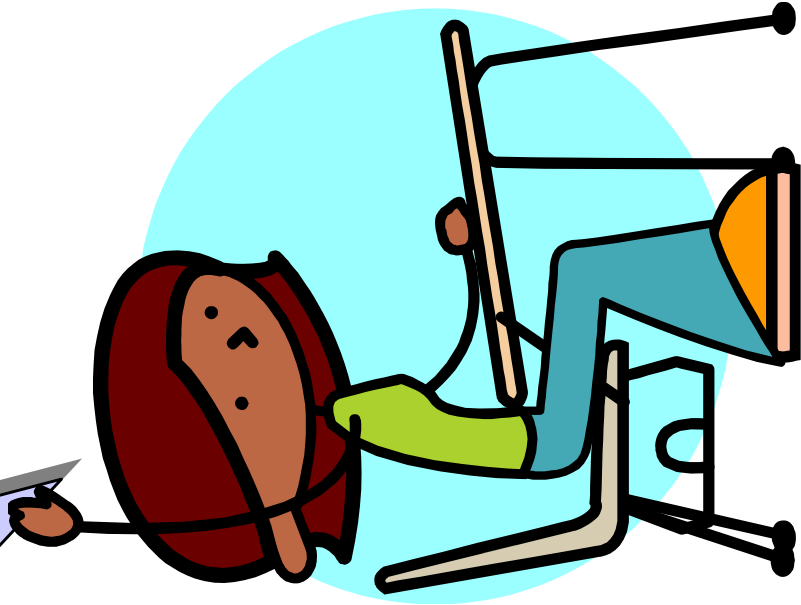


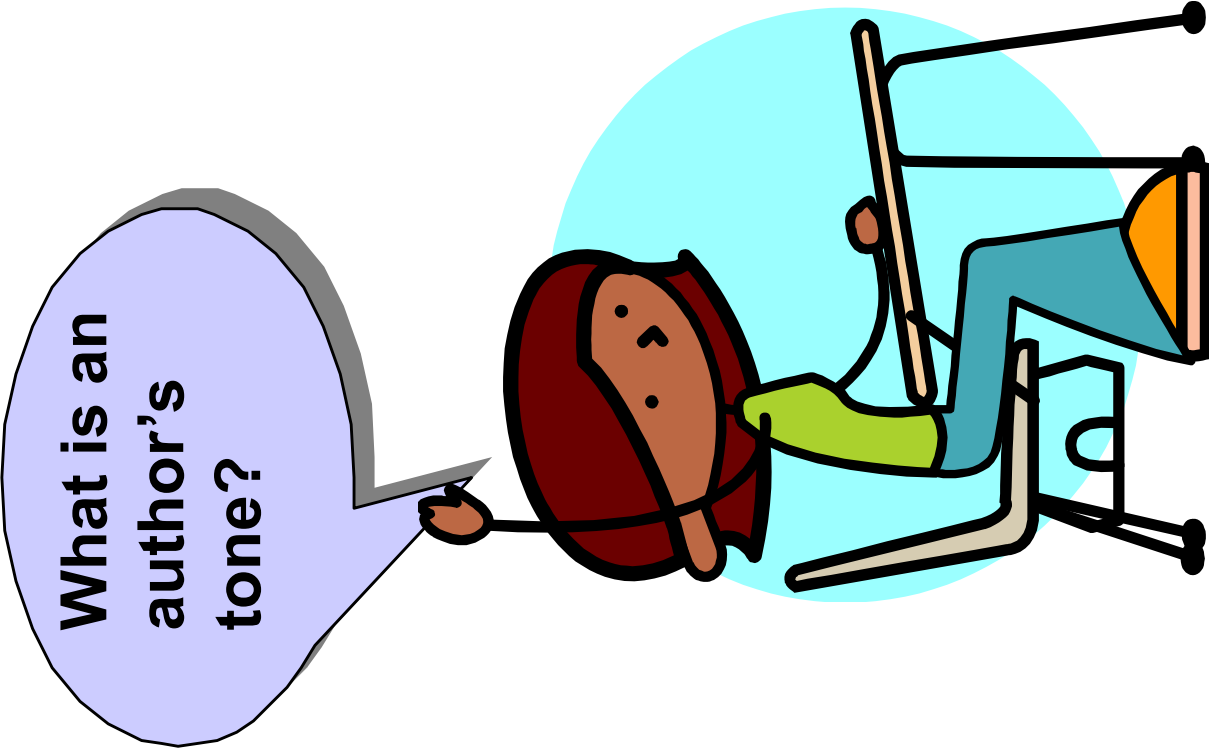
Author's Tone

CCPS / adapted from Jane Henderson

2008 / 2009

What is an
author's
tone?





What is an
author's
tone?



Tone indicates the
writer's attitude. Often
an author's tone is
described by adjectives,
such as: **cynical**,
depressed, **sympathetic**,
cheerful, **outraged**,
positive, **angry**,
sarcastic, **prayerful**,
ironic, **solemn**,
vindictive, **intense**,
excited.

Tone is not an *action*.
It is an *attitude*.

Real-life Example

You can say the same phrase in different ways, each showing a different attitude or tone.

Try saying, “Come here, Sally” using the following tones:

- Commanding or bossy
- Secretive
- Loving
- Angry
- Excited
- Playful

Tone is not explained
or expressed directly.

A reader must
“read between the lines”
to feel the author’s attitude
and identify the tone.

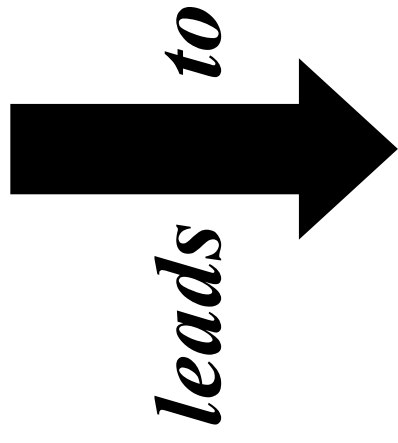
Tone is different than “Mood.”

Tone is the **author's** own attitude toward the subject.

Mood is the emotion the author wanted the **readers** to feel while reading about the subject.

An author's tone
influences the story's
mood and atmosphere.

Author's Tone



Story's Atmosphere
& Mood

Example:

An author writes a horror story using a **serious** and **sinister** tone.

That tone helps create a **scary** atmosphere and a **nervous, frightened** mood for the readers.

Another Example:

An author writes a satire, making fun of a horror story using a **playful or sarcastic** tone.

That playful tone helps create a **humorous** mood for the readers.

Literary Examples of Author's Tones...

Serious / Solemn

“The girl remembered little from the raid at Okeadan in which she had been captured. She knew her parents had been killed. She had no idea what had happened to her brothers and sisters. Much of what she had experienced had been so horrible that she had simply shut it out of her mind. . . .”

At Her Majesty's Request p. 17



Serious / Solemn

“The girl remem

This author's **serious tone** inspires an atmosphere of tragedy. This leads to a **mood** of sadness, sympathy, and caring in the reader when reading this passage.

or what she had experienced had been so horrible that she had simply shut it out of her mind. . . .”

At Her Majesty's Request p. 17



Sarcastic

“Just look at the Titanic. The captain said, ‘Even God can’t sink this ship.’ Then, on the first voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, boom, it hit an iceberg and sank. And as soon as a daredevil utters the words ‘piece of cake’ before attempting a stunt, he is doomed. ‘Piece of cake’ becomes his ‘famous last words.’ ...”



My Brother's Arm p. 111-2

Sarcastic

“Just look at the Titanic. The
‘Even God can’t sink it’
first voyage. **Carcastic tone** inspires a slightly
of tragedy.”

This author's satire in *Spice* is as much a piece of cake as a stunt, he is doomed. This puts the reader in a cynical mood. This becomes his 'famous last words'."

My Brother's Arm p. 111-2



Humorous



“When he realized he was still in one piece, he knew that at the very least he must be completely flat, with his face peering out of his own bottom and his brains leaking out of his ears. . . .”

Toad Heaven p. 64

Humorous



“When an author’s humorous tone inspires a playful mood in the reader. (It also helps the reader identify with and care about the characters.)”

Breaking out

Toad Heaven p. 64

Objective / Impersonal



“By nightfall on Monday, the center of the storm had barely moved, and icy winds of hurricane force swept across an area from Virginia up to Nova Scotia, Canada. The wind was so powerful that in Liberty, New York, the local train station had its roof entirely ripped off ...”

Blizzard p . 56

Objective / Impersonal



“By nightfall M

barely

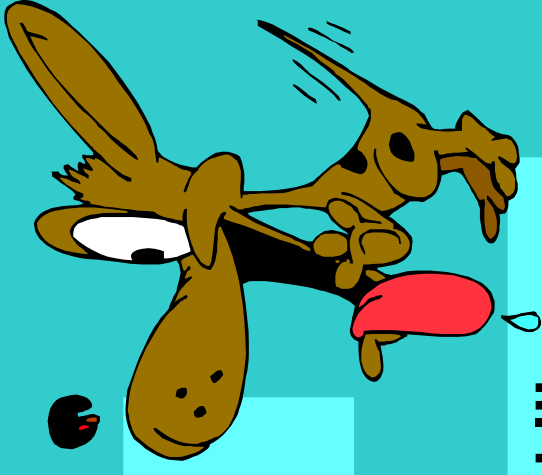
This author's impersonal **tone** inspires a serious atmosphere, typical of nonfiction (such as news reports). The **mood** for this piece might be considered studious or academic.

ertul that in
cal train station had its roof
....”

Blizzard p . 56



Enthusiastic



“ . . . the next minute, Winn-Dixie looked like a furry bullet, shooting across the building, chasing that mouse. He was barking and his feet were skidding all over the polished Pick-It-Quick floor, and people were clapping and hollering and pointing. They really went wild when Winn-Dixie actually caught the mouse.”

Because of Winn-Dixie p. 36



Enthusiastic



“ . . . the next minute

furr hurr”

This author’s enthusiastic **tone** inspires an active, lively atmosphere. The author hopes to influence the readers to be in an excited **mood**, anticipating more action.

... Pick-It-

clapping and

outing. They really went wild

When Winn-Dixie actually caught the mouse.”

Because of Winn-Dixie p. 36



Hostile / Angry

“Dana grinned malevolently. His teeth were nubby and yellow, like an old barn dog’s. Kneeling on Roy’s chest, he hauled back to hit him again.”

Hoot p. 184



Hostile / Angry

This author's angry tone inspires a violent atmosphere. The author may be hoping to inspire a tense and uneasy mood in the reader, emphasizing the conflicts in the story.

Hoot p. 184

“We’d gone a quarter mile down the trail when we ran into a man walking the wrong way. He had a pack on his back – a full, towering, overstuffed pack – and he was sweating hard. His breath sounded like a bellows. I stepped aside to let him pass. I stared. I knew that he was one of the ones who hadn’t made it, who’d quit right there at the start.”

Halfway to the Sky p. 32

Disapproving



“We’d gone a quarter mile down the trail when we ran into a man walking the wrong way. He had a pack on his back –

Disapproving

This author’s disapproving tone sets up a competitive atmosphere, leading to a judgmental mood in the reader. It also helps the reader appreciate the accomplishments of the characters.

the
no hadn’t made it,
who’d quit right there at the start.”

Halfway to the Sky p. 32



Personal



“I feel alive for the first time in years,” said Faber. “I feel I’m doing what I should’ve done a lifetime ago. For a little while I’m not afraid. Maybe it’s because I’m doing the right thing at last . . .”

Fahrenheit 451 p. 131

A stylized illustration of a person with dark skin and long black hair, wearing a blue and green patterned shirt, sitting and reading a book. The background is a warm, abstract composition of orange, red, and brown tones, suggesting a fire or a sunset. A large yellow callout box is positioned over the person's head and the book, containing text about personal tone and mood. The text is in a clean, sans-serif font, with some words in bold. The overall style is modern and graphic.

Personal

“I feel

This author's personal **tone** leads to an atmosphere of emotional expression and revelation. The author hopes to set a **mood** of confidentiality and sharing in the readers, helping them to understand and care about the characters.

last . . . ”

ing the

Fahrenheit 451 p. 131

Corny

It sounds clichéd
But at times like this,
I miss my dad.

I mean,
I don't remember him –
he died of cancer when I was three.

Pictures
are all that's left.
My favorite one is
us sitting on a bench, eating ice cream.
Our knees are knobby the same way,
we're both grinning like hyenas,
he's pointing at the camera.

I haven't had a dad in twelve years.
Most of the time,
that's okay.
But today,
right now,
I'd like a hug.
From him.

Shark Girl, Kelly Bingham

Grieving



Corny

It sounds clichéd
But at times like this,
I miss my dad.

I mean,
I don't remember him –
he died of cancer when
Pictures
are all th

Poets often “bare their souls” in their poems.
This poet's **grieving tone** reveals her deepest
feelings about her father, creating an **mood** of
sadness and longing. This inspires a **mood** of
sympathy and caring in the readers.

I
M
th
But today,
right now,
I'd like a hug.
From him.

Shark Girl, Kelly Bingham

Grieving



Indifferent

Flicker

A maid cleans.
A crew cuts the lawn.
Even the groceries get delivered.
Jordan's dad is home, for once,
but he barely lifts his head
from his laptop to meet me.
His eyes
flicker in surprise,
but he slams
his attention back to the screen
and coughs to dismiss us.

Reaching for Sun,
Tracie Vaughn Zimmer



Indifferent

Flicker

A maid cleans.

A crew cuts the

Even

This poet's indifferent tone creates an impersonal, possibly uncaring atmosphere. This causes an emotionally empty mood in the reader. It allows the reader to understand why the speaker in the poem may be depressed.

back to the screen

and coughs to dismiss us.

Reaching for Sun, Tracie Vaughn Zimmer



Examples of Tone

- Cautious
- Humorous
- Affectionate
- Hostile
- Critical
- Objective
- Personal
- Violent
- Solemn / Serious
- Sarcastic
- Disapproving
- Enthusiastic
- Desperate
- Pleading
- Indifferent

The next time you read a passage,
try to identify the author's tone.

It will help you
“get the message”
of the text.

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