understand the following definitions:

- **Colloquialisms:** Informal expressions that reflect the way we speak every day
- **Idioms:** expressions that mean something other than what they literally say
- **Jargon:** Specific language related to a certain profession or interest
- **Slang:** Nonstandard informal language that often becomes rapidly outdated
- **Culture-specific language:** Words and expressions that are common in a language or region and may or may not be adopted by other cultures

Provide examples of each type of informal language and invite students to contribute their own examples. Maintain a list of these examples for students to reference in Practice and Apply.

Practice

Use folktales to illustrate how informal language helps make the story seem more authentic. Select several folktales from various cultures around the world. Point out that using informal and culture-specific language is important to these stories that are set in a certain time and place. Informal language is also an important part of a character's actions or dialogue; it makes the character seem more authentic.

Read aloud several folktales. Discuss how informal language is used in the story and how the language reflects the characters and setting.

Choose two characters from a folktale and write a short script for them, including examples of informal language appropriate for the age, culture, profession, and setting. Discuss the script with students and revise it using student feedback.

Apply

Have students work in pairs to write a short script between two characters of a particular time, place, or culture. Point out that they may use two characters from one of the folktales or they can make up their own characters. Remind them to think about the region, age, background, and interests of the characters before they start. Ask them to include informal language that better develops each character, yet sounds like natural speech appropriate for the place and time.

Assess

Have partners identify how they used informal language to develop their characters. Ask them to identify specific uses of slang, colloquialisms, and jargon.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Have partners perform their scripts. After each presentation, ask the group to identify examples of informal or culture-specific language that was used by each character. Then ask the audience to evaluate whether each dialogue sounds like everyday conversation appropriate for the given time and place.