

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**.

From *The Great Gatsby*, 1925

I lived at West Egg, the — well, **the less fashionable** of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them. ...The one on my right was a **colossal affair** by any standard ... spanking new under a thin beard **of raw ivy** ... My own house **was an eyesore**

Across the courtesy bay the **white palaces of fashionable** East Egg glittered along the water ...

Tone for **West Egg** neighborhood

The word choices suggest a tone such as **dispiriting**.

Tone for the neighborhood **on the right**

The word choices suggest a tone such as **uplifting**.

Meaning

These word choices suggest the **contrast between the neighborhoods of rich and not-so-rich people**.

CFU

Which meaning could be suggested by these tones – **shocking, horrified**?

- A** Man's behavior is often less than human. **B** The beauty of nature inspires success.

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

- 1 Read the text.
- 2 Identify word choices that impact tone and meaning. (underline)
- 3 Determine₂ the tones. (circle)
- 4 Analyze₃ the meaning of the author's word choices. (write).

From **Billy Budd** by Herman Melville (1891)

Background: *Billy Budd is a young sailor who is well-liked because of his innocence.*

In the time before steamships, or then more frequently than now, a stroller along the docks of any considerable sea-port would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed mariners, man-of-war's men or merchant-sailors in holiday attire ashore on liberty. In certain instances they would flank, or, like a body-guard quite surround some superior figure of their own class, moving along with them like Aldebaran₄ among the lesser lights of his constellation.

3. How does the author's word choices impact the meaning?

1. What is the tone about the **sailor group that surrounds someone?**

- A. admiration
- B. disdain
- C. lonely

2. What is the tone about the **superior figure?**

- A. disapproval
- B. frustration
- C. awestruck

- 1 Read the full passage.
- 2 Infer₉ the meaning based on word choices used. (write)

From **Billy Budd** by Herman Melville (1891)

Background: *Billy Budd is a young sailor who is liked for his innocence.*

In the time before steamships, or then more frequently than now, a stroller along the docks of any considerable sea-port would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed mariners, man-of-war's men or merchant-sailors in holiday attire ashore on liberty. In certain instances **they would flank**, or, **like a body-guard** quite surround some superior figure of their own class, moving along with them like **Aldebaran** among the lesser lights of his constellation. That signal object was the "Handsome Sailor" of the less prosaic₅ time alike of the military and merchant navies. With **no perceptible trace of the vainglorious**₆ about him, rather with the off-hand unaffectedness of **natural regality**₇, he seemed to **accept the spontaneous homage**₈ of his shipmates.

4. Meaning

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

From **A White Heron** by Sarah Orne Jewett (1886)

Background: *Young Sylvia climbs a high tree to view the country and locate the nest of the white heron.*

The way was harder than she thought; she must reach far and hold fast, the sharp dry twigs caught and held her and scratched her like angry talons, the pitch made her thin little fingers clumsy and stiff as she went round and round the tree's great stem, higher and higher upward. Sylvia's face was like a pale star, if one had seen it from the ground, when the last thorny bough was past, and she stood trembling and tired but wholly triumphant, high in the tree-top.

5. What is the tone about the young girl named **Sylvia**?

- A. encouraging
- B. admiring
- C. sorrowful

6. How does the author's word choices impact the meaning?



Writing

Write a sentence for tone. The tone of the previous passage from **A White Heron** is achievement. Identify word choices in the text that indicate this tone.

The tone of achievement is suggested by the word choice

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

Determine the tones. Analyze the meaning of the author's word choices.

From **Hamlet** by William Shakespeare

Background: Hamlet speaking aloud his own thoughts.

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural
shocks

That flesh is heir to:

7. What is the tone about **Hamlet**?

- A. outraged
- B. confused
- C. resigned

8. How does the author's word choices impact the meaning?

**Listening**

Find at least two phrases in the passage that give setting details. Analyze their tone and how they impact the passage.

1 In section 1, what is the tone about the **people in town**?

- A. tense
- B. gossipy
- C. joyful

2 In section 2, what is the tone about the **people in town**?

- A. spiteful
- B. sorrowful
- C. sympathetic

3 In section 3, what is the tone about the **people in town**?

- A. blissful
- B. distress
- C. vicious

**Reading**

Read the passage. Select and analyze at least three words or phrases that give a tone of resignation or acceptance.

Because I Could Not Stop for Death by Emily Dickinson (1890)

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school, where children strove
At recess, in the ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

*This is only part of the poem.

Justify your selection.

Identify the word choices, analyze them, describe the tone, and infer the meaning of the passage.

Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston (1937)

Background: *Janie's husband Joe just died.*

¹All things concerning death and burial were said and done. ²Finish. End. Nevermore. Darkness. Deep hole. Dissolution. Eternity. Weeping and wailing outside. ³Inside the expensive black folds were resurrection and life. ⁴She did not reach outside for anything, nor did the things of death reach inside to disturb her calm. ⁵She sent her face to Joe's funeral, and herself went rollicking with the springtime across the world. ⁶After a while the people finished their celebration and Janie went on home.

1 What sentences convey that Janie is **indifferent** to her husband's death.

2 What sentences convey that Janie is **relieved** about her husband's death.



Writing

Write a sentence for tone.

Excerpt from *The Great Gatsby*

... he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up, and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room.

The tone of resistance is suggested by the word choice(s) ...

The tone of hopelessness is suggested by the word choice(s) ...
