

WRITING TASK

Exercise 1. What are the features of personal and impersonal tone?

Complete the features of personal and impersonal writing using these words.

active avoid contracted formal
furthermore I, we and you it passive
share uncontracted

Personal tone	Impersonal tone
a Use pronouns (e.g. _____)	Use pronouns (e.g. _____)
b Use verbs	Use verbs
c Use forms (e.g. <i>isn't</i>)	Use forms (e.g. <i>is not</i>)
d Use phrasal verbs	Use verbs
e Add personal details	personal information
f Use conversational linking phrases (e.g. <i>what's more</i>)	Use formal linking phrases (e.g. _____)
g _____ your feelings	Be objective in your judgements

Exercise 2. Read two paragraphs of a review for a comedy show. Do they have a personal or impersonal tone? Why? Write your answer and arguments.

Paragraph A

I've got to admit that I'm not a big fan of stand-up comedy. I always think that it's a rather unnatural thing. The comedian stands up in front of an audience who stare at him or her as if to say, 'Come on, then, make me laugh.' The comedian then has a few minutes to make them laugh or the audience will start to get restless. It's all a bit too aggressive for me. So when I went with an old school friend to see new British comedian Spencer Brown last Tuesday night at the Bristol Comedy Club, I wasn't really looking forward to it.

Tone: personal / impersonal

Why?

Paragraph B

¹ However, we quite enjoyed the show. And we ² were not the only ones – ³ his act seemed to be liked by the rest of the audience too. Brown's technique is to ⁴ commence by telling a small joke – usually some amusing observation about daily life – which ⁵ it is imagined at first is the main joke. But ⁶ subsequently he builds on this by telling a joke ⁷ that is related to the first and then another. The effect of ⁸ combining jokes like this is that, even though each one may not be that funny by itself, the whole sequence is ⁹ in reality very funny.

Tone: personal / impersonal

Why?

Exercise 3. Make the tone of the paragraph below personal, use the phrases in the box to replace the underlined words.

in fact	then	but	start	the rest of the audience seemed to like his act
putting together	that's	weren't		you think at first

¹ However, we quite enjoyed the show. And we ² were not the only ones – ³ his act seemed to be liked by the rest of the audience too. Brown's technique is to ⁴ commence by telling a small joke – usually some amusing observation about daily life – which ⁵ it is imagined at first is the main joke. But ⁶ subsequently he builds on this by telling a joke ⁷ that is related to the first and then another. The effect of ⁸ combining jokes like this is that, even though each one may not be that funny by itself, the whole sequence is ⁹ in reality very funny.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____