**Definition of diction:**

As a literary device, diction refers to the choice of words and [style](http://www.literarydevices.com/style/) of expression that an author makes and uses in a work of literature. Diction can have a great effect on the tone of a piece of literature, and how readers perceive the characters.

One of the primary things that diction does is establish whether a work is formal or informal. Choosing more elevated words will establish a formality to the piece of literature, while choosing slang will make it informal. For example, consider the difference between “I am much obliged to you, sir” and “Thanks a bunch, buddy!” The former expression of gratitude sounds much more formal than the latter, and both would sound out of place if used in the wrong situation.

**Common Examples of Diction**

We alter our diction all the time depending on the situation we are in. Different communication styles are necessary at different times. We would not address a stranger in the same way as a good friend, and we would not address a boss in that same way as a child.

examples of different diction choices based on formality:

* “Could you be so kind as to pass me the milk?” Vs. “Give me that!”
* “I regret to inform you that that is not the case.” Vs. “You’re wrong!”
* “It is a pleasure to see you again! How are you today?” Vs. “Hey, what’s up?”
* “I’m a bit upset,” Vs. “I’m so pissed off.”
* “I would be delighted!” Vs. “Sure, why not?”
* “I’ll do it right away, sir,” Vs. “Yeah, just a sec.”

Taken from http://www.literarydevices.com/diction/