

AP ENGLISH
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
sardonic	complacent	haughty
melancholy	delirious	indignant

Like word choice, the language of a passage has control over tone. Language can be categorized as formal, informal, scientific, clinical, etc. We often need words to describe language--to describe the force or quality of the diction images and details. These words qualify how the work is written, not the attitude or tone:

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

TONE

This element of poetry is bound to surface on the AP exam. Students can usually think of only a few obvious tones: ironic (if they don't know any other) serious, or humorous. Beyond that, they are at a loss. Listed are some of the adjectives used to describe tone that have been used by students with good results:

DOGMAIC—AUTHORITATIVE, ASSERTIVE, ARROGANT
DIDACTIC—INSTRUCTIVE
ELEGIAC—EXPRESSING SORROW
IRONIC—SHOWING THE UNEXPECTED OR OPPOSITE EFFECT
CONDESCENDING—SHOWING SUPERIORITY
PEDANTIC—OSTENTATIOUS, UNIMAGINATIVE
AMBIVILANT—INDECISIVE, MIXED EMOTIONS
PATRONIZING—CONDESCENDING
ALOOF—HAUGHTY, DISTANT
SKEPTICAL—QUESTIONING, DOUBTING
SYMPATHETIC—FAVORING, EXPRESSING SORROW
SENTIMENTAL—MAUDLIN, AFFECTEDLY EMOTIONAL
APATHETIC—UNCARING, UNINVOLVED
HYPNOTIC—INTRIGUING, TRANCE-LIKE
SATIRICAL—RIDICULING, IRONIC
CANDID—FRANK, TRUTHFUL
BITTER—HATING, MALICIOUS
LOATHING—ABHORRING, DISLIKE
REVERENT—HAVING DEEP RESPECT
POMPOUS—ARROGANT, SELF-IMPORTANT
CATHARTIC—PURGING, CLEANSING
LUGUBRIOUS—DISMAL, MOURNFUL
HAVING LEVITY—HUMOR
SUPERCILIOUS—LOFTY, PRIDE, ARROGANT
FATALISTIC—DEADLY, PESSIMISTIC
INCONGRUOUS—NOT COINCIDING, DISHARMONIOUS
SOMBER—DARK, GLOOMY
DISPASSIONATE—UNAFFECTED, LOGICAL
THREATENING—IMPOSING HARM
COMPLIMENTARY—FAVORABLE
CONTEMPTUOUS—SCORNFUL
GALLING—CAUSING EXASPERATION
SOPORIFIC—CAUSING SLEEP, SOOTHING OR DULL
THEATRICAL—DRAMATIC
PUNGENT—SHARP, PENETRATING APPEAL TO THE SENSES
DESULTORY—OFF THE MAJOR IDEA, WANDERING
ETHNIC—RACIAL, CULTURAL
TONGUE-IN-CHEEK—IRONIC, FACETIOUS, SARCASTIC

TONE VOCABULARY WORDS

satiric
whimsical
dramatic
learned
informative
somber
urgent
confident
mock-heroic
objective
diffident
ironic
didactic
petty
factual
restrained
elegiac
disdainful
lugubrious

pedantic
indignant
bantering
flippant
condescending
patronizing
facetious
clinical
mock-serious
inflammatory
benevolent
burlesque
fanciful
detached
cynical
incisive
allusive
scornful
effusive

colloquial
compassion
impartial
insipid
pretentious
vibrant
irreverent
sentimental
moralistic
compliment
contemptuous
sympathetic
taunting
concerned
angry
turgid
sardonic
contentious
insolent
candid