

| Listen to the theme music from various television programs. You do not have to name the program. | What type of television program? Drama, Comedy, Mystery, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Children's Program, Family Show, Other? | How do you know? What happens in the music to help you identify the type of program? | How would you describe the tone? (Choose from the list of tone words on the wall or use your own.) Why did you choose those words? |
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Examples from various CDs of "Television's Greatest Hits". <http://www.amazon.com/Televisions-Greatest-Hits-Vol-From/dp/B000000GOI>

**Positive
Tone/Attitude:**

*amiable,
amused,
appreciative,
authoritative,
benevolent,
brave,
calm,
cheerful,
cheery,
compassionate,
complimentary,
confident,
consoling,
content,
ecstatic,
elated,
elevated,
encouraging,
energetic,
enthusiastic,
excited,
exuberant,
friendly,
hopeful,
impassioned
jovial,
joyful,
jubilant,
lighthearted,
loving,
optimistic,
passionate,
peaceful,
playful,
pleasant,
proud,
relaxed,
reverent,
romantic,
soothing,
sweet,
sympathetic,
vibrant,
whimsical*

**Humor-Irony-
Sarcasm
Tone/Attitude :**

*amused,
bantering,
bitter,
caustic,
comical,
condescending,
contemptuous,
critical,
cynical,
disdainful
droll,
facetious,
flippant,
giddy,
humorous,
insolent,
ironic,
irreverent,
joking,
malicious,
mock-heroic,
mocking,
mock-serious,
patronizing,
pompous,
ribald,
ridiculing,
sarcastic,
sardonic,
satiric,
scornful
sharp,
taunting,
teasing,
wry,
grotesque*

**Neutral
Tone/Attitude:**

*admonitory,
allusive,
apathetic,
authoritative,
baffled,
callous,
candid,
ceremonial,
clinical,
contemplative,
conventional,
detached,
didactic,
disbelieving,
dramatic,
earnest,
expectant,
factual,
fervent,
formal,
forthright,
frivolous,
histrionic,
humble,
incredulous,
informative,
inquisitive,
instructive,
learned,
lyrical,
matter-of-fact,
meditative,
nostalgic,
objective,
obsequious,
persuasive,
pretentious,
questioning,
reflective,
reminiscent,
resigned,
restrained,
sentimental,
shocked,
sincere,
unemotional,
urgent,
wistful,
zealous*

**Sorrow-Fear-
Worry
Tone/Attitude:**

*aggravated,
agitated,
anxious,
apologetic,
apprehensive,
concerned,
confused,
dejected,
depressed,
despairing,
disturbed,
elegiac,
embarrassed,
fearful,
foreboding,
gloomy,
grave,
hollow,
hopeless,
horrific,
melancholic,
miserable,
morose,
mournful,
nervous,
numb,
ominous,
paranoid,
pessimistic,
pitiful,
poignant,
regretful,
remorseful,
resigned,
sad,
serious,
sober,
solemn,
somber,
staid,
upset*

**Negative
Tone/attitude:**

*accusing,
aggravated,
agitated,
angry,
apathetic,
arrogant,
artificial,
audacious,
belligerent,
bitter,
boring,
brash,
childish,
choleric,
coarse,
cold,
condemnatory.
contradictory,
desperate,
disappointed,
disgruntled,
disgusted,
disinterested,
furious,
harsh,
haughty,
hateful,
hurtful,
indignant,
inflammatory,
insulting,
irritated,
manipulative,
obnoxious,
outraged,
quarrelsome,
shameful,
snooty,
superficial,
surly,
testy,
threatening,
uninterested,
wrathful,*

Using Art to help students with tone in Literature

| What do you see? Colors, lines, space, texture, forms, shapes? | How do those combination of elements make you feel? | Does the art make an impact on your emotions and reactions? How? |
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WE ARE MAKING A NEW WORLD one of the most memorable images of the First World War. The title mocks the ambitions of the war, as the sun rises on a scene of the total desolation. The landscape has become un-navigable, unrecognizable and utterly barren. The mounds of earth act almost as gravestones amongst the death and desolation. Nash was looking for a new kind of symbolism divorced from the more traditional Symbolist principles. He realized that the ideas he had been presenting in a figurative way before the war could be more meaningful in pure landscape form.



Nash was unable, due to war time censorship, to depict the full horrors of war. Instead, Nash painted heavily symbolic, elegantly tortured landscapes that give a dramatic impression of a world torn apart by war.

In his painting *We Are Making a New World* (1918) Nash depicts the Polygon Wood in Ypres Salient. The landscape is reduced to a few ragged stumps, all which remain of the woods that once stood there. Devoid of figures, it is a haunting image that leaves the viewer with a sense of how this new form of warfare affected the people on the frontline. It asks what would a weapon capable of ripping apart an entire landscape do to a human body? In many ways it is the lack of figures that give Nash's painting their power. They ask questions without giving answers, leaving the audience to ponder the experiences of those who lived in such places and question the nature of war itself.

Movie Clips - Tone and Mood

| Movie Clip Title and Notes. | What tone word(s) best describe the overall impression of the clip? You may choose from the tone wall or use your own word(s). | Describe how the tone was accomplished-- music, use of sound, use of camera techniques, etc. | Did the tone and the mood match? Why or why not? |
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Helping students tune their ears to a page of text is one of the most difficult tasks AP English Literature and Composition teachers face. In the past when only the most gifted readers in a senior class enrolled in the course, you simply had to explain to students how tone was the author's implied attitude toward the subject and audience, offer a few examples, and your work was done. Now that many more than those rare few who spring whole from Zeus's head take the class—30 percent of the twelfth graders at my school enroll in AP English Literature—teachers need to be increasingly explicit when teaching about tone....

Readers determine tone by paying attention to the particular choices a writer makes in terms of diction, detail, syntax, and imagery. Most of the time, good readers do this instinctively. That is why we derive pleasure from wicked monologues like Dorothy Parker's "But the One on the Right." If I were to read the following passage aloud, my tone of voice would immediately convey the narrator's scathing attitude toward the dinner party and her poor partner.

I knew it. I knew if I came to this dinner, I'd draw something like this baby on my left. They've been saving him up for me for weeks. Now, we've simply got to have him—His sister was so sweet to us in London; we can stick him next to Mrs. Parker—she talks enough for two.

My challenge is to help students hear that tone for themselves from a page of print. I do this by teaching students to pay attention to the tricks and the tools an author uses to create tone. It is vital to their understanding of the work as a whole.

In "Reading at Risk," the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) survey of literary reading in America, NEA chairman Dana Gioia asserts that advanced literacy is a specific intellectual skill and social habit. "As more Americans lose this capability, our nation becomes less informed, active, and independent-minded. These are not qualities that a free, innovative, or productive society can afford to lose." I agree. My goal as AP teacher is much larger than simply preparing students to identify tone for the May exam. I want the young people in my care to leave able to negotiate challenging literary texts—if not with ease, with comprehension—for life. To do that, they will need to sensitize themselves to the nuances of diction and sentence structure. I want students to be able to hear the tone in Kansas preacher John Ames's letter to his son and thereby enter the fictional world of Marilynne Robinson's gorgeous, quiet new novel, *Gilead*.

I told you last night that I might be gone sometime, and you said, Where, and I said, To be with the Good Lord, and you said, Why, and I said, Because I'm old, and you said, I don't think you're old. And you put your hand in my hand and you said, You aren't very old, as if that settled it. I told you you might have a very different life from mine, and from the life you've had with me, and that would be a wonderful thing, there are many ways to live a good life.

Interpreting Figurative Language

| What this means literally. | Example of figurative language (from the text) | How this language reveals the character's feelings? (tone) |
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Read the following examples and answer the questions in the right hand column. In each passage you are examining how tone contributes to the meaning of the passage.

A Loud Sneer for Our Feathered Friends

From childhood, my sister and I have had a well-grounded dislike for our friends the birds. We came to hate them when she was ten and I was eleven. We had been exiled by what we considered an unfeeling family to one of those loathsome girls' camps where Indian lore is rife and the management puts up neatly lettered signs reminding the clients to be Good Sports. From the moment Eileen and I arrived at dismal old Camp Hi-Wah, we were Bad Sports, and we liked it.

We refused to get out of bed when the bugle blew in the morning, we fought against scrubbing our teeth in public to music, we sneered when the flag was ceremoniously lowered at sunset, we avoided doing a good deed a day, we complained loudly about the food, which was terrible, and we bought some chalk once and wrote all over the Recreation Cabin, "We hate Camp Hi-Wah." It made a wonderful scandal, although unfortunately we were immediately accused of the crime. All the other little campers loved dear old Camp Hi-Wah, which shows you what kind of people they were.

The first two weeks Eileen and I were at Camp Hi-Wah, we sat in our cabin grinding our teeth at our counselors and writing letters to distant relatives. These letters were, if I say so myself, real masterpieces of double dealing and heartless chicanery. In our childish and, we hoped, appealing scrawl, we explained to Great-Aunt Mary Farrel and Second Cousin Joe Murphy that we were having such fun at dear Camp Hi-Wah making Indian pocketbooks.

-Ruth McKenney

As you read the passage, mark the verbs. What do they reveal about the attitude of the campers?

How does the sentence structure in this paragraph contribute to the tone of the work?

Explain how the "letters" contribute to the tone of the piece.

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| <p>Almost no feature of the interior design of our current cars provides safeguards against injury in the event of collision. Doors that fly open on impact, inadequately secured seats, the sharp-edged rearview mirror, pointed knobs on instrument panel and doors, flying glass, the overhead structure—all illustrate the lethal potential of poor design. A sudden deceleration turns a collapsed steering wheel or a sharp-edged dashboard into a bone and chest-crushing agent. Penetration of the shatterproof windshield can chisel one’s head into fractions. A flying seat cushion can cause a fatal injury. The apparently harmless glove-compartment door has been known to unlatch under impact and guillotine a child. Roof-supporting structure has deteriorated to a point where it provides scarcely more protection to the occupants, in common roll-over accidents, than an open convertible. <i>Ralph Nader, “The Safe Car You Can’t Buy”</i></p> | <p>What words signify danger or potential harm? What do these words reveal about the attitude of the speaker? What do the verbs reveal about both the attitude of the speaker and the tone of the paragraph?</p> |
| <p>Perhaps because bats are nocturnal in habit, a wealth of thoroughly unreliable legend has grown up about them, and men have made of the harmless, even beneficial little beasts a means of expressing their unreasoned fears. Bats were the standard of paraphernalia for witches; the female half of humanity stood in terror that bats would become entangled in their hair. Phrases crept into the language expressing man’s revulsion or ignorance -“bats in the belfry,” “batty,” “blind as a bat.” <i>Franklin Folsom, “Life in Caves”</i></p> | <p>What words reveal the attitude of the speaker towards bats? What words reveal his feelings about humans. What inferences can you draw about the tone of the work as a whole?</p> |

The bowerbird is another creature that spends so much time courting the female that he never gets any work done. If all the male bowerbirds became nervous wrecks within the next ten or fifteen years, it would no surprise me. The female bowerbird insists that a playground be built for her with a specially constructed bower at the entrance. This bower is much more elaborate than an ordinary nest and is harder to build; it costs a lot more, too. The female will not come to the playground until the male has filled it up with a great many gifts: silvery leaves, red leaves, rose petals, shells, beads, berries, bones, dice, buttons, cigar bands, Christmas seals, and the Lord knows what else. When the female finally condescends to visit the playground, she is in a coy and silly mood and has to be chased in and out of the bower and up and down the playground before she will quit giggling and stand still long enough to shake hands. The male bird is, of course, pretty well done in before the chase starts, because he has worn himself out hunting for eyeglass lenses and begonia blossoms. I imagine that many a bowerbird, after chasing a female for two or three hours, says the hell with it and goes home to bed. Next day, of course, he telephones someone else and the same trying ritual is gone through again. A male bowerbird is as exhausted as a nightclub habitue is before he is out of his twenties.

From "Courtship Through the Ages" by James Thurber

How does the opening sentence help to reveal the tone of the piece?

Are there words and phrases that make you smile? Why or why not?

How does the "list of gifts" project humor?

What other methods does the author use to establish his tone?

What is the general attitude of the speaker towards the male bowerbird? The female? Towards courting? What tone is prevalent throughout most of the piece?

A Humument (A Human Document): Use the excerpt on the next page from **Toni Morrison's "The Gift of the Dolls"** to create an original free verse poem by "finding" well-written lines inside her story. Because this is free verse, your poem does not need to rhyme or have a regular rhythm. Transform the prose into a poem. Start with a pencil and a light hand. Circle word groups that you think you want to keep in your poem. Look for irresistible imagery, evocative description, energetic vocabulary. Once your poem begins to take on its shape, consider how art will enhance it and reflect the *tone* of the poem.

It had begun with Christmas and the gift of dolls. The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll. From the clucking sounds of adults I knew that the doll represented what they thought was my fondest wish. I was bemused with the thing itself, and the way it looked. What was I supposed to do with it? Pretend I was its mother? I had no interest in babies or the concept of motherhood. I was interested only in humans my own age and size, and could not generate any enthusiasm at the prospect of being a mother. Motherhood was old age, and other remote possibilities. I learned quickly, however, what I was expected to do with the doll: rock it, fabricate storied situations around it, even sleep with it. Picture books were full of little girls sleeping with their dolls. Raggedy Ann dolls usually, but they were out of the question. I was physically revolted by and secretly frightened of those round moronic eyes, the pancake face, and orangeworms hair.

The other dolls, which were supposed to bring me great pleasure, succeeded in doing quite the opposite. When I took it to bed, its hard unyielding limbs resisted my flesh--the tapered fingertips on those dimpled hands scratched. If, in sleep, I turned, the bone-cold head collided with my own. It was a most uncomfortable, patently aggressive sleeping companion. To hold it was no more rewarding. The starched gauze or lace on the cotton dress irritated any embrace. I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me. Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs--all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. "Here," they said, "this is beautiful, and if you are on this day 'worthy' you may have it." I fingered the face, wondering at the single-stroke eyebrows; picked at the pearly teeth stuck like two piano keys between red bowline lips. Traced the turned-up nose, poked the glassy blue eyeballs, twisted the yellow hair. I could not love it. But I could examine it to see what it was that all the world said was lovable. Break off the tiny fingers, bend the flat feet, loosen the hair, twist the head around, and the thing made one sound--a sound they said was the sweet and plaintive cry "Mama," but which sounded to me like the bleat of a dying lamb, or, more precisely, our icebox door opening on rusty hinges in July. Remove the cold and stupid eyeball, it would bleat still, "Ahhhhhh," take off the head, shake out the sawdust, crack the back against the brass bed rail, it would bleat still. The gauze back would split, and I could see the disk with six holes, the secret of the sound. A mere metal roundness.

Grown people frowned and fussed: "You-don'tknowhowto-takecareof-nothing.I-neverhadababydollinmywholelifeandused-tocrymyeyesoutfor-them. Now-yougotoneabeautifuloneand-youtearitupwhat'sthematterwith-you?"

How strong was their outrage. Tears threatened to erase the aloofness of their authority. The emotion of years of unfulfilled longing preened in their voices. I did not know why I destroyed those dolls. But I did know that nobody ever asked me what I wanted for Christmas. Had any adult with the power to fulfill my desires taken me seriously and asked me what I wanted, they would have known that I did not want to have anything to own, or to possess any object. I wanted rather to feel something on Christmas day. The real question would have been, "Dear Claudia, what experience would you like on Christmas?" I could have spoken up, "I want to sit on the low stool in Big Mama's kitchen with my lap full of lilacs and listen to Big Papa play his violin for me alone." The lowness of the stool made for my body, the security and warmth of Big Mama's kitchen, the smell of the lilacs, the sound of the music, and, since it would be good to have all of my senses engaged, the taste of a peach, perhaps, afterwards.

Read the two poems carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast the two poems, analyzing how each poet uses literary devices to make his point. You may wish to consider such elements as structure, imagery, and tone.

Funeral Blues

--W.H. Auden

1. Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
2. Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
3. Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
4. Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

5. Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
6. Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,
7. Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
8. Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

9. He was my North, my South, my East and West,
10. My working week and my Sunday rest,
11. My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
12. I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

13. The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;
14. Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
15. Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
16. For nothing now can ever come to any good.

The Weary Blues

Langston Hughes, 1902 - 1967

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,
I heard a Negro play.
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
He did a lazy sway . . .
He did a lazy sway . . .
To the tune o' those Weary Blues.
With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
O Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man's soul.
O Blues!
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—
"Ain't got nobody in all this world,
Ain't got nobody but ma self.
I's gwine to quit ma frownin'
And put ma troubles on the shelf."

Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more—
"I got the Weary Blues
And I can't be satisfied.
Got the Weary Blues
And can't be satisfied—
I ain't happy no mo'
And I wish that I had died."
And far into the night he crooned that tune.
The stars went out and so did the moon.
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

From *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*,
published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright © 1994
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I Hear America Singing
by Walt Whitman

I HEAR America singing, the varied carols I hear;
Those of mechanics—each one singing his, as it should be, blithe and strong;
The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work;
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat—the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck;
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench—the hatter singing as he stands;
The wood-cutter's song—the ploughboy's, on his way in the morning, or at the noon intermission, or at sundown;
The delicious singing of the mother—or of the young wife at work—or of the girl sewing or washing—Each singing what belongs to her, and to none else;
The day what belongs to the day—At night, the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious songs.

I, Too, Sing America
by Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--

I, too, am America.

Assignment: Whitman & Hughes: "America" Poems

In the poems "I Hear America Singing" written by Walt Whitman and "I, Too" written by Langston Hughes, the speakers express their own perceptions of America. Read carefully Walt Whitman's poem "I Hear America Singing" and Langston Hughes' poem "I, Too." What attitudes do the speakers express towards America? How does the use of tone reveal those attitudes?

| SOAPSTONE COMPARISON | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------|---|
| | Whitman | Both | Hughes |
| Speaker | | | |
| Occasion | What was the motivation/inspiration for Whitman writing this poem? | | What was the motivation/inspiration for Hughes writing this poem? |
| Audience | The intended readers were... | | The intended readers were... |
| Purpose | The poem's purpose is to... | | The poem's purpose is to... |
| Subject | | | |
| Tone | Serious? Celebratory? Critical? Why? Explain: | | Serious? Celebratory? Critical? Why? Explain |