Name _____ Date _____

# Posh word swaps

Swap chatty words for formal ones, without changing the meaning.

## 1 Learn



We use **informal** (chatty) words with friends, and **formal** words in careful speech and writing. Formal writing often swaps a chatty phrase like **find out** for one precise word: **discover**.



Chatty (informal)

swap hats!



Formal

| Chatty (informal) | | Formal |
|---|---|---|
| find out | → | discover |
| ask for | → | request |
| go in | → | enter |

**Worked example:** make this sentence formal. "Kids can go in for free if they ask for a ticket."

1. Find the chatty words: **kids**, **go in**, **for free**, **ask for**.
2. Choose a formal swap with the **same meaning**: children, enter, free of charge, request.
3. Read it back: **"Children may enter free of charge if they request a ticket."**

**Flip's tip:** a formal word must mean the same thing. **exit** sounds formal, but it means go *out*, not go in!

**Warm up:** write a formal swap for each phrase.

find out _____ ask for _____ go in _____

**Grown-ups:** both kinds of language are useful: informal language isn't wrong, it just suits a different audience. Ask, "Who would you say this to? Who would you write this to?"

Name _____ Date _____

## 2 Try it together

a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



### Posh or Chatty?

**You need:** 8 small pieces of paper, a pencil and a cup or bowl.

1. Write one chatty phrase on each piece of paper: **find out, ask for, go in, help, need, get, say sorry, put off**. Fold them into the cup.
2. Take turns to pick one and read it aloud. The other player gives a formal swap with the same meaning.
3. Check the swap in a sentence: "Please *request* a form." Does it still mean the same?
4. Write your best swaps in the table.

| Chatty phrase | Formal swap | Our sentence |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**Grown-ups:** there can be more than one good swap (get can be receive or obtain). Ask your child to choose the one that fits the sentence best. Play it at teatime with new phrases too.

## 3 Practise

**A.** Draw a line from each chatty phrase to its formal swap.

| | |
|---|---|
| **find out** | **require** |
| **ask for** | **return** |
| **go in** | **discover** |
| **help** | **postpone** |
| **need** | **enter** |
| **say sorry** | **apologise** |
| **put off** | **request** |
| **give back** | **assist** |

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Name _____ Date _____

**B.** Ring the formal word that keeps the meaning.

Visitors should **go in** / **enter** / **exit** through the main gate.

Scientists hope to **find out** / **discover** / **invent** how bees choose flowers.

You may **ask for** / **request** / **require** a copy of the report.

The match is **put off** / **postponed** / **cancelled** until next week.

**C.** These slang words are not formal. Write a formal word for each.

**loads of** _____ **kids** _____

**awesome** _____ **stuff** _____

**D.** Rewrite each sentence formally.

1. We need to find out who left the gate open, so please help us.

2. Loads of kids went in early and got awesome seats.

## Challenge

Leo's sign should welcome visitors into the museum. He writes: **"Visitors, please exit through the front door."** Is his formal word right?

_____

## I can... Tick when you can.

- [ ] swap chatty phrases like find out for formal words like discover
- [ ] spot slang such as loads and kids
- [ ] check that my formal word still means the same thing