

W using formal language in reports

A Work in groups of three. Discuss the questions and complete the *Me*, *Partner 1* and *Partner 2* columns in the table.

- How much time do you spend doing each activity in the table each week?
- Are you spending more (↑), less (↓) or the same (↔) time on each activity at the moment, compared to last year?

	Me	Partner 1	Partner 2	Average
	hours	hours	hours	hours
checking social media				
sending instant messages				
studying online				

B Now work out the average number of hours spent doing each activity. Are people spending more or less time on each activity compared to last year? Complete the *Average* column of the table in Exercise A.

C Read the *Report about online trends* and answer the questions.

- What trends did the writer find? Did you find the same trends?
- What was different?
- What is the writer's main prediction for the future?



Report about online trends

¹These days, online communication is more and more important in our daily lives. ²But are we actually spending more time online? ³This report examines the number of hours that people spend on various online

activities and explores some recent trends. ⁴I interviewed eight members of my English class about their online habits.

How much time do you spend checking social media?

The average number of hours in my group is just over one hour per day. This is surprising, as I expected the total to be higher. One possible reason is that several popular social media sites are showing more adverts these days.

How much time do you spend sending instant messages?

The average number of hours here is approximately 1.5 hours per day. Almost everybody said that this number is increasing for them. It seems that many people are using instant messaging services for conversations that they had on social media before.

How much time do you spend studying online?

The average number of hours here was 4.3 per week. Two people in my group never study online, and this trend is not changing. Two people study online a lot: 12 and 15 hours a week. This trend is also not changing, as these people both study on long-term courses. However, the other three people's answers were especially interesting: they all spend two to three hours a week studying, but this is increasing very fast, from zero last year. They all use language learning apps to study for pleasure.

Conclusion

There certainly seems to be a trend away from social media and towards messaging apps. However, the main trend I noticed is the increase in online studying, especially the use of language apps. I expect this trend to continue into the future.

D Look at the introduction to the *Report about online trends*. Match the sentences (1–4) with the descriptions (a–d).

- Explain where you got your information, e.g. *Who did you ask?*
- Ask a rhetorical question to make the reader think about the topic.
- Present your reason for writing the report: what does the report do?
- Start by introducing the general topic of your report.

E Look at the box and complete the tips about using formal language in reports. Then find examples of each tip in the report.

Using formal language in reports

We **use / don't use** contractions (e.g. *there's, isn't*).

In general, most sentences are quite **long / short**.

Most sentences have **a human subject**, e.g. *I, Two people / a non-human subject*, e.g. *It, This trend*.

F Match the formal phrases (1–7), which are underlined in the *Report about online trends*, with the less formal phrases (a–g).

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 This report examines ... | a but |
| 2 various | b more or less |
| 3 One possible reason is that ... | c Maybe this is because ... |
| 4 approximately | d In this report, I look at ... |
| 5 It seems that ... / There certainly seems to be ... | e I think ... |
| 6 especially | f a few different |
| 7 However, ... | g very |

WRITING

A PREPARE You are going to write a report about current trends in communication. What trends do you notice? You can use the ideas in Exercise A or your own ideas.

B PLAN Choose two or three points to include in your report. These will be your main paragraphs.

C WRITE Write your report (150–200 words). Remember:

- to start with an introduction.
- when you present numbers, show what they mean and how they're connected together.
- to use formal language.
- to end with a conclusion.

D REVIEW Work in groups. Share your reports. Who found the most interesting information? Were you surprised by any of the trends he/she found?