

DECIPHERING TONE

An analysis of tone will depend on our precise and accurate understanding of the author's attitude toward 1. the subject and 2. the audience. To investigate tone, the acronym DIDLS is sometimes helpful.

DICTION	The important and individual words the author uses.
IMAGES	The word pictures created by groups of words.
DETAILS	Often confused with images, these are more precisely FACTS, and are notable not only for what is included but for what is purposefully omitted.
LANGUAGE	This term describes the characteristics of the body of words used: terms like slang, scholarly, and jargon denote language.
SENTENCE STRUCTURE	Expressed in its most elemental form, this notes that short sentences are often emotional or assertive and that longer sentences move toward more reasonable or even scholarly intent.

Step 1 – Decide positive, negative, or neutral.

Step 2 – Analyze connotation – emotional impact of the word.

Step 3 – What is the attitude of the writer? How is he/she feeling about the topic? What is the topic?

Step 4 – Pick out words that imply tone.

Step 5 – Decide tone. Here is a list of possible words that can be used to describe tone.

*Tone is the attitude of the writer towards the subject of the writing. [Watch this video on Tone.](#)

TONE WORDS

Source: http://www1.fccj.edu/shughes/tone_words_to_know.htm

animated	ambivalent	apathetic	accusatory
amused	absurd	aggressive	acerbic
angry	abstruse	assertive	aggrieved
arrogant		awestruck	admiring
admiring	assertive	ardent	acerbic
befuddled	benevolent	bitter	belligerent
compliant	cautionary	condescending	callous
cynical	colloquial	comic	confused
critical	compassionate	complaining	chatty
complex	cheerful	contemptuous	caustic
cruel	celebratory	candid	conciliatory
detached	depressed	disapproval	docile
evasive	docile	derisive	dignified
disparaging	distressed	disheartened	diplomatic
defiant	dispassionate	demeaning	excited
empathetic	egotistical	earnest	farcical
frustrated	forceful	formal	frank
fawning	flippant	faultfinding	frivolous
fuming	ghoulish	grim	gullible
gentle	hard	hard-hearted	hypercritical
humble	intense	incensed	imploring
indignant	intimate	impressionable	sulking
inane	irreverent	impassioned	informative
incredulous	indifferent	impartial	ironic
jaded	joyous	laudatory	loving
malicious	mocking	modest	macabre
mourning	mean-spirited	naive	nasty

narcissistic	nostalgic	objective	outraged
obsequious	optimistic	outspoken	placating
pompous	pragmatic	pretentious	prayerful
playful	pathetic	pessimistic	pensive
patronizing	philosophical	persuasive	reflective
resentful	reverent	resigned	regretful
righteous	reticent	reflective	restrained
sentimental	satirical	sympathetic	skeptical
scornful	scathing	subjective	self-pitying
sensationalistic	submissive	scorning	subjective
solemn	sorrowful	tragic	thoughtful
tolerant	unassuming	unbiased	uneasy
virtuous	vindictive	witty	world-weary
wretched	wonder	worried	whimsical

This list is not exhaustive.