Formal and Informal Language

Strategies for Academic Writing Series

1. Rewrite following sentences without contractions.
   a. Informal: The improvements can’t be introduced due to funding restrictions.
   b. Formal: The improvements cannot be introduced due to funding restrictions
   c. Informal: I don’t believe that the results were accurate.
   d. Formal: I do not believe that the results were accurate.
   e. Informal: The research project won’t continue next year.
   f. Formal: The research project will not continue next year.

2. Phrasal verbs (two-part verbs often consisting of a verb and a preposition) are sometimes considered as less formal than other verbs. Rewrite the underlined phrasal verbs with more formal vocabulary words.
   a. Informal: The balloon was blown up for the experiment.
   b. Formal: The balloon was inflated for the experiment.
   c. Informal: The patient got over his illness.
   d. Formal: The patient recovered from his illness. (*Expressions with “get” and “got” are usually considered informal*)
   e. Informal: The results of the study were mixed up.
   f. Formal: The results of the study were confused/conflated. (*These words have different meaning—improve your vocabulary and look them up in a dictionary!*)

3. The following sentences are mixed formal and informal. Write F (formal) or I (informal) in the brackets after each sentence.
   a. The project will be completed next year. __F__
   b. I showed that his arguments didn’t hold water. _I___
   c. We’ll finish the job next year. _I___
   d. It is possible to consider the results from a different viewpoint. _F___
   e. Five more tests will be necessary before the experiment can be concluded. _F___
   f. I don’t know why the organizers put up with the problem for so long. _I___
   g. The meeting took place at the mayor’s office. _F___
   h. The bridge will be closed for repairs. _F___
   i. The burgers were totally delicious. _I___ (*Totally is often considered informal*)