

FORMAL SPEECH: Words and Sentences

An oral research presentation is an example of **formal speech**, which is different from both conversational speech and from formal writing intended to be read off a page. Formal speech:

- Provides more context than conversational speech does
- Uses more formal vocabulary than conversational speech uses
- Uses simpler sentences than formal writing uses
- Clearer to a listening audience than formal writing is

Conversational Speech*

The worst part about it was I had a friend sitting up here and she's saying "ha ha"... And I was saying "Go get the police... go get someone"... I later learned that there are some people who do that in the face of disaster... I mean they just start cracking up as opposed to crying.

Formal Speech

I told my friend to call the police or get help, and all she did was laugh at me. I learned later that this was not callousness. This is how some people react in the face of disaster. Some people respond by crying, and some respond by laughing.

or Maybe my friend did not realize that I was serious. She began laughing, and she laughed even harder as my situation became more difficult. She claimed I looked funny, clinging there screaming. I realized that she was laughing because she was unable to take action. The situation must have been very disturbing to her, and so she treated it as if it were a different situation.

Formal Writing*

My helpful friend, perhaps not realizing that I was serious, began laughing. She roared all the harder as my situation became more difficult. She claimed I looked funny, clinging there screaming. I realized that she was laughing because she was incapable of acting: the situation must have been greatly disturbing to her, and so she treated it as if it were another situation.

* "Speaking vs Writing." *University of Westminster: Learning Skills*, University of Westminster, http://www2.westminster.ac.uk/eic/learning-skills/literacy/sp_vs_writ_dif.html. Accessed 4 Apr. 2017.