

Tone

Voice of the Speaker



What is **tone**?

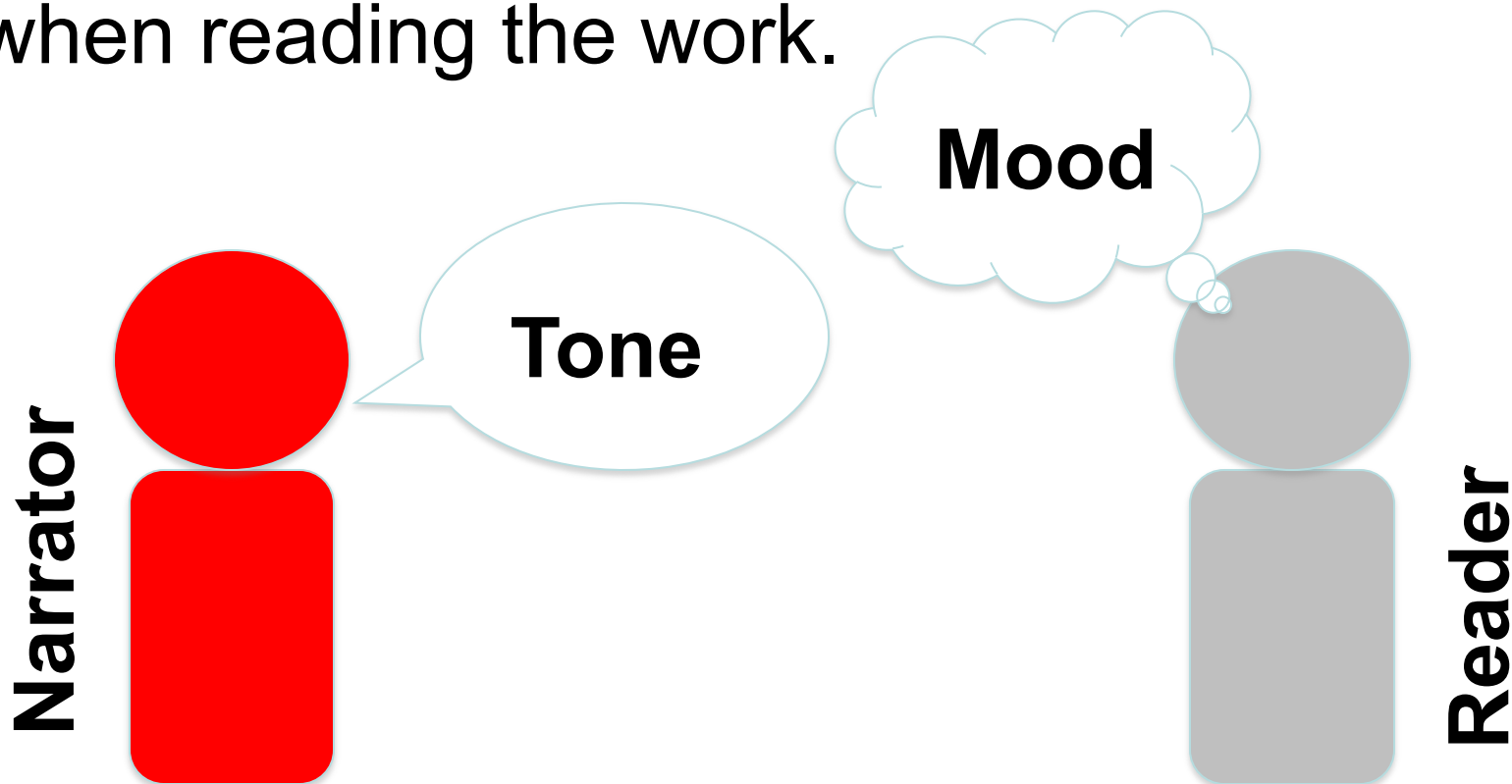
The **attitude** with which the speaker or narrator treats his or her subject.

- **Tone** is similar to tone of voice.
- The same adjectives can be used to describe the narrator's tone.
- You can't *hear* the narrator, so you have to infer the tone from his or her words.

Tone is not Mood

Tone: how the narrator or speaker feels about their subject.

Mood: how the reader is supposed to feel when reading the work.



Example **Tone** Words

Some examples of words that describe **tone**.

- **Anxious**
- **Appreciative**
- **Concerned**
- **Cynical**
- **Depressed**
- **Foreboding**
- **Grateful**
- **Grave**
- **Hopeful**
- **Jealous**
- **Loving**
- **Melancholy**
- **Peaceful**
- **Pleasant**
- **Respectful**
- **Sensitive**
- **Timid**
- **Wise**

Compare and Contrast...

1

Life's city ways are dark,
Men mutter by, the wells
Of the great waters moan.
O death, O sea, O tide,
The waters moan like bells.
No light, no mark,
The soul goes out alone
On seas unknown.

2

The skies are sown with stars
tonight,
The sea is sown with light,
The hollows of the heaving floor
Gleam deep with light once more,
The racing ebb-tide flashes past
And seeks the vacant vast,
A wind steals from a world asleep
And walks the restless deep.

- These passages both talk about the sea.
- One is very dark and dreary.
- The other is bright and happy.
- **Tone** makes a big difference in the mood.

Review

- **Tone and mood** are different but related.
- **Tone** describes the narrator's attitude or voice.
- **Mood** is how the reader is supposed to feel.
- **Ex:** A reader can feel scared for a character even if the narrator is indifferent.

Practice

1. Read the passage.
2. Describe the **tone** of the narrator or speaker.
3. Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

1

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

‘Pipe a song about a Lamb!’
So I piped with merry cheer.
‘Piper, pipe that song again.’
So I piped: he wept to hear.

Suggested Answer

This speaker's tone is pleasant or happy.

Explanation

I believe this because he is piping with "merry cheer" and "Piping songs of pleasant glee." This shows that he is very happy.

2

Dearest, forgive that with my clumsy touch
I broke and bruised your rose.
I hardly could suppose
It were a thing so fragile that my clutch
Could kill it, thus.

Suggested Answer

This speaker's tone is apologetic or regretful.

Explanation

I believe this because she says, "Dearest, forgive."
This shows that she feels bad about what she did
and she wants forgiveness.

3

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the
wind is in the trees,

When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed
upon cloudy seas,

When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over
the purple moor,

A highwayman comes riding--

Riding-- riding--

A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-
door.

Suggested Answer

This speaker's tone is spooky or frightening.

Explanation

I believe this because she describes the moon as a "ghostly galleon," or a spooky ship.

4

One asked of regret,
And I made reply:
To have held the bird,
And let it fly;
To have seen the star
For a moment nigh,
And lost it
Through a slothful eye;
To have plucked the flower
And cast it by;
To have one only hope--
To die.

Suggested Answer

This speaker's tone is regretful or depressed.

Explanation

I believe this because he says, "To have one only hope-- / To die." Hoping for death is about as depressing as it gets.

5

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing ‘Ha ha he!’

Suggested Answer

This speaker's tone is joyful or cheerful.

Explanation

I believe this because the speaker says stuff like, “the green woods laugh with the voice of joy.” The speaker chooses to describe the woods as laughing with a voice of joy. That is a very cheerful way to describe the noises of the forest.