Tone—Style—Syntax

Tone is the writer's or speaker's attitude toward the subject.

Another List of Words but in Categories:

Developing A Tone Vocabulary

angry	sad	sentimental
sharp	cold	fanciful
upset	urgent	complimentary
silly	joking	condescending
boring	poignant	sympathetic
afraid	detached	contemptuous
happy	confused	apologetic
hollow	childish	humorous
joyful	peaceful	horrific
allusive	mocking	sarcastic
sweet	objective	nostalgic
vexed	vibrant	zealous
tired	frivolous	irreverent
bitter	audacious	benevolent
dreamy	shocking	seductive
restrained	somber	candid
proud	giddy	pitiful
dramatic	provocative	didactic

Another list of tone words:

satiric	pedantic	colloquial
whimsical	indignant	compassionate
dramatic	bantering	impartial
learned	flippant	insipid
informative	condescending	pretentious
Somber	patronizing	vibrant
Urgent	facetious	irreverent
confident	clinical	sentimental
mock-heroic	mock-serious	moralistic
objective	inflammatory	complimentary
diffident	benevolent	contemptuous
ironic	burlesque	sympathetic
petty	detached	taunting
factual	cynical	angry
restrained	incisive	turgid
elegiac	allusive	sardonic
disdainful	scornful	contentious
lugubrious	effusive	insolent
candid	fanciful	concerned

Words That Describe Language

jargon	pedantic	poetic
vulgar	euphemistic	moralistic
scholarly	pretentious	slang
insipid	sensuous	idiomatic
precise	exact	concrete
esoteric	learned	cultured
connotative	symbolic	picturesque
plain	simple	homespun
literal	figurative	provincial
colloquial	bombastic	trite
artificial	abstruse	obscure
detached	grotesque	precise
emotional	concrete	exact

Another List of Words but in Categories:

reverence	love	joy
awe	affection	exaltation
veneration	cherish	zeal
solemn	fondness	fervor
	admiration	ardor
happiness	tenderness	elation
glad	sentiment	jubilant
pleased	romantic	buoyancy
merry	Platonic	
glee	adoration	**calm**
delight	narcissism	serene
cheerful	passion	tranquil
gay	lust	placid
sanguine	rapture	
mirth	ecstasy	**hope**
enjoy	infatuated	expect
relish	enamor	anticipate
bliss	compassion	

sadness	anger	hate
somber	vehement	vengeance
melancholy	rage	abhorrence
sorrow	outrage	animosity
lament	antipathy	enmity
despair	exasperation	malice
despondent	indignant	pique
regret	vexation	rancor
dismal	incensed	aversion
funereal	petulant	loathing
saturnine	irascible	despise
dark	riled	scorn
gloomy	bitter	contempt
dejection	acrimony	disdain
grave	irate	jealousy
grief	fury	repugnance
morose	wrath	repulsion
sullen	rancor	resentment
woe	consternation	spite
bleak	hostility	fear
remorse	choleric	disgust
forlorn	futility	
agony	umbrage	**fear**
depression	gall	timidity
misery	bristle	apprehension
barren	exasperation	anxiety
empty		terror
pity	**ironic tones**	horror
lugubrious	playful	dismay
distress	witty	agitation
	humorous	sinister
ironic tones	sarcastic	dread
acerbic	sardonic	alarm
smirking	flippant	startle
sneering	cynical	qualms
derisive	mocking	angst
icy	biting	trepidation
		uneasy

Often a change or shift in tone will be signaled by the following:

> key words (e.g. *but, yet, nevertheless, however, although*
> punctuation (*dashes, periods, colons*)
> stanza and paragraph divisions
> changes in line and stanza or sentence length

There are at least four areas that may be considered when analyzing style: <u>diction</u>, <u>sentence structure</u>, <u>treatment of subject matter</u>, and <u>figurative language</u>.

Diction (choice of words)—Describe diction by considering the following:

> Words may be **monosyllabic** (one syllable in length) or polysyllabic (more than one syllable in length). The higher the ratio of **polysyllabic** words, the more difficult the content.
> Words may be mainly **colloquial** (slang), **informal** (conversational), **formal** (literary), or **old-fashioned**.
> Words may be mainly **denotative** (containing an exact meaning), e.g. *dress*, or **connotative** (containing a suggested meaning), e.g. *gown*.
> Words may be **concrete** (specific) or **abstract** (general).
> Words may be **euphonious** (pleasant sounding), e.g. *butterfly*, or **cacophonous** (harsh sounding), e.g. *pus*.

Sentence Structure/Syntax—Describe the sentence structure by considering the following:

> Examine the sentence length. Are the sentences **telegraphic** (shorter than five words in length), **medium** (approximately eighteen words in length), or **long and involved** (thirty words or more in length)? Does the sentence length fit the subject matter, what variety of length is present? Why is the sentence length effective?
> Examine sentence patterns. Some elements to consider:

> A **declarative** (assertive) **sentence** makes a statement, e.g., *The king is sick*. An **imperative sentence** gives a command, e.g., *Stand up*. An **interrogative sentence** asks a question, e.g., *Is the king sick?* An **exclamatory sentence** makes an exclamation, e.g., *The king is dead!*

> A **simple sentence** contains one subject and one verb, e.g., *The singer bowed to her adoring audience*. A **compound sentence** contains two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, for, nor, yet, so*) or by a semicolon, e.g. *The singer bowed to the audience, but she sang no encores*. A **complex sentence** contains an independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses, e.g., *You said that you would tell the truth*. A **compound-complex sentence** contains two or more principal clauses and one or more subordinate clauses, e.g. *The singer bowed while the audience applauded, but she sang no encores*.
> A **loose sentence** makes complete sense if brought to a close before the actual ending, e.g., *We reached Edmonton that morning after a turbulent flight and some exciting experiences*. A **periodic sentence** makes sense only when the end of the sentence is reached, e.g., *That morning, after a turbulent flight and some exciting experiences, we reached Edmonton*.
> In a **balanced sentence**, the phrases or clauses balance each other by virtue of their likeness or structure, meaning, and/or length, e.g., *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters*.
> **Natural order** of a sentence involves constructing a sentence so the subject comes before the predicate, e.g., *Oranges grow in California*. **Inverted order** of a sentence (sentence inversion) involves constructing a sentence so the predicate comes before the subject, e.g. *In California grow oranges*. This is a device in which normal sentence patterns are reversed to create an emphatic or rhythmic effect. **Split order** of a sentence divides the predicate into two parts with the subject coming in the middle, e.g., In California oranges grow.
> **Juxtaposition** is a poetic and rhetorical device in which normally unassociated ideas, words, or phrases are placed next to one another, creating an effect of surprise and wit, e.g., "The apparition of these faces in the crowd;/Petals on a wet, black bough" ("In a Station of Metro" by Ezra Pound).
> **Parallel** structure (parallelism) refers to a grammatical or structural similarity between sentences or parts of a sentence. It involves an arrangement of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs so that elements of equal importance are equally developed and similarly phrased, e.g., *He was walking, running, and jumping for joy*.

- ➢ **Repetition** is a device in which words, sounds, and ideas are used more than once for the purpose of enhancing rhythm and creating emphasis, e.g., ". . . government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.
- ➢ **A rhetorical question** is a question which expects no answer. It is used to draw attention to a point and is generally stronger than a direct statement, e.g., *If Mr. Ferchoff is always fair, as you have said, why did he refuse to listen to Mrs. Baldwin's arguments?*

- ➢ Examine sentence beginnings. Is there a good variety or does a pattern emerge?

- ➢ Examine the arrangement of ideas in a sentence. Are they set out in a special way for a purpose?

- ➢ Examine the arrangement of ideas in a paragraph to see if there is evidence of any pattern or structure.

Treatment of Subject Matter

Describe the author's treatment of the subject matter by considering the following. Has the author been?

- ➢ **Subjective?** Are his conclusions based upon facts; are they impersonal or scientific?
- ➢ **Objective?** Are his conclusions based upon facts; are they impersonal or scientific?
- ➢ Supportive of his main idea? If so, how did he support his claims? Did he: (a) state his opinions, (b) report his experience, (c) report observations, (d) refer to readings, (e) refer to statements made by experts, (f) use statistical data?

Figurative Language

- ➢ **Simile** is a comparison of two different things or ideas through the use of the words like or as. It is definitely a stated comparison, where the poet says one thing is like another, e.g. *The warrior fought like a lion.*
- ➢ **Metaphor** is a comparison without the use of like or as. The poet states that one thing is another. It is usually a comparison between something that is real or concrete and something that is abstract, e.g., *Life is but a dream.*

- ➢ **Personification** is a kind of metaphor which gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human characteristics, e.g., *The wind cried in the dark.*
- ➢ **Hyperbole** is a deliberate, extravagant, and often outrageous exaggeration. It may be used either for serious or comic effect, e.g., *The shot that was heard 'round the world.*
- ➢ **Understatement (Meiosis)** is the opposite of hyperbole. It is a kind of irony which deliberately represents something as much less than it really is, e.g., *I could probably manage to survive on a salary of two million dollars per year.*
- ➢ **Paradox** is a statement which contradicts itself. It may seem almost absurd. Although it may seem to be at odds with ordinary experience, it usually turns out to have a coherent meaning, and reveals a truth which is normally hidden, e.g., *The more you know, the more you know you don't know.* (Socrates)
- ➢ **Oxymoron** is a form of paradox which combines a pair of contrary terms into a single expression. This combination usually serves the purpose of shocking the reader into awareness, e.g., *sweet sorrow, wooden nickel.*
- ➢ **Pun** is a play on words which are identical or similar in sound but which have sharply diverse meanings. Puns may have serious as well as humorous uses, e.g., *When Mercutio is bleeding to death in Romeo and Juliet, he says to his friends, "Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man."*
- ➢ **Irony** is the result of a statement saying one thing while meaning the opposite. Its purpose is usually to criticize, e.g., *It is simple to stop smoking. I've done it many times.*
- ➢ **Sarcasm** is a type of irony in which a person appears to be praising something while he is actually insulting the thing. Its purpose is to injure or hurt, e.g., *As I fell down the stairs head-first, I heard her say, "look at that coordination."*
- ➢ **Antithesis** involves a direct contrast of structurally parallel word groupings generally for the purpose of contrast, e.g., *sink or swim.*
- ➢ **Apostrophe** is a form of personification in which the absent or dead are spoken to as if present, and the inanimate as if animate. Those are all addressed directly, e.g., *The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind.*

- ➤ **Allusion** is a reference to a mythological, literary history, or Biblical person, place or thing, e.g., *He met his Waterloo.*
- ➤ **Synecdoche (Metonymy)** is a form of metaphor. In synecdoche, a part of something is used to signify the whole, e.g., *All hands on deck.*

*Also, the reverse, whereby the whole can represent a part is synecdoche, e.g. *Canada played the United States in the Olympic hockey finals.*

*Another form of synecdoche involves the container representing the thing being contained, e.g., *The pot is boiling.*

*One last form of synecdoche involves the material from which an object is made standing for the object itself, e.g., *The quarterback tossed the pigskin.*

*In metonymy, the name of one thing is applied to another thing with which it is closely associated, e.g., *I love Shakespeare. The pen is mightier than the sword.*

Elements of Rhetoric

I. Style
- ✓ syntax
- ✓ diction
- ✓ point of view
- ✓ devices of language (alliteration, assonance, etc.)
- ✓ tone
- ✓ imagery
- ✓ figures of speech
- ✓ phrasing
- ✓ coordination/subordination
- ✓ selection of detail
- ✓ parallelisms
- ✓ repetition

II. Modes of discourse (Purpose)
- ✓ definition
- ✓ cause/effect (causal analysis)
- ✓ comparison/contrast
- ✓ argumentation
- ✓ description
- ✓ narration
- ✓ summary
- ✓ persuasion (elements of logic—persuading by emotion)
- ✓ classification/division
- ✓ process analysis

Some generalizations about literature:

1. Authors usually devalue materialism.
2. As a rule, authors do not value formal religion. They do, however, generally value individual reverence.
3. Authors value mutability.
4. Authors are rarely neutral about the carpe diem theme.
5. Authors' thinking often runs counter to their own cultural training.
6. Authors are not only our social historians; they are also our social critics.
7. In the conflict between the individual and society, authors normally value the individual more than the society.
8. Most authors attack overweening pride.
9. Most authors have a critical tone toward war.
10. In much literature, the family is a source of the most passionate kind of conflict.

Words that Describe the Reader's Perception the Speaker:

humble	shallow
bold	fatuous
insipid	haughty
imperious	proud
austere	audacious
confident	insecure
credulous	innocent
naïve	triumphant
vivacious	insolent
sincere	inane
vain	gullible

Words that describe style and syntax:

plain, sparse, austere, unadorned
ornate, elaborate, flowery
jumbled, chaotic, obfuscating
erudite, esoteric
journalistic, terse, laconic
harsh, grating
mellifluous, musical, lilting, lyrical
whimsical
elegant
staccato, abrupt
solid, thudding
sprawling, disorganized
dry
deceptively simple