

What is Register and Formality in French?

Worksheet

French register spans formal (vous, passive voice, complex syntax, subjunctive) to informal (tu, direct address, simple clauses, indicative). The choice reflects social distance, respect, and setting—business email vs text to a friend.

Questions

1. 'Pourriez-vous m'aider?' is which register?

- A) Informal
- B) Neutral
- C) Formal
- D) Colloquial

2. Which is most informal?

- A) Vous devez partir.
- B) Tu dois partir.
- C) Il faut partir.
- D) Veuillez partir.

3. Passive voice ('est considéré') signals...

- A) simplicity
- B) formality
- C) doubt
- D) friendliness

4. 'On fait ça' compared to 'Je fais ça'?

- A) Same register.
- B) On is more formal, distancing.
- C) Je is more formal.
- D) On is casual; Je is formal.

5. Rewrite formal-to-informal: 'Il vous est demandé de présenter vos travaux.'

6. Professional email opening: compare registers.

7. Academic writing vs casual text: mood/tense.

8. Define: What is register in French?

9. Define: Formal register uses vous or tu?

10. Define: Grammar markers of formal register?

Answer Key

1. C) Formal — Conditional + vous = formal, respectful request.
2. B) Tu dois partir. — Tu + direct imperative (dois) = informal and direct.
3. B) formality — Passive voice is a hallmark of formal, impersonal academic/professional writing.
4. B) On is more formal, distancing. — On (impersonal) is more formal/objective; Je (personal) is direct and less formal.
5. Formal (passive, vous): Il vous est demandé de présenter vos travaux. Informal (active, tu): Je te demande de me montrer ton travail. OR: On te demande de nous montrer tes travaux. Shift: passive→active, vous→tu, complex→simple.
6. Formal: Monsieur, Madame, Je vous prie d'accepter l'assurance de mes sentiments distingués. Informal: Hi / Salut, À bientôt / Cordialement. Choice depends on hierarchical distance and relationship.
7. Academic (subjunctive): Il est essentiel que l'on comprenne les nuances. Casual (indicative): C'est vrai qu'on comprend mieux maintenant. Formal favors conditional, subjunctive; casual favors present indicative.
8. The stylistic level adapted to context: formal (professional, academic, distant) vs informal (friendly, casual, familiar).
9. Vous is formal, respectful, distant. Tu is informal, intimate, friendly.
10. Passive voice, subjunctive mood, complex syntax, impersonal 'on', polite conditionals.

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