

Diction Design

Directions to Students: Each of the following sets of words has one word that is seemingly overdressed or underdressed for the occasion. Which one is more formal or casual than the rest of the words in the group? Circle the word that is a different level of diction from the others in the set.

father parent daddy	thoroughfare conduit road	s'up hey good evening
potent formidable strong	astounding boss remarkable	neat cool extraordinary
significant important big	kids teens adolescents	fundamentally completely tots
therefore consequently as a result 'cuz	vibe chill veg out decompress	replete suffused permeated hecka full

“Quick-write: Making a Fashion Statement”

Directions to Students: Respond to any of the following questions in a 5-minute quick-write. Why might it sometimes be a good idea to make “a fashion statement” by shifting to a level of diction that is different from the rest of the text? When do you want your words to stand out? How might an audience react to language that is unexpectedly casual or formal? Are there times when this kind of reaction can help a writer achieve his or her purpose? When can this rhetorical move be effective?

