

# Analyzing TONE

Tone is the writer's attitude or feeling about the subject of his text.

It is a special kind of rhetorical strategy because tone is created by the writer's use of all of the other rhetorical strategies.

- Diction & Tropes
- Syntax & Schemes
- Details & Lack of Details

When discussing an author's tone, you must be careful to choose the right word. Below is a list of tone words. Use them in your essays to describe the tone of the piece but only if you are sure you know the word's meaning (not sure – look it up in a dictionary).

When writing your essay, avoid saying: "The writer uses tone" since ALL writers use a tone of some kind. Instead, say: "The writer creates a \_\_\_\_\_ tone..."

abhorrence	abrasive	abrupt	abstract	accusatory
admiring	admonitory	affected	afraid	ambivalent
amused	amusing	analytical	angry	annoyed
anxious	apathetic	apologetic	apprehensive	approving
argumentative	artful	audacious	austere	authentic
authoritative	awe	awkward	baffled	bantering
bemused	benevolent	bitter	blunt	bold
bookish	boring	bucolic	callous	calm
candid	cautious	cerebral	ceremonial	cheery
childish	cliché	clinical	cold	comic
compassionate	compelling	complimentary	complicated	concerned
conciliatory	concise	condemning	condescending	confident
confiding	confused	contemptuous	contented	contrived
corny	critical	curious	cynical	dark
delightful	dense	derisive	despairing	desperate
detached	detached	didactic	disappointed	disbelieving
disdainful	disgusted	dismayed	disparaging	distinctive
disturbed	down-to-earth	dramatic	dreamy	dreary
dull	earnest	economical	edgy	effective
effusive	elated	elegant	elegiac	elitist
eloquent	embittered	endearing	energetic	enlightening
entertaining	enthusiastic	erudite	exaggerating	exuberant
facetious	factual	factual	fanciful	fascinated
fearful	flippant	fluent	focused	forced
forceful	foreboding	forgettable	forgiving	formal
formulaic	forthright	fresh	frivolous	funny
furious	giddy	gimmicky	glib	gloomy

graceful	grandiose	grim	gritty	grudging
gutsy	hackneyed	happy	harsh	haughty
haunting	hollow	honest	hopeful	hopeless
horrific	humorous	hyperbolic	idealistic	idiosyncratic
imaginative	impartial	impassioned	impulsive	incisive
incredulous	indifferent	indignant	indulgent	inflammatory
informal	informative	insightful	insisting	insolent
instructive	insubstantial	intellectual	interesting	intimate
inviting	irate	ironic	irrelevant	irreverent
irritated	joking	jovial	joyful	judgmental
labored	lackadaisical	lackluster	laudatory	learned
light	lighthearted	lofty	loving	lucid
lush	lyrical	matter of fact	maudlin	meditative
melancholic	melodramatic	memorable	mock-heroic	mocking
mock-serious	moralizing	morbid	mournful	narrow
nostalgic	objective	obvious	offbeat	offensive
opinionated	optimistic	ordinary	ostentatious	outraged
outrageous	overdone	paradoxical	passionate	patronizing
peaceful	pedantic	pedestrian	pejorative	pensive
persuasive	pessimistic	piquant	pitiful	plaintive
playful	poetic	pompous	preachy	predictable
pretentious	profound	prosaic	proud	provocative
puzzled	querulous	questioning	rambling	reader-friendly
realistic	reflective	refreshing	regretful	repressed
reproachful	resigned	respectful	restrained	revealing
reverent	rhapsodic	sad	sanctimonious	sarcastic
sardonic	satiric	satisfied	scornful	seductive
self-indulgent	sensuous	sentimental	serene	serious
severe	shallow	sharp	shocked	silly
simple	simplistic	sincere	sober	solemn
somber	sophomoric	spicy	spiteful	stiff
strident	striking	strong	substantive	subtle
superficial	surprised	surprising	suspicious	sweet
sympathetic	talky	taunting	thorough	thoughtful
thought-provoking	threatening	tired	tiresome	tolerant
trite	troubled	unconvincing	underdone	uneven
unsympathetic	upset	urbane	urgent	vexed
vibrant	wary	whimsical	wise	wistful
witty	wordy	wry	zealous	

## MOOD WORDS

Sometimes the TONE will set a MOOD.

bleak	dark	delirious	dismal	eerie,
elegiac	haunting	lonely	ominous	peaceful
playful	quizzical	reproachful	satiric	serene
soothing	suspenseful	tense	threatening	uplifting
whimsical				

## CHARACTER WORDS

Sometimes you need to describe the SPEAKER.

absorbed	aggressive	aloof	ambitious	amorous
anxious	apathetic	argumentative	arrogant	bitter
bored	carefree	careless	cautious	churlish
compassionate	conceited	conniving	curious	deceitful
demure	detached	devious	devoted	dishonest
easygoing	envious	exacting	frantic	fretful
gregarious	intelligent,	irritable	loquacious	manipulative
mendacious	naive	nervous	noble	outgoing
patient	picky	scrupulous	self-involved	sincere
sloppy	spontaneous	suspicious	talkative	testy
uninvolved	unpredictable	vindictive	welcoming	wise
worried				