

Using Informal Language

Consider using with *Voyages in English 2011*

Grade 6–Chapter 7, Lesson 3

Grade 7–Chapter 6, Lesson 3 or Lesson 4

Grade 8–Chapter 7, Lesson 4



Teach

Explain to students that informal language is the kind used in everyday speech and conversation. Informal language can vary depending on the country, region, profession, and age of the speakers.

Guide students to understand the following definitions:

- **Colloquialisms:** Informal expressions that reflect the way people speak every day
- **Jargon:** Specific language related to a certain profession or interest
- **Slang:** Nonstandard informal language, which often becomes rapidly outdated
- **Culture-specific language:** Words and expressions that are common in a particular 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 examples of their own. Maintain a list of these examples for students to reference in Practice and Apply.

Practice

Point out that using informal and culture-specific language is important to a story that is set in a certain time and place. Informal language is also an important part of a character's actions or dialogue.

Model for students how informal language is used to develop a character through dialogue. Choose two characters and write a short dialogue between them, including examples of informal language appropriate for the age, culture, profession, and setting for the characters. Discuss the dialogue with students and revise it using student feedback.

Apply

Have students work in pairs to write a short dialogue between two characters of a particular time, place, or culture. 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, and 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 read their dialogues aloud. 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.