

Word choices are used to impact **tone** and **meaning**.

- ▶ **Tone** is the speaker's **attitude** toward the subject.
- ▶ **Meaning** is the author's **message** suggested by the **word choices**.

adapted from **Frankenstein** by Mary Shelley

Background: *Dr. Frankenstein created the monster.*

¹It was on a **dark, dreary night** of November when I saw the **dull, yellow eye** of the **creature** open.

²Oh! No mortal could support the **horror** of that **countenance**.

³A mummy again endued with animation **could not be so hideous as that wretch**. ⁴I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was **ugly** then; but when those muscles and joints were **rendered capable** of motion, it became a **thing such as even Dante could not have conceived**.

TONE

The **word choices** used by the speaker suggest a **frightened and scared attitude towards the creature**.

MEANING

The **word choices** used by the author suggest that **Dr. Frankenstein is horrified because he created a dreadful and scary monster/creature**.

CFU

Which word choices suggest a tone of admiration? Explain.

- A** “The captive princess was in great distress. She was angry about being locked up.”
- B** “The captive princess was not only beautiful but resourceful. While locked up, she planted a garden.”

In your own words, how do word choice impact tone and meaning?

- 1 Read the text.
- 2 Identify word choices that impact tone and meaning. (underline)
- 3 Determine the tone. (circle)
- 4 Analyze the meaning of the author's word choices. (write).

Background: *Frankenstein the monster is telling Dr. Frankenstein about his encounters with mankind.*

¹Monster: "I am alone and miserable; man will not associate with me; ²I am shunned and hated by all mankind; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. ³My companion must be of the same species and have the same defects. ⁴This being you must create."

1 What is the speaker's tone?

- A. peaceful and happy
- B. empathic and understanding
- C. lonely and frustrated
- D. angry and sad

2 How do the author's word choices impact the meaning?

Background: *Dr. Frankenstein has been working on creating the female companion for the monster.*

¹Dr. Frankenstein: "As I looked on him, his countenance expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery. ²I thought with madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged. ³The wretch saw me destroy the creature on which he depended for happiness.

3 What is the speaker's tone?

- A. playful and earnest
- B. gloomy and regretful
- C. angry and obsessed
- D. boring and detached

4 How do the author's word choices impact the meaning?

- 1 Read the text.
- 2 Identify word choices that impact tone and meaning. (underline)
- 3 Determine the tone. (circle)
- 4 Analyze the meaning of the author's word choices. (write).

Background: *The monster killed Dr. Frankenstein's wife, Elizabeth, shortly after their wedding.*

¹*Dr. Frankenstein:* "While I still hung over her in the agony of despair, I happened to look up. ²The windows of the room had before been darkened, and I felt a kind of panic on seeing the pale, yellow light of the moon brighten the chamber. ³With a sensation of horror not to be described, I saw at the open window a figure the most hideous and abhorred.

5 What is the speaker's tone?

- A.** fear and loneliness **B.** indifferent and scared
C. misery and repulsion **D.** upset and vengeful

6 How do the author's word choices impact the meaning?

Read the text. Answer the question.

Background: the Monster has seen Dr. Frankenstein destroy his potential mate.

Monster: "Shall each man," cried he, "find a wife, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I had feelings of affection, and they were requited by detestation and scorn. Man! you may hate; but beware! **your hours will pass in dread and misery**, and soon the **bolt will fall which must ravish from you your happiness for ever**. Are you to be happy while I grovel in the intensity of my wretchedness? You can blast my other passions; but **revenge remains--revenge**, henceforth dearer than light or food! I may die; but first you, my tyrant and tormentor, **shall curse the sun that gazes on your misery**. Beware; for I am fearless, and therefore powerful. I will watch with the wiliness of a snake, that I may sting with its venom. Man, you **shall repent** of the injuries you inflict."

1. What is the impact of the word choices the author uses?

- A** They express the hatred the Monster feels toward mankind.
- B** They provide further understanding of the Monster's loneliness.
- C** They promise a most devastating retaliation.
- D** They make the reader feel sympathy for the Monster's lack of love.

Skill Closure

- 1 Read the text.
- 2 Identify word choices that impact tone and meaning. (underline)
- 3 Determine the tone. (circle)
- 4 Analyze the meaning of the author's word choices. (write).

Adapted from **Frankenstein** by Mary Shelley

Here the monster tells Dr. Frankenstein that he read the papers describing his creation. The Monster: I discovered some papers in the pocket of the coat which I had taken from your lab. It was your journal of the four months that preceded my creation. You described every step you took in your work. Everything is related which refers to my accursed origin; the details of that series of disgusting circumstances; the description of my odious₇ and loathsome₈ person is given, in language which painted your own horrors and rendered mine indelible₉. I sickened as I read. 'Hateful day when I received life!' I exclaimed in agony. 'Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust?'

1 What is the speaker's tone?

- A. anger B. disgust C. sadness

2 How do the author's word choices impact the meaning?

Concept Closure

Read the text and explain the tone and meaning.

From **Huckleberry Finn** by Mark Twain:

Background: Tom and Sid have returned home from being gone all night. Aunt Sally is waiting for them. Aunt Sally: "Well, I never heard the likes of it in all my born days! So, it was YOU, you little rascallions, that's been making all this trouble, and turned everybody's wits clean inside out and scared us all most to death. I've as good a notion as ever I had in my life to take it out o' you this very minute. To think, here I've been, night after night, a – YOU just get well once, you young scamp, and I lay I'll tan the Old Harry out o' both o' ye!"

Aunt Sally's tone is _____

Word choices convey meaning by suggesting that _____

Summary Closure

What did you learn today about analyzing the impact of word choices on tone and meaning?

Word Bank

tone
attitude
meaning
message
word choices

Read the text. Determine the tone and analyze the meaning of the text.

From *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry

This is the beginning of the story where Della realizes she doesn't have a lot of money to buy her beloved husband, Jim, a Christmas present.

Della: There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So, Della did it. Which instigates¹ the moral reflection that life is made up of, sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are.

1. What is the speaker's tone?

- A. mad and confused
- B. broke and poor
- C. bewildered and cheerful
- D. sorrowful and frustrated

2. How do the author's word choices impact the meaning?

**Listening**

Listen carefully to each stanza. What is the tone for each stanza in Robert Frost's poem? Explain.

Stanza 1

How do the author's word choices impact the meaning?

- A annoyance
- B isolation
- C exhaustion

Stanza 2

How do the author's word choices impact the meaning?

- A indifference
- B peaceful
- C hurriedly

Stanza 3

How do the author's word choices impact the meaning?

- A apathetic
- B disengaged
- C afraid

Stanza 4

How do the author's word choices impact the meaning?

- A vengeful
- B hopeless
- C irritated



Reading

Read the passage. Answer questions about the tone and meaning. Explain.

Sonnet 73 by Shakespeare

Background: This sonnet is about growing old.

That time of year thou mayst in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs₁ which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day,
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

A	The metaphor of the tree losing its leaves gives the start of the poem an optimistic tone.	○ Yes ○ No
B	The metaphor of the <i>light of sunset fading</i> conveys the meaning that death is coming.	○ Yes ○ No
C	In line 8, “rest” is used as a connotative word that means rest of death at the end of a person’s life, giving a tone of despair.	○ Yes ○ No
D	The last two lines of the sonnet suggest that love is the consolation to life even though there is still death.	○ Yes ○ No

Read the text. Determine the tone and analyze the meaning of the text.

MACBETH – Scene V

Background: Macbeth is at war with the English.

In the meantime, Macbeth finds out his wife is dead.

She should have died hereafter;/ There would have been a time for such a word./ To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, /Creeps in this petty pace from day to day /To the last syllable of recorded time,/ And all our yesterdays have lighted fools /The way to dusty death. /Out, out, brief candle! /Life's but a walking shadow, /a poor player That struts and frets, his hour upon the stage /And then is heard no more: /it is a tale Told by an idiot, /full of sound and fury, /Signifying nothing.

1. What is the tone of the passage? Provide textual evidence.

2. How does the choice of words impact the meaning of the text?

Read the text. Determine the tone and analyze the meaning of the text.

In this short story by Edgar Allan Poe, the narrator has been sentenced to death during the Spanish Inquisition for an unnamed crime. He is tied to the floor and a large, sharp blade (the pendulum) is swinging back and forth towards his body.

excerpt from ***The Pit and the Pendulum*** by Edgar Allan Poe

The vibration of the pendulum was at right angles to my length. I saw that the crescent was designed to cross the region of the heart. It would fray the serge of my robe—it would return and repeat its operations— again—and again. Notwithstanding terrifically wide sweep (some thirty feet or more) and its hissing vigor of its descent, sufficient to split these very walls of iron, still the fraying of my robe would be all that, for several minutes, it would accomplish. And at this thought I paused. I dared not go farther than this reflection. I dwelt upon it with a pertinacity₁ of attention—as if, in so dwelling, I could arrest here the descent of the steel. I forced myself to ponder upon the sound of the crescent as it should pass across the garment—upon the odd thrilling sensation which the friction of cloth produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity₂ until my teeth were on edge.

1. What is the tone of the passage? Provide textual evidence.

2. How does the choice of words impact the meaning of the text?
