

# \*Colloquialism



**Colloquialism:** An informal, slang style of English that should be reserved primarily for speech, as it can seem unprofessional or sloppy in written texts; or, writing in the way one would speak.

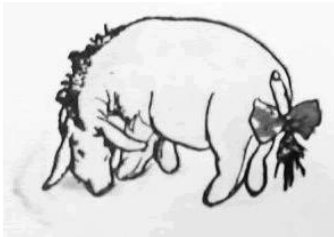
## Why is colloquialism discouraged?

- An academic paper written in a colloquial tone makes the writer seem less educated than he or she is in reality.

## Common Colloquialisms to Avoid

“I’m a Bear of Very Little Brain, and long words Bother me.”

“It’s not much of a tail, but I’m sort of attached to it.”



- Anyways
- Could of, would of, should of
- Get
- Gonna, wanna
- Like
- Kind, kind of
- Ain’t
- Next we’ll...

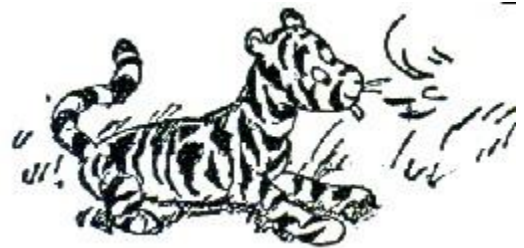
- Pretty much
- A lot
- Real, really
- Alright
- Okay/OK
- Sorta, sort of, kinda, kind of
- So you see...
- You’ll, we’re, they’ll

## Do not...

- use contractions. Such examples include, but are not limited to, can’t, didn’t, doesn’t, and isn’t.
- use clichés.
- use filler words, such as basically, even, just, or well.
- split infinitives. Instead of writing “He tried **to not sneeze** in the library,” write “He tried not **to sneeze** in the library.”
- end sentences with a preposition. Common prepositions to, on, in, and with.

use slang. Example: replace “kids” with “children.”

- use second person point of view (you, your).



“I’ve gotta lotta bouncin’ include to do!”

### Example of Colloquial Writing

John,  
I'm looking for a job and I've heard through the grapevine that you're looking for a workhorse to basically run the shop with. Well, I'm the man of the hour, 'cause I've got a lot to offer. I'm pretty hard working, and I'm really good about being on time. I've use to working by myself. Anyways, let me know if you want to get together for an interview, okay?

--Unprofessional Joe

### Example of Non-Colloquial Writing

Dear Mr. Feeney:  
I understand that you are looking for a strong worker to assist you in your shop. I would appreciate consideration because I am diligent, punctual, and accustomed to working with minimal supervision. Please contact me about setting up an interview. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully, Professional Joe

### Test your Knowledge of Colloquialism!

1. Roger Daltry sang, "I don't mind other guys dancing with my gal."
  - a. Is this sentence a victim of colloquialism?
  - b. If so, how can it be changed to be less colloquial?
2. She put all her eggs in one basket and counted her chickens before they hatched.
  - a. Is this sentence a victim of colloquialism?
  - b. If so, how can it be changed to possess a more academic tone?
3. Edgar stepped jauntily onto the bus and paid his fare.
  - a. Is this sentence a victim of colloquialism?
  - b. If so, how can it be changed to avoid colloquialism?
4. What did you set the phone on?
  - a. Is this sentence a victim of colloquialism?
  - b. If so, how can it be changed to possess a more academic tone?

## Answers!

1. Roger Daltry sang, "I don't mind other guys dancing with my gal."
  - a. Yes! There are contractions (don't) and slang terms (guys, gal).
  - b. Roger Daltry sang, "I do not mind if other men dance with my girlfriend."
  
2. She put all her eggs in one basket and counted her chickens before they hatched.
  - a. Yes! There are clichés in this sentence ("all her eggs in one basket," "counted her chickens before they hatched").
  - b. She put all of her hopes in one opportunity and made plans before she knew what the outcome was going to be.
  
3. Edgar stepped jauntily onto the bus and paid his fare.
  - a. No! This sentence is free of colloquialism.
  
4. What did you set the phone on?
  - a. Yes! Second person is used ("you") and the sentence ends with a preposition ("on").
  - b. Did Theresa set her phone down on the table?

Winnie the Pooh drawings courtesy of: <http://www.just-pooh.com/pictures-category.html?id=4>