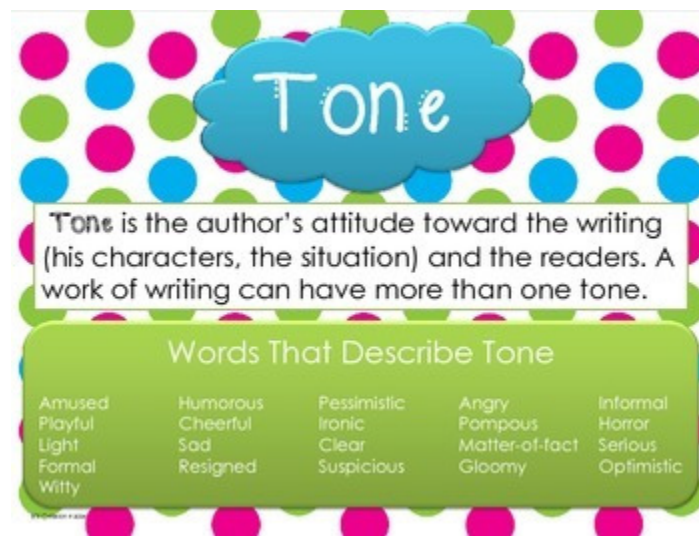


# What is TONE?

Tone is the attitude that a story conveys toward its subject.

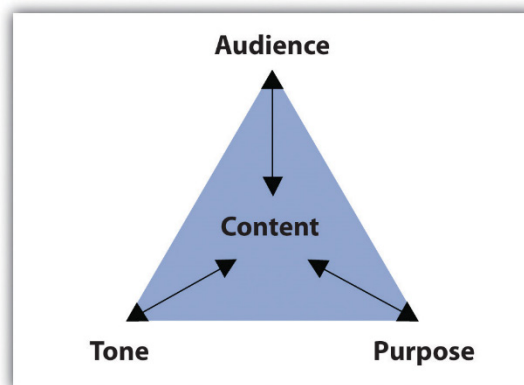
To name the different tones/attitudes in writing, you need to understand what tone means.

- For example, have you ever used sarcasm when talking with your friends? If a story conveys an attitude of humor or sarcasm toward its characters and events, it is indicating to the reader that the material is to be taken with a “grain of salt” (which means to view something with skepticism or not to interpret something literally).
- Or perhaps an attitude of sincerity (genuineness) and earnestness (deep feeling) is created through subtle (not easily determined, indirect) content and language manipulation (being influenced), telling the reader to take the story seriously.



Think of how you use tone of voice to convey your real meaning when speaking with a friend. Tone can easily change the meaning of a statement or comment. For example, “*Hey, nice outfit.*” This may mean that it is truly a nice outfit, or eww, that outfit is ugly. You can turn it into a compliment, sarcastic remark, or envious comment. It all depends on the way you say it by changing the inflection (varying your voice), your emphasis (placing importance) on certain words, and the vocal range you use. Combine all that with your body language or facial expressions, and you convey (show) your tone.

Tone relies upon its purpose and the audience:



When writing — **how you present your words changes the tone.**

For example:

**Sincere Tone:**

*She rose from her chair when I came in and exclaimed with a smile: "Wow! Nice outfit!"*

**Sarcastic Tone:**

*She gave me one look and said, with a short laugh, "Yeah, right! Nice outfit!"*

**Envious Tone:**

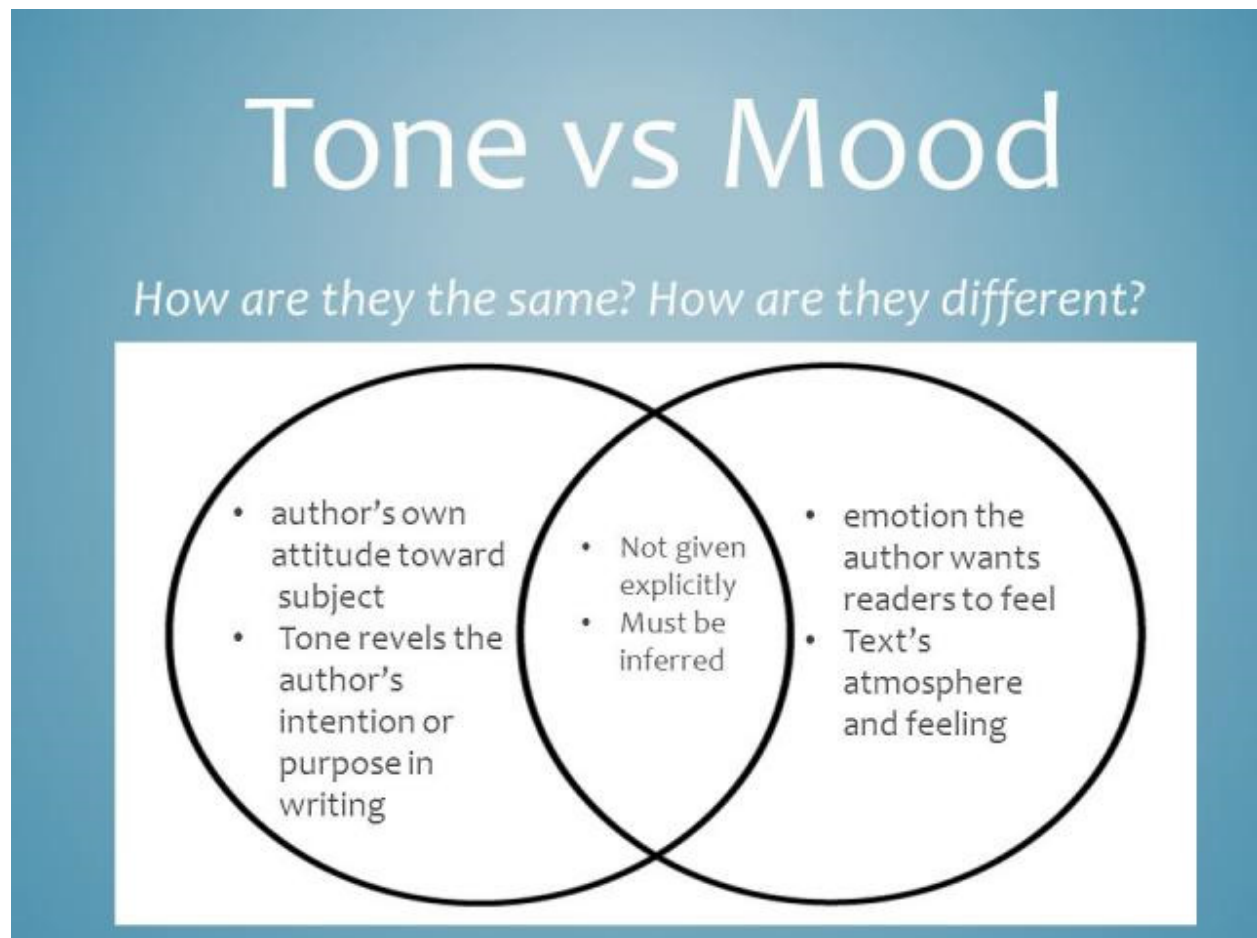
*She glanced at me quickly and muttered reluctantly, "Um, yeah . . . nice outfit."*

**Insulting Tone:**

*She looked at me incredulously and said, "Eww! Nice outfit!"*

These are just a few examples of **tone**. Others include sad, angry, joyous, playful, ironic, condescending . . . now *you* think of some and/or some examples.

Don't confuse **tone** with **mood**!



# Tone = Speaker's Attitude

## POSITIVE TONE WORDS

admiring	hilarious
adoring	hopeful
affectionate	humorous
appreciative	interested
approving	introspective
bemused	joyful
benevolent	joyful
blithe	laudatory
calm	light
casual	lively
celebratory	mirthful
cheerful	modest
comforting	nostalgic
comic	optimistic
compassionate	passionate
complimentary	placid
conciliatory	playful
confident	poignant
contented	proud
delightful	reassuring
earnest	reflective
ebullient	relaxed
ecstatic	respectful
effusive	reverent
elated	romantic
empathetic	sanguine
encouraging	scholarly
euphoric	self-assured
excited	sentimental
exhilarated	serene
expectant	silly
facetious	sprightly
fervent	straightforward
flippant	sympathetic
forthright	tender
friendly	tranquil
funny	whimsical
gleeful	wistful
gushy	worshipful
happy	zealous

## NEUTRAL

(+, -, or neutral)

commanding  
direct  
impartial  
indirect  
meditative  
objective  
questioning  
speculative  
unambiguous  
unconcerned  
understated

## NEGATIVE TONE WORDS

abhorring	hostile
acerbic	impatient
ambiguous	incredulous
ambivalent	indifferent
angry	indignant
annoyed	inflammatory
antagonistic	insecure
anxious	insolent
apathetic	irreverent
apprehensive	lethargic
belligerent	melancholy
bewildered	mischievous
biting	miserable
bitter	mocking
blunt	mournful
bossy	nervous
cold	ominous
conceited	outraged
condescending	paranoid
confused	pathetic
contemptuous	patronizing
curt	pedantic
cynical	pensive
demanding	pessimistic
depressed	pretentious
derisive	psychotic
derogatory	resigned
desolate	reticent
despairing	sarcastic
desperate	sardonic
detached	scornful
diabolic	self-deprecating
disappointed	selfish
disliking	serious
disrespectful	severe
doubtful	sinister
embarrassed	skeptical
enraged	sly
evasive	solemn
fatalistic	somber
fearful	stern
forceful	stolid
foreboding	stressful
frantic	strident
frightened	suspicious
frustrated	tense
furios	threatening
gloomy	tragic
grave	uncertain
greedy	uneasy
grim	unfriendly
harsh	unsympathetic
haughty	upset
holier-than-thou	violent
hopeless	wry