

Words to Describe Tone

Gathered from AP Lit College Board Training materials, compiled and organized by Chris Palmer

Attitudes chiefly rational--Explanatory, instructive, didactic, admonitory, condemnatory, indignant, puzzled, curious, wistful, pensive, thoughtful, preoccupied, deliberate, studied, candid, guileless, thoughtless, innocent, frank, sincere, questioning, uncertain, doubting, incredulous, critical, insinuating, persuading, coaxing, pleading, persuasive, argumentative, authoritative

Attitudes of pleasure--Peaceful, satisfied, contented, happy, cheerful, pleasant, bright, sprightly, joyful, playful, jubilant, elated, enraptured

Attitudes of pain--Worried, uneasy, troubled, disappointed, regretful, vexed, annoyed, bored, disgusted, miserable, cheerless, mournful, sorrowful, sad, dismal, melancholy, plaintive, fretful, querulous, irritable, sore, sour, sulky, sullen, bitter, crushed, pathetic, tragic

Attitudes of Passion--Nervous, hysterical, impulsive, impetuous, reckless, desperate, frantic, wild, fierce, furious, savage, enraged, angry, hungry, greedy, jealous, insane

Attitudes of self-control--Calm, quiet, solemn, serious, serene, simple, mild, gentle, temperate, imperturbable, nonchalant cool, wary, cautious

Attitudes of friendliness--Cordial, sociable, gracious, kindly, sympathetic, compassionate, forgiving, pitying, indulgent, tolerant, comforting, soothing, tender, loving, caressing, solicitous, accommodating, approving, helpful, obliging, courteous, polite, confiding, trusting

Attitudes of unfriendliness--Sharp, severe, cutting, hateful, unsociable, spiteful, harsh, boorish, pitiless, disparaging, derisive, scornful, satiric, sarcastic, insolent, insulting, impudent, belittling, contemptuous, accusing, reproving, scolding, suspicious

Attitudes of comedy--Facetious, comic, ironic, satiric, amused, mocking, playful, humorous, hilarious, uproarious

Attitudes of animation--Lively, eager, excited, earnest, energetic, vigorous, hearty, ardent, passionate, rapturous, ecstatic, feverish, inspired, exalted, breathless, hasty, brisk, crisp, hopeful

Attitudes of apathy--Inert, sluggish, languid, dull, dispassionate, colorless, indifferent, stoic, resigned, defeated, helpless, hopeless, dry, monotonous, vacant, feeble, dreaming, bored, blasé, sophisticated

Attitudes of self-importance--Impressive, profound, proud, dignified, lofty, imperious, confident, egotistical, peremptory, bombastic, sententious, arrogant, pompous, stiff, boastful, exultant, insolent, domineering, flippant, saucy, positive, resolute, haughty, condescending, challenging, bold, defiant, contemptuous, assured, knowing

Attitudes of submission and timidity--Meek, shy, humble, docile, ashamed, modest, timid, unpretentious, respectful, devout, reverent, servile, obsequious, groveling, contrite, obedient, willing, fawning, ingratiating, deprecatory, submissive, frightened, surprised, horrified, aghast, astonished, alarmed, fearful, terrified, trembling, wondering, awed, astounded, shocked

Tone vs. Mood:

