International School of Monterrey

Junior High School **__th Grade**
Trimester ___ **Literature**

Name _____ **Date** _____ **List #____- ____**

Analyze Word Choice

In this lesson, you will . . .

- learn to recognize and identify tone
- notice and analyze mood
- identify how changes in words and phrases can affect tone and mood
- learn about the concept of word choice and connotations

Word Choice, Tone, and Mood

Tone is a writer's attitude toward a subject. It is a lot like your tone of voice. When you are excited, angry, or being funny, your tone shows how you are feeling. The same is true for writers.



Tone: Angry Tone: Playful

Writers can't use their voices, facial expressions, or body language to express tone. Instead, they use **word choice**. They may use strong words or phrases to show anger or colorful descriptions to show happiness. An author's choice of words provides clues about their attitude toward a subject.

The words an author chooses also affect the **mood** of a text. A text's **mood** is the feeling, or atmosphere, it may create for readers. The tone and mood of a text are closely related.

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Learn how Word Choice Affects Tone and Mood

To determine the tone and mood of a text, look closely at the words the writer selected.

A text's **tone** shows the author's attitude toward a subject.

I am outraged by the amount of garbage people still generate! When shopping, everyone can easily bring a reusable bag to avoid taking yet *another* plastic bag home just to throw it away!

This selection has an angry tone. The writer uses strong words and direct statements to express anger toward people who create unnecessary garbage.

The **mood** of a text is the feeling it may create in readers.

Devi was walking on air after she aced her job interview. The trees shimmied cheerfully in the wind and the sky stretched out like a gorgeous blue canvas. Even the distant hum of rush hour traffic sounded like a happy song.

This writer uses pleasant imagery and adjectives with positive, festive associations to describe the trees, sky, and traffic sounds. This helps show the happiness Devi feels, and gives the scene a joyful mood.

Identify Tone

Read the passage. Then answer the question.

Let's Make a Healthy Smoothie!

You won't believe how easy it is to make a healthy smoothie! Some people buy pricey pre-made fruit drinks, but it is incredibly fun and simple to make your own at home. While you gather your ingredients, try listening to some upbeat dance music to make your time in the kitchen more festive. Prepare ½ cup unsweetened almond milk, four ice cubes, one medium banana, ½ cup sliced berries or mango, ¼ cup Greek yogurt, 1 tablespoon nut butter, and ½ cup baby spinach. Pour the almond milk and ice cubes into a blender, and then sprinkle in the rest of the ingredients. After that, just blend it all until it's nice and smooth.

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If the smoothie is too thick, have no fear. Just add another splash of almond milk and blend. If it is too thin, add another ice cube, and blend it one more time. Most importantly, have fun and enjoy!

____1. Which word BEST describes the tone of this passage?

A. condescending
B. enthusiastic
C. neutral
D. irritated

Identify Mood

Read the passage. Then consider the mood of the passage.

I dragged myself through the school entrance, wishing desperately that I hadn't gone to bed so late. The door groaned eerily as it shut behind me. As I plodded down the shadowy hallway to Algebra class, something felt a little odd, but I couldn't put my finger on it.

Then I realized what was different. No one else was in the building yet! Could I really be the first one at school, before any of the teachers? I walked into my algebra class, noticing the cold echo of my own footsteps reverberating in the classroom. Suddenly, the lights shut off and my heart began to pound. I heard a bizarre whispering sound to my left and —

Phew! Just at that moment, I woke up from my strange dream.

Complete each sentence to analyze the mood of this passage.

____2. The mood of this passage is __.

A. humorous
B. serious
C. frightening

____3. The writer creates this mood using words and phrases like "eerily," "shadowy," and __

A. "first one."
B. "cold echo."
C. "woke up."

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Learn about Changes in Tone

The tone of a work can change from beginning to end. This indicates that the writer's or speaker's attitude has shifted. When tone changes, meaning and mood often change as well.

Read the following excerpts from the poem "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe.

Excerpt from the beginning of "The Raven":

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,

Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.

Excerpt from the end of "The Raven":

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!

Now, identify how the poem's tone changes.

____4. **Tone in the beginning of the poem:**

A. *amused*

B. *anxious*

C. *serene*

____5. **Tone at the end of the poem:**

A. *admiring*

B. *angry*

C. *uncertain*

Learn about Connotation and Diction

Writers must choose words carefully to be sure that they are expressing the intended tone. One way to do this is to pay attention to the **connotations**, or emotional associations, of different words. For example, the words *slender* and *scrawny* both mean "thin." However, *slender* suggests something is thin and graceful, while *scrawny* suggests it is thin and awkward.

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A writer's overall word choice is sometimes called **diction**. A work with a serious tone may use **formal diction**–correct grammar and precise words. A humorous work might use **informal diction**–more casual language, including slang.



Change Connotation and Tone

Read the example sentence. Think about how you could replace the bolded word to change the tone.

I am **annoyed** that more people aren't saving water.

Each bolded emotion describes one new tone for the example sentence. For each sentence, choose the word with the appropriate connotation to express the new tone.

____6. **Angry**: I am ___ that more people aren't saving water.

A. concerned
B. shocked
C. stumped
D. infuriated

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____7. **Surprised**: I am ___ that more people aren't saving water.

A. concerned
B. shocked
C. stumped
D. infuriated

____8. **Baffled**: I am ___ that more people aren't saving water.

A. concerned
B. shocked
C. stumped
D. infuriated

____9. **Worried:** I am ___ that more people aren't saving water.

A. concerned
B. shocked
C. stumped
D. infuriated

Identify Diction and Tone

Read each sentence. Think about how the sentences give the same information but with different diction and tone. Then identify the type of diction for each sentence.

____10. When a peregrine falcon dives, it plummets at over 200 miles per hour. It is the fastest animal on Earth.

A. *formal diction*
B. *informal diction*

____11. Peregrine falcons are, like, super fast. They move way faster than any other animal ever!

A. *formal diction*
B. *informal diction*

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Remember . . .

- Tone can show a writer's attitude toward the subject.
- Mood is the feeling a text may produce in a reader.
- Writers convey tone and create moods through word choice, imagery, and direct statements.
- The connotations, or emotional associations, of words affect tone.
- A writer's overall word choice is sometimes called diction.

Think about the different ways authors use word choice.

____12. Through word choice, writers can craft the ___, or atmosphere, of a text.

A. topic

B. mood

C. summary

D. structure

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