**Mood & Tone List 1 (Quiz #8)**

**Tone** (the speaker’s attitude toward a subject), is one of the many factors that creates **mood** (the overall emotional atmosphere of the text). Although similar, they are not synonymous. Below is a list of tones along with moods that they *might* create. Remember that mood is the sum of several different factors; not all texts that include the following tones will have the accompanying moods listed.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tone** | **Mood** |
| **Mocking** – mimicking or imitating with the purpose of ridiculing, deriding, or minimizing  If someone uses a mockingtone, they are aiming to make the subject seem silly or ridiculous. By using such a tone, the speaker is placing themselves in a position of superiority – after all, you wouldn’t mock someone you respect; you would save that for someone whom you feel is beneath you. A speaker with a mocking tone may be attempting to elicit humor from others, but it is at the subject’s expense and, therefore, not humorous for the subject. A *sardonic* person might use this tone often.  *Examples: pretty much any SNL skit that features a character playing a political figure; Malvolio’s tone toward Sir Toby in* Twelfth Night*; Jack’s tone toward Piggy in* Lord of the Flies*; Alex Karev’s tone toward April Kepner in* Grey’s Anatomy. | **Belittled** – made to feel less impressive or important than one would otherwise; disparaged or criticized  If someone has made you feel belittled, they’ve managed to provoke feelings of insecurity and possibly shame in you. You feel belittled when you’ve been verbally attacked and feel vulnerable, like you are less of a person than your attacker. This is definitely not a pleasant way to feel.  *Examples: Nwoye often feels belittled by Okonkwo’s condescending remarks in* Things Fall Apart*; Piggy often feels belittled by Jack in* Lord of the Flies. |
| **Wistful** – pensive, in a melancholy, yearning, or longing way  If someone is speaking in a wistful tone, they are pining for something (or *someone*) that they can’t have, either because it’s out of their reach, or because it’s in the past. Older people looking back fondly on their youth often speak about those memories with a wistful tone. Someone going on and on about the person they have a crush on but who doesn’t want them back is probably speaking with a wistful tone. *Wistful* is complex in terms of connotation: the speaker clearly has positive feelings toward the subject, but the word is also negative because it indicated inaccessibility.  *Examples: Duke Orsino usually speaks about Olivia in a wistful tone* *in* Twelfth Night*; Dr. Weber’s attitude toward Ellis Grey in* Grey’s Anatomy*; Snape’s attitude toward Lily Potter in* Harry Potter | **Sentimental** – expressive of or appealing to tender emotions, like love, pity, or nostalgia  If you’re feeling sentimental, you have a deep attachment to whatever the subject is. When we talk about things having “sentimental value,” what we mean is that we are attached to them emotionally. They tend to remind us of things that are dear to us and evoke feelings like love and nostalgia. *Sentimental* generally has a positive connotation, but it can also be pretty heart-wrenching if we’re feeling sentimental about something or someone that is no longer around.  *Examples: pretty much every episode of* This is Us; *how Harry Potter feels when he sees pictures of or hears stories about his parents;* |
| **Blithe** – joyous or merry, especially in a carefree way.  If you have a *blithe* attitude, you are feeling pretty dang good! The things and people that we feel this way about are precious to us, and they evoke feelings of lighthearted contentment, as if weights are being lifted off of our shoulders. In poetry, larks are generally considered symbols of pure, unadulterated happiness. In fact, Percy Bysshe Shelley’s poem “To a Skylark” begins, “Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!” and then proceeds for several stanzas to say how if he could feel just *half* of what a lark can, he would basically be the happiest dude on earth.  *Examples: J. K. Rowling’s tone when Harry Potter plays Quidditch is almost always blithe; Shelley’s tone toward the skylark in “To a Skylark” is blithe* | **Ebullient** - overflowing with fervor, enthusiasm, or excitement; high-spirited.  *Ebullient* is a much stronger word than *happy*. *Ebullient* is like *exultant* with an extra punch of energy. This is the emotional equivalent of the fun parts of a roller coaster: it makes you want to type in all caps and use exclamation points and, like, 5 smiley face emojis. In fact, many people spend their entire lives seeking experiences that make them feel this way.  *Examples: the way we feel watching the endings of most Disney movies– we’re ebullient when Dory finds her parents at the end of* Finding Dory! *Also, the ending of Twelfth Night, when the truth finally comes out, and most of our characters end up happy as can be, we feel ebullience at their good fortune.* |
| **Facetious** – not meant to be taken seriously or literally; cleverly humorous.  *Facetious* and *sarcasm* are often confused, but they are not quite the same. Sarcasm is more extreme and biting, whereas facetious is a bit lighter in connotation. If someone is speaking in a facetious tone, they’re likely using some wit and wordplay, but they’re not necessarily being full-on sarcastic, and they’re certainly not being sardonic. A facetious joke might be deemed inappropriate if the audience doesn’t pick up on the tone, but ultimately, this is a pretty light-hearted word.  *For Example*: *Shakespearean fools often speak in a facetious tone. Take this example from* Twelfth Night*, in which Feste the fool is jesting facetiously with Lady Olivia*. *If she didn’t catch on to his facetious tone, his statements would likely be extremely offensive to her; instead, their banter is clever, light, and friendly.*  OLIVIA Take the fool away.  FESTE Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady.  OLIVIA Go to, you're a dry fool; I'll no more of you: besides, you  grow dishonest…  FOOL Good madonna, give me leave to  prove you a fool.  OLIVIA Can you do it?  FOOL Dexterously, good madonna.  OLIVIA Make your proof.  FOOL I must catechise you for it, madonna: good my mouse of  virtue, answer me.  OLIVIA Well, sir, for want of other idleness, I'll bide your proof.  FOOL Good madonna, why mournest thou?  OLIVIA Good fool, for my brother's death.  FOOL I think his soul is in hell, madonna.  OLIVIA I know his soul is in heaven, fool.  FOOL The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's  soul being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen. | **Jocular** – feeling good-humored, as a result of joking.  Jocular is the cheerful feeling you get from laughing at jokes. When you’re just having a good time, laughing with friends, you’re feeling jocular. This is ultimately the goal of traditional comedies: their aim is to make the audience feel free from harm and amused at human shortcomings. Plays like *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Taming of the Shrew* are intended to leave you feeling jocular.  *For Example: The feeling you get from watching cartoons or comedies like* Modern Family*. Or – in case you missed it – the feeling you get watching comedic plays like* Twelfth Night*.* |
| **Portentous** – ominously significant; serious and disquieting, as if something severe is about to happen.  Is your English teacher tired of your overusing the word *foreboding*? Try *portentous*! If you’re speaking in a portentous tone, you’re hinting that something – and in likelihood, something *bad* – is going to happen. Through this tone, you’re trying to appeal to your audience’s perceptive abilities to catch on to hints and notice subtle details that foreshadow something negative to come.  *For Example: In Act 1 Scene 1 of* Macbeth *(as well as, like, 95% of the play), the witches use a portentous tone when discussing Macbeth and what will transpire “When the hurly-burly’s done / When the battle’s lost and won.”* *Chinua Achebe also uses a portentous tone when he first reveals “The ill-fated lad was called Ikemefuna.”* | **Apprehensive** – uneasy or fearful about something that might happen.  If you’re feeling apprehensive, you’ve perceived some sort of threat that is provoking feelings of anxiety or tension. This is the feeling you have when the author hasn’t explicitly said so, but you *just know* something bad is about to happen, and you’re hesitant to turn the page or keep watching. This is a *specific* kind of suspense.  *For example: In Act 1 Scene 1 of* Macbeth*, the witches’ portentous tone along with the stifling, uncomfortable weather imagery and the chant-like trochaic tetrameter creates an apprehensive mood for the audience: we pretty much know for sure that some grisly action is about to go down. Similarly, once Achebe drops the whole “ill-fated lad” bit on us, we’re apprehensive about reading: we just know that something horrible is going to happen to Ikemefuna, and we’re just waiting to see when and what that will be.* |