

TONE WORDS:

Positive

ecstatic—intense feeling; rapturous delight

I was ecstatic to learn I had won the scholarship.

empathetic—understand/appreciate the feelings of others

Her empathetic tone led me to trust her.

bantering—light teasing/joking

The bantering, although light-hearted, made the minister uncomfortable.

elated—extremely happy

We were elated when we won the game.

jovial—cheerful (**jocular**)

The teacher's jovial (jocular) personality made learning fun.

earnest—intensely sincere

The candidate spoke earnestly of his desire to help others.

reverent—respectful/regarding something as very important

She spoke of the President in a reverent tone.

vibrant—full of life

His tone became vibrant when he spoke of his happy childhood.

whimsical—lightly fanciful

He whimsically spoke of magical powers and talking gnomes.

humble—modest, meek

The athlete's humble tone contrasted with his great achievements.

authoritative—official, expert, knowledgeable

A political candidate tries to sound authoritative when speaking of the economy.

solemn—very serious, grave

At the funeral, the preacher delivered the eulogy in a solemn tone.

Neutral

objective—unbiased

The police report was thorough and objective.

clinical—impersonal, scientific

The professor's clinical tone failed to inspire his students.

detached—emotionally uninvolved

The writer's detached tone left his audience cold.

diffident—shy, unsure

Her diffident nature made her an unlikely candidate for class president.

inquisitive—positive: eager for knowledge

The student's inquisitive tone inspired her teacher.

negative: inappropriately curious

She was so inquisitive that we had to tell her to mind her own business.

NEGATIVE

sarcastic—ridiculing (**taunting, derisive, mocking**)

He sarcastically told his losing team "good job!"

ironic—opposite to what is expected by reader

Swift's "A Modest Proposal" is ironic; he did not seriously intend for people to eat their children.

satiric—ridiculing in order to expose wrongs

John Stewart satirically praised the governmental policy that led to war.

sardonic—darkly humorous

Her sardonic story treated murderers in a humorous manner.

cynical—questioning the goodness of people

The student's cynical remarks alarmed her parents, who had always taught her to trust others.

flippant—irreverently humorous

The flippant remarks about religious faith offended the priest.

haughty—excessively proud (**arrogant**)

The rich woman assumed a haughty tone towards her servants

condescending (patronizing)—conveying an attitude of superiority

Unfortunately, my high test grades in school led me to develop a condescending attitude towards my friends.

pretentious—assuming self-importance

The speaker's name-dropping and use of big words seemed more pretentious than genuine.

bombastic—talking in a way that sounds important (big words) but has little meaning.

The general's bombastic tone alienated his troops.

coarse—crude, ill-mannered

The tennis player's coarse words caused him to be thrown off the court.

apathetic—with little or no emotion; uninvolved

He seemed not to care; the father's attitude toward his son was oddly apathetic.

disdainful—scornful

The coach's disdainful words hurt and discouraged her team.

gloomy—sad, dark

Our good mood soon darkened as we read the gloomy passage

nostalgic—longing for the past

Listening to music from the 40's created a nostalgic mood in the old folks' home.

inflammatory—arousing anger

accusatory—blaming

His accusatory tone had an inflammatory effect on his audience.

contentious—quarrelsome

The girl's contentious words created a hostile atmosphere among her classmates.

wrathful—very angry

In "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Jonathon Edwards terrified his listeners by vividly describing a wrathful God.

bitter—strong negative feelings as a result of pain

She spoke bitterly of the death of her husband in the war.

didactic—preachy, lecturing

I soon tired of my mother's didactic tone

moralistic—imposing a system of right and wrong

The moralistic sermon inspired all of us to do the right thing.