

### Moods and Tones in Text

**Mood** is the general **atmosphere** created by the author's words. It is the feeling the reader gets from reading those words. It may be the same, or it may change from situation to situation. Watch the following video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kKXYjOD-AI> and decide upon a mood for it.

**Tone** is the author's attitude toward the writing (his characters, the situation) and the readers. A work of writing can have more than one tone. An example of tone could be both serious and humorous. Tone is set by the choice of vocabulary and other details, but especially by **context**, or the background of the passage. Watch the video closely. Notice how the mood of the video is horrific. Given the context of the video, the author's attitude is not one horror. What is the tone here? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kKXYjOD-AI>

**More Practice: Find an advertisement or song online. Add the link here:**

**What is the Mood?**

**What is the Tone?**

**Directions:** For each written selection, decide what the mood is first. Underline parts of the text that help reveal this. Then, after reading a little about the context of the passage, use your list of tone words that best describes the author's attitude.

**1.Context:** Idele has been betrayed by a former lover and is sharing her feelings.

*There's a fire starting in my heart,  
Reaching a fever pitch and it's bring me out the dark.  
Finally I can see you crystal clear  
Go ahead and sell me out and I'll lay your ship bare.*

- Adele *Rolling in the Deep*

Mood: vengeful, sympathetic, gloomy, anxious

Tone: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Context:** Kanye is speaking about a nameless woman who cheats on her lovers.

*In the night I hear 'em talk, the coldest story ever told  
Somewhere far along this road he lost his soul  
To a woman so heartless  
How could you be so heartless?  
How could you be so heartless?*

- Kanye West *Heartless*

Mood: Cold, horrific, angry, distressed

Tone: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Context: The “day of the reaping” is when a heartless government randomly chooses one person from a district to compete in a “hunger game” spectacle for the masses, where players fight to the death

*When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim’s warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress. She must have had bad dreams and climbed in with our mother. Of course, she did. This is the day of the reaping.*

- Suzanne Collins *The Hunger Games*

Mood: horrific, irritated, gloomy, determined

Tone: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Context: Jing-Mei is trying to satisfy her mother who expects her to be a prodigy (i.e. child wonder) who can outdo her cousin in the same family.

*I pictured this prodigy part of me as many different images, and I tried each one on for size. I was a dainty ballerina girl standing by the curtain, waiting to hear the music that would send me floating on my tiptoes. I was like the Christ child lifted out of the straw manger, crying with holy indignity. I was Cinderella stepping from her pumpkin carriage with sparkly cartoon music filling the air.*

- Amy Tan *The Joy Luck Club*

Mood in this text is: confused, content, nostalgic, idyllic

Tone: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Context: Steinbeck writes about the Joads of the Midwest, victims of the Great Depression, in which families lost everything due to a massive stock market crash and a drought.

*THE SKY GRAYED among the stars, and the pale, late quarter-moon was insubstantial and thin. Tom Joad and the preacher walked quickly along a road that was only wheel tracks and beaten caterpillar tracks through a cotton field. Only the unbalanced sky showed the approach of dawn, no horizon to the west, and a line to the east. The two men walked in silence and smelled the dust their feet kicked into the air.*

- John Steinbeck *The Grapes of Wrath*

Mood: nostalgic, depressed, lethargic, painful

Tone: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Context: America and Britain have won WWII but there are still forces and ideas at work in the world that threaten democracy.

*The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American Democracy. For with primacy in power is also joined an awe inspiring accountability to the future. If you look around you, you must feel not only the sense of duty done but also you must feel anxiety lest you fall below the level of achievement. Opportunity is here now, clear and shining for both our countries.*

- Winston Churchill “Iron Curtain Speech”

Mood: pessimistic, peaceful, hopeful, distant

Tone: \_\_\_\_\_