**Standard and Slang**

The English language has several levels of usage which differ in the degree of formality or informality. There are different opinions on what to include in these levels, and the boundaries between them are not always clear. The following overview should give you a general idea of what these levels are.

**Formal English**

Formal English is used in polite conversation with strangers in formal situations as well as in formal and business correspondence. Formal English is very correct and follows grammar rules very strictly. Its vocabulary is quite complicated.

**Standard English**

Standard English is used by the majority of native speakers in formal and informal situations with strangers, coworkers, friends and family in both speech and writing. It is the language of general use. Standard English is polite, friendly, and correct in grammar, pronunciation, and the choice of words.

**Informal English**

Informal English (everyday, conversational, colloquial English) is close to Standard English and is used by the majority of native speakers in informal situations with coworkers, friends and family, mostly in oral communication. It is the ordinary, everyday language of literate people in conversation. Grammar and vocabulary are simpler, and a lot of everyday idioms are used.

**Slang**

Slang (non-standard, unconventional language) is very informal use of words and phrases for more colorful or peculiar style of expression that is shared by the people in the same social subgroup, for example, computer slang, sports slang, military slang, musicians' slang, students' slang, underworld slang. Slang is not used by the majority of native speakers, and many people consider it vulgar, though quite a few slang phrases have already come into standard usage. Slang contains many obscene and offensive words and phrases. It also has many expressions that are acceptable in informal communication. Slang is highly idiomatic.

Which of these language levels should we choose?

Keep in mind that academic English, that is, the language that is studied in educational institutions, is usually more formal than the language in real life. Why?