

Tone Words

tone: the author's attitude toward the subject and audience.

whimsical: given to capricious notions, odd notions, or fanciful humor.

Example: At first I thought the monkeys were staring at me like police detectives, arrogant in their powers of perception. Then I decided they were just constipated.

dramatic: vivid, moving, striking, emotional.

Example: "Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang!"

--Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*

informative: imparting knowledge : INSTRUCTIVE

Example: The Polynesian tree squirrel only mates at midnight.

somber: of a dismal or depressing character : MELANCHOLY

urgent: calling for immediate attention : PRESSING

confident: characterized by assurance; *especially* : SELF-RELIANT

mock-heroic: ridiculing or burlesquing heroic style, character, or action

objective: expressing or dealing with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations; free from bias

diffident: hesitant in acting or speaking through lack of self-confidence; shy, RESERVED, UNASSERTIVE

ironic: that which expresses something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning

sarcastic: having the character of sarcasm (a sharp and often satirical or ironic utterance designed to cut or give pain); SARCASTIC implies an intentional inflicting of pain by deriding, taunting, or ridiculing (note the difference from satiric)

satiric: trenchant (incisive) wit, irony, or sarcasm used to expose and discredit vice or folly; SATIRIC implies that the intent of the ridiculing is censure and reprobation

learned: characterized by or associated with learning : ERUDITE

didactic: designed or intended to teach

pedantic: narrowly, stodgily, and often ostentatiously learned; making a show of knowledge; a *pedant* is one who is unimaginative or who unduly emphasizes minutiae in the presentation or use of knowledge

pretentious: expressive of affected, unwarranted, or exaggerated importance, worth, or stature <*pretentious* language> <*pretentious* houses>

factual: restricted to or based on fact

restrained: limited, restricted, or kept under control

elegiac: expressing sorrow often for something now past; of, relating to, or comprising elegy or an elegy

disdainful: full of or expressing disdain (a feeling of contempt for what is beneath one)

lugubrious: MOURNFUL, *especially* exaggeratedly or affectedly mournful

indignant: filled with or marked by indignation (anger aroused by something unjust, unworthy, or mean)

bantering: to speak to or address in a witty and teasing manner

flippant: lacking proper respect or seriousness

condescending: to assume an air of superiority

patronizing: adopting an air of condescension toward : treat haughtily or coolly

facetious: meant to be humorous or funny : not serious

clinical: analytical or coolly dispassionate

mock-serious: ridiculing or burlesquing a person or situation by pretending to be serious about it; treating something obviously trivial as serious

inflammatory: tending to excite anger, disorder, or tumult : SEDITIOUS

benevolent: marked by or disposed to doing good

burlesque: a literary or dramatic work that seeks to ridicule by means of grotesque exaggeration or comic imitation (think *Simpsons*)

fanciful: marked by fancy or unrestrained imagination rather than by reason and experience

detached: exhibiting an aloof objectivity usually free from prejudice or self-interest (what journalists are *supposed* to be)

cynical: having or showing the attitude or temper of a cynic; *especially* : contemptuously distrustful of human nature and motives

incisive: impressively direct and decisive (as in manner or presentation)

allusive: an implied or indirect reference especially in literature; *also* : the use of such references; the act of alluding or hinting at

scornful: to feel scorn toward

effusive: excessively demonstrative

colloquial: a : used in or characteristic of familiar and informal conversation; *also* : unacceptably informal b : using conversational style

compassionate: having or showing compassion : SYMPATHETIC

impartial: not partial or biased : treating or affecting all equally

insipid: 1 : lacking taste or savor : TASTELESS. 2 : lacking in qualities that interest, stimulate, or challenge : DULL, FLAT

petty: marked by or reflective of narrow interests and sympathies : SMALL-MINDED

vibrant: pulsating with life, vigor, or activity

irreverent: lacking proper respect or seriousness

sentimental: 1 a : marked or governed by feeling, sensibility, or emotional idealism b : resulting from feeling rather than reason or thought 2 : having an excess of sentiment or sensibility

moralistic: 1 : characterized by or expressive of a concern with morality 2 : characterized by or expressive of a narrow and conventional moral attitude

complimentary: a : expressing or containing a compliment b : FAVORABLE

contemptuous: manifesting, feeling, or expressing contempt (the act of despising, disdain)

sympathetic: feel sympathy towards; given to, marked by, or arising from sympathy, compassion, friendliness, and sensitivity to others' emotions

taunting: to reproach or challenge in a mocking or insulting manner

concerned: a : ANXIOUS, WORRIED <*concerned* for their safety> b : INTERESTED <*concerned* to prove the point>

angry: um ... to be angry

turgid: excessively embellished in style or **language** : BOMBASTIC, POMPOUS

sardonic: disdainfully or skeptically humorous : derisively mocking

contentious: exhibiting an often perverse and wearisome tendency to quarrels and disputes

insolent: 1 : insultingly contemptuous in speech or conduct : OVERBEARING 2 : exhibiting boldness or effrontery : IMPUDENT

candid: a : marked by honest sincere expression b : indicating or suggesting sincere honesty and absence of deception c : disposed to criticize severely : BLUNT