

**STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS**

Grade Level: This unit can be modified for any grade level,  
using different text complexity and appropriate language for the grade

**Unit Title:** Determining meaning through author's tone

**Established Goals:**

Students will interpret how words and phrases are used in text, and analyze how specific language shapes tone and meaning

**Understandings:** *Students will understand that...*

How word choice shapes tone

**Essential Question:**

How does word choice shape tone and add to meaning?

Students will know:

Through reading text of varied tones, understand how tone helps convey meaning

Students will be able to:

Recognize tone in text as conveyed through word choice, including connotation, figurative language and technical words

Common Core Standards learned

Reading: Craft and Structure Standard 4

Analyze how word choice conveys tone and meaning

- R.#4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning and tone

Tone: Style or manner of expression in speaking or writing

**STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE**

**Performance Tasks:**

Students read their own written passages and class guesses the tone as conveyed through word choice

Students e-mail one another on a current topic. Students must guess the intended tone from word choice. Is the guess accurate to writer's intention or not?

**Please see tone rubric below**

**Other Evidence:**

Students are provided varied texts given their achievement level and assess for words and phrases that establish a specific tone

Varied writing with different tones are provided all students, assess words for tone

Students re-write a passage, changing the tone. Other students guess what the new tone is and give word choice examples that affect tone.

**Key Criteria:**

Criteria for understanding is that students accurately assess tone through word meaning 80% of the time assessed

## STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

### Learning activities

#### I. Tone of spoken voice:

In each case students are asked what the tone is:

Students write down words that create tone

Teacher nicely welcomes, “Good morning, young ladies and gentlemen” (What’s the tone?)

Teacher nicely says, Your homework from yesterday was very well done and I can see you really put some good time and thought in it. (Use positive tone of voice and sardonic)

To a student who is in on the role playing, “ Your work was poor.”

Another teacher enters, “Why didn’t you tell me you were going to sign up for the laptops?”

Two students are really nice to each other on who gets a nice pen or a poor pencil, speaking nicely

Two students argue over a seat (first nicely, then angrily. Students prep in advance)

#### II. Brief passages that convey tone

Children’s book author Kate Feiffer’s joyful, humorous upbeat books; mystery, science text passage; Edgar Allen Poe (gloom, dark, mysterious), “in Just-spring,” (attached) any e e cummings poem: What is the tone? What words affect the tone?

#### III. Discuss and use examples of “tone” in writing when writing e-mail: how a tone can be mistakenly viewed as negative, how we use happy faces to signal tone, word choice to soften tone, etc How can changes of words convey different tone in an e-mail message where one can’t see the speaker to interpret tone?

#### IV. Read “Casey at the Bat” poem. (Attached) Trace the changes in tone through the poem. What particular words convey tone in each different area of the tone?

#### V. Use sports writing articles as examples of tone. The upbeat, enthusiastic sports writer’s tone when the home team wins, the angry or belittling tone when a team is doing poorly

Examples: NY Times sports articles condemning the NY Giants on consistently losing; exuberance with New England Patriots’ football team beating Denver Broncos early in the season; Boston Globe articles on the Red Sox winning game 6 to win the World Series, 2013

### Active learning strategies

Students perform in small groups and act out tone, others guess the tone and give word choice examples that produce the particular tone

Students perform in front of class and act out tone of voice and word choice, others guess tone attempted

Lines are taken from varied readings and students are asked to perform the tone as deduced from the context. Examples: The play “A Raisin in the Sun”: Walter: “Who decides which women in this world are allowed to wear pearls?” “You lost the money?”

*Romeo and Juliet* The Prince: “A glooming peace the morrow with it brings/ The sun for sorrow would not show his head. / For never was there a story of more woe/ Than that of Juliet and her Romeo.”

Students are given a tone provided by teacher and write out on a topic in that tone

In small groups students read varied passages and determine the tone and note the words that convey that tone, class assesses others’ assessment of the tone

## Differentiation

Special education, ELL: Students practice tone of voice with each other.

Students read simple passages appropriate to their reading level for the words that convey tone

Advanced:

Students read more complex text and more subtle tone, note that specific words that convey that tone

Read news editorials (informational non-fiction text) for tone that is more subtle.

What words and series of multiple words in the text convey tone?

## “Re-Teach” when non-mastery

More practice with tone of voice: pleasant, angry, happy, sad, nervous, confident, apologetic, excited

Choose passages close to student’ personal interests (such as sports, season of the year, animal(s), text)

Choose passages close to student’s reading level

Tone:

IN Just-  
spring when the world is mud-  
luscious the little  
lame balloonman  
whistles far and wee  
  
and eddieandbill come  
running from marbles and  
piracies and it's  
spring  
  
when the world is puddle-wonderful  
the queer  
old baloonman whistles  
far and wee  
and bettyandisbel come dancing  
from hop-scotch and jump-rope and  
it's  
spring  
and  
the  
goat-footed  
baloonMan whistles  
far  
and  
wee

*by: e.e. cummings (1894-1962)*

What words here shape tone and meaning? What is the overall tone of this poem?

*Please see Tone rubric to guide and assess tone understanding below*

This is an advanced rubric that can be modified for earlier grade/ ability levels

<b>Analysis Rubric for Tone</b>			
	<b>Mastery</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Beginning</b>
<b>Diction/Word Choice</b>	<p><b>Mastery</b></p> <p>The connotation of word choice is clearly explained. Unusual, interesting, and repeated words are examined. Discuss meaning of words and how understanding words help to comprehend meaning of the text.</p>	<p><b>Proficient</b></p> <p>The connotation of word choice is somewhat explained. Limited discussion of unusual, interesting, and repeated words. Some discussion of meaning of words and how understanding words help to comprehend meaning of the text.</p>	<p><b>Beginning</b></p> <p>The connotation of word choice is poorly explained. Lack of discussion of unusual, interesting, and repeated words. Weak discussion of meaning of words and how understanding words help to comprehend meaning of the text.</p>
<b>Images/Senses</b>	<p><b>Mastery</b></p> <p>Analyze words/ phrases that appeal to the five senses (sight, touch, sound, taste, and smell). Explain how the images enhance/ effect the piece of work. Indicate author's tone.</p>	<p><b>Proficient</b></p> <p>Limited analysis of words/ phrases that appeal to the five senses (sight, touch, sound, taste, and smell). Limited explanation how the images enhance/ effect the piece of work. Some indication of author's tone.</p>	<p><b>Beginning</b></p> <p>Weak analysis of words/ phrases that appeal to the five senses (sight, touch, sound, taste, and smell). Poor explanation of how the images enhance/ effect the piece of work. Weak indication of author's tone.</p>
<b>Details</b>	<p><b>Mastery</b></p> <p>Discuss details author has chosen to include. Explain how the details reflect the author's perspective on the subject of the text. Include how a specific detail or lack or specific detail affects the reader.</p>	<p><b>Proficient</b></p> <p>Limited discussion of details author has chosen to include. Limited explanation of how the details reflect the author's perspective on the subject of the text. Limited inclusion of how a specific detail or lack or specific detail affects the reader.</p>	<p><b>Beginning</b></p> <p>Poor discussion of details author has chosen to include. Weak explanation of how the details reflect author's perspective on the subject. Weak inclusion of how a specific detail or lack or specific detail affects the reader.</p>
<b>Language</b>	<p><b>Mastery</b></p> <p>Tell what the overall impression of the language used in the text. Explain if the piece is written with formal or informal language. Describe the vocabulary which is used in the overall text.</p>	<p><b>Proficient</b></p> <p>Limited telling of what the overall impression of the language used in the text. Limited explanation if the piece is written with formal or informal language. Limited description of the vocabulary which is used in the overall text.</p>	<p><b>Beginning</b></p> <p>Lacking the overall impression of the language used in the text. Weak explanation if the piece is written with formal or informal language. Weak description of the vocabulary which is used in the overall text.</p>
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	<p><b>Mastery</b></p> <p>Explain how a speaker or author constructs a sentence affects what the audience understands. Tell what the sentences are like. Indicate how structure affects the reader's attitude.</p>	<p><b>Proficient</b></p> <p>Limited explanation of how a speaker or author constructs a sentence affects what the audience understands. Limited telling of what the sentences are like. Some indication of how structure affects reader's attitude.</p>	<p><b>Beginning</b></p> <p>Weak explanation of how a speaker or author constructs a sentence affects what the audience understands. Lack of telling what the sentences are like. No indication of how structure affects reader's attitude.</p>

<b>Introduction</b>	<p><b>Mastery</b></p> <p>Uses a specific and interesting attention-getter; Links the attention-getter to the thesis through a logical progression of ideas; ends with a clear thesis statement; mentions the title and author of piece.</p>	<p><b>Proficient</b></p> <p>Uses a specific attention-getter; Links the attention-getter to the thesis through a logical progression of ideas; ends with a thesis statement; mentions the title and author of piece.</p>	<p><b>Beginning</b></p> <p>Lacks one or more of the following elements: specific attention-getter, Logical progression of ideas, clear thesis statement.</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<p><b>Mastery</b></p> <p>Conclusion restates the thesis differently than in the introduction. Conclusion is fully-developed and brings a sense of closure to the piece, tying back to the attention-getter. Conclusion does not end with a question or cliché and it does not bring up a new topic not discussed in the paper.</p>	<p><b>Proficient</b></p> <p>Conclusion restates the thesis differently than in the introduction. Conclusion is adequately-developed, Conclusion does not end with a question or cliché and it does not bring up a new topic not discussed in the paper.</p>	<p><b>Beginning</b></p> <p>Conclusion either restates the thesis in the exact same words as the introduction or does not restate the thesis at all; conclusion needs to be more developed as it leaves the reader feeling there should be more to the paper; conclusion uses one or more of the following: a question at the end, a cliché and a new topic not discussed in the paper.</p>
<b>Conventions/Grammar</b>	<p><b>Mastery</b></p> <p>Paper may have very few mechanical errors, but these errors are hardly noticeable.</p>	<p><b>Proficient</b></p> <p>Paper may have noticeable mechanical and grammatical errors, but these do not make the paragraphs unclear.</p>	<p><b>Beginning</b></p> <p>Paper has numerous mechanical and grammatical errors which distract the reader and make the paragraph's meaning unclear.</p>