

acerbic  
adoring  
affectionate  
ambiguous  
ambivalent  
annoyed  
antagonistic  
anxious  
apathetic  
appreciative  
apprehensive  
belligerent  
bemused  
benevolent  
bewildered  
biting  
bitter  
blunt  
bossy  
brusque  
calm  
candid  
casual  
choleric  
cold  
colloquial  
comic  
compassionate  
complex  
complicated  
complimentary  
conceited  
condescending  
confident  
confused  
contemptuous  
conversational  
cynical  
demanding  
depressed  
derisive  
derogatory  
desolate  
despairing  
desperate  
detached  
diabolic  
direct  
disappointed  
disrespectful

doubtful  
earnest  
ecstatic  
effusive  
elevated  
eloquent  
embarrassed  
emotional  
empathetic  
encouraging  
enraged  
euphoric  
evasive  
excited  
exhilarated  
facetious  
factual  
familiar  
fervent  
flippant  
forceful  
frantic  
gloomy  
greedy  
gushy  
harsh  
haughty  
hilarious  
holier-than-thou  
hostile  
humorous  
impartial  
impatient  
indifferent  
indignant  
inflammatory  
informal  
informative  
insecure  
insistent  
insolent  
introspective  
ironic  
irreverent  
jovial  
joyful  
laid-back  
learned  
lethargic  
lively

lofty  
ludicrous  
meditative  
melancholy  
mischievous  
mocking  
modest  
mournful  
mysterious  
nervous  
nostalgic  
objective  
ominous  
optimistic  
outraged  
outspoken  
paranoid  
passionate  
patronizing  
pedantic  
pensive  
pessimistic  
placid  
playful  
poignant  
powerful  
pretentious  
proud  
questioning  
reassuring  
relaxed  
resigned  
respectful  
reticent  
reverent  
ridiculous  
romantic  
sarcastic  
sardonic  
scholarly  
selfish  
sentimental  
serious  
severe  
sinister  
skeptical  
solemn  
somber  
stately  
straightforward

**Tone** words describe the speaker's or writer's feelings or judgment about the subject at hand. Note that tone words on this list are all **adjectives**, words that describe. Tone may change or **shift** within a piece of writing; be on the watch for such **tonal shifts**.

Many of these words are familiar to you, but for those that may be unfamiliar to you, I've provided parenthetical synonyms. Keep this sheet (forever) as a reference tool for any assignment requiring you to discover and discuss tone.

admiring	fanciful	remorseful (full of regret or guilt)
affectionate	forgiving	respectful
afraid	frightened	restrained (not emotional)
ambivalent (uncertain about a choice)	frightening	sad
angry	frivolous	sarcastic (sharp, wounding)
amused	giddy (silly, lighthearted)	scheming (tricky)
apologetic	grateful	scornful (arrogant)
ashamed	happy	seductive (intriguing)
audacious (bold, spirited, reckless)	horrific	self-mocking
benevolent (kind, well-meaning)	humorous	self-pitying
bewildered (confused, puzzled)	hypocritical (false, two-faced)	sentimental (romantic, emotional)
bitter (biting, full of hate)	impassioned (of strong emotion)	serious
bored	indignant	sharp
calm or calming	instructive	shocking
candid (honest)	insulting	silly
caring	irreverent (not respectful)	skeptical (disbelieving)
cheerful	ironic	solemn (serious)
childish	joyous	somber
cold	lighthearted	sorrowful
compassionate (deeply sympathetic)	loving	straightforward (direct)
complimentary	malevolent (mean-spirited, evil)	superior (looking down on)
conceited	matter-of-fact (unemotional)	sweet
condescending (superior, patronizing)	mocking	sympathetic
confused	nostalgic (longing for the past)	threatening
contemptuous (disdainful, scornful)	objective (not influenced by feelings or prejudices)	tired
critical	optimistic (hopeful)	tolerant
cruel	outraged	tragic
curious	peaceful	uncertain (doubting)
doubtful	pessimistic (not hopeful)	upset
depressed (very sad or discouraged)	playful	urgent
detached (emotionally uninvolved)	pleading (begging)	vengeful (meaning to hurt)
didactic (instructive)	poignant (moving, sorrowful)	vibrant
distressed (suffering)	praising	warm
dramatic	proud (full of praise or esteem)	worried
dreamy	provocative (stimulating)	zealous (eager and involved)
encouraging		
excited		



