

DIDLS, Tone, Levels of Language

Mr. Eble, AP Language & Composition

Please use the following pages as a resource for taking notes on tone and for the activities we do in class.

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Levels of Language

"Do you speak differently when talking with your teacher or doctor than when you are chatting with a friend on the telephone?"

1. **Frozen** (Ceremonial)—Language that does not change. **Examples:** Lord's Prayer; Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
2. **Formal**—Complete sentences and specific word usage.
3. **Consultative**—Formal register used in conversation
4. **Casual**—Language used in conversation with friends. Word choice is general, and conversation is dependent upon non-verbal assists.
5. **Colloquial**—Language particular to a geographic location
6. **Intimate**—Language between lovers...also the language of sexual harassment.
7. **Jargon**—Language associated with a trade or profession
8. **Slang**—Language only understood among a select group of people often defined by age, sex, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status

Tone-cabulary

angry	sad	sentimental	restrained	somber	candid
sharp	cold	fanciful	proud	giddy	pitiful
upset	urgent	complimentary	dramatic	provocative	didactic
silly	joking	condescending	formal	majestic	serious
boring	poignant	sympathetic	highfalutin	pompous	despairing
afraid	detached	contemptuous	helpless	lamenting	angry
happy	confused	apologetic	warm	caring	enraged
hollow	childish	humorous	concerned	syrupy	amused
joyful	peaceful	horrific	comic	disapproving	disgusted
allusive	mocking	sarcastic	scandalized	anxious	frightened
sweet	objective	nostalgic	terrified	horrified	shocked
vexed	vibrant	zealous	ironic	satiric	surprised
tired	frivolous	irreverent	pleading	begging	prayerful
bitter	audacious	benevolent	sardonic	cynical	cryptic
dreamy	shocking	seductive			

Your team will have five minutes to think of synonyms for the following words—all of which produce a fairly neutral tone. Identify the tone of each. At the end of the five minutes one member of your team should write your list on the board.

To laugh	
Self-confident	
House	
Teacher	
Old	
Gathering	

Beyond the Negative and Positive

Developing a refined and precise tone vocabulary will go a long way to improving the preciseness and eloquence of your writing. You need to have a bevy of words to describe the author's attitude beyond just *negative and positive*. Using the list of nouns that you just generated in the diction race, categorize them by the connotations and tones they convey.

Positive:

Hopeful	Joyful
Appealing	Compassionate
Lighthearted	Optimistic
Sympathetic	Elated
Amused	Proud

Negative:

Angry	Outraged
Accusatory	Irritated
Bitter	Wrathful
Gloomy	Fearful

Condemnatory	Inflammatory
Patronizing	Flippant
Taunting	Irreverent
Cynical	Apprehensive

Neutral (Can Remain Neutral or Move to the Negative or Positive)

Clinical	Sentimental
Matter of Fact	Informative
Factual	Questioning
Authoritative	Urgent
Instructive	Reminiscent
Ceremonial	Shocked

Tone Writing Exercise

Your topic: Describe one difficult and/or funny experience you had over the weekend. Use the words you and your group listed above, and **write each in a different English you speak; clarify the audience and the type of English.**

<p>Audience #1:</p> <hr/> <p>Type of English:</p> <hr/>	
<p>Audience #2:</p> <hr/> <p>Type of English:</p> <hr/>	
<p>Audience #1:</p> <hr/> <p>Type of English:</p> <hr/>	

Tone and Point of View

Why did the chicken cross the road?

One layman's answer.....

"Because it was too far to go around."

However, some experts have examined this question and their findings follow.

JERRY FALWELL

CENSORED

PAT BUCHANAN

To steal a job from a decent, hardworking American.

DR. SEUSS

Did the chicken cross the road? Did he cross it with a toad? Yes! The chicken crossed the road, but why it crossed, I've not been told!

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

To die. In the rain.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

I envision a world where all chickens will be free to cross roads without having their motives called into question.

GRANDPA

In my day, we didn't ask why the chicken crossed the road. Someone told us that the chicken crossed the road, and that was good enough for us.

ARISTOTLE

It is the nature of chickens to cross the road.

KARL MARX

It was a historical inevitability.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

This was an unprovoked act of rebellion and we were quite justified in dropping 50 tons of nerve gas on it.

RONALD REAGAN

What chicken?

GEORGE W. BUSH

The chicken will cross the road with shock and awe.

CAPTAIN JAMES T. KIRK

To boldly go where no chicken has gone before.

FREUD

The fact that you are at all concerned that the chicken crossed the road reveals your underlying sexual insecurity.

BILL GATES

I have just released e-Chicken 2000, which will not only cross roads, but will lay eggs, file your important documents, and balance your checkbook - and Internet Explorer is an inextricable part of e-Chicken.

EINSTEIN

Did the chicken really cross the road or did the road move beneath the chicken?b

BILL CLINTON

I did not cross the road with THAT chicken. What do you mean by chicken? Could you define chicken please?

THE BIBLE

And God came down from the heavens, and He said unto the chicken, "Thou shalt cross the road." And the chicken crossed the road, and there was much rejoicing.

COLONEL SANDERS

I missed one?

JOHN STEINBECK

On the edge of a dusty road, a chicken ambled up to the concrete, clucking, jumping in surprise at passing cars, nipping at pebbles to aid its digestion. Despite the coop being destroyed by the tractor, the bird moved with confidence, even when a red ant made its way up the chicken’s bumpy orange leg. This caused it to flap its wings, which made an oncoming truck driver swerve to hit it. The chicken fancifully squawked and jumped, forcing the rig to miss narrowly, securing the animal’s journey across the barren wasteland.

Part II: Read the chicken crossed the road handout. Using the basic question of “Why did the chicken cross the road?”, construct a response using the **D**iction, **I**mages, **D**etails, **L**anguage, and **S**yntax typical for three people (at Moeller and beyond... authors? Athletes?). At the end of each write a sentence or two explaining the DIDLS elements.

Speaker	Answer to the joke, “Why did the chicken cross the road?”	DIDLS Analysis

Use the following section of Amy Tan's "Mother Tongue" to answer the following questions.

Be sure to annotate as you read.

My mother has long realized the limitations of her English as well. When I was a teenager, she used to have me call people on the phone and pretend I was she. In this guise, I was forced to ask for information or even to complain and yell at people who had been rude to her. One time it was a call to her stockbroker in New York. She had cashed out her small portfolio, and it just so happened we were going to New York the next week, our first trip outside of California. I had to get on the phone and say in an adolescent voice that was not very convincing, "This is Mrs. Tan."

My mother was standing in the back whispering loudly, "Why he don't send me check, already two weeks late. So mad he lie to me, me losing money."

And then I said in perfect English on the phone, "Yes, I'm getting rather concerned. You had agreed to send the check two weeks ago, but it hasn't arrived."

Then she began to talk more loudly. "What he want, I come to New York tell him front of his boss, you cheating me?" And I was trying to calm her down, make her be quiet, while telling the stockbroker, "I can't tolerate any more excuses. If I don't receive the check immediately, I am going to have to speak to your manager when I'm in New York next week." And sure enough, the following week, there we were in front of this astonished stockbroker, and I was sitting there red-faced and quiet, and my mother, the real Mrs. Tan, was shouting at his boss in her impeccable broken English.

We used a similar routine more recently, for a situation that was far less humorous. My mother had gone to the hospital for an appointment to find out about a CAT scan she had had a month earlier. She said she had spoken very good English, her best English, no mistakes. Still, she said, the hospital staff did not apologize when they informed her they had lost the CAT scan and she had come for nothing. She said they did not seem to have any sympathy when she told them she was anxious to know the exact diagnosis, since both her husband and son had died of brain tumors. She said they would not give her any more information until the next time and she would have to make another appointment for that. So she said she would not leave until the doctor called her daughter. She wouldn't budge. And when the doctor finally called her daughter, me, who spoke in perfect English—lo and behold—we had assurances that the CAT scan would be found, promises that a conference call on Monday would be held, and apologies for any suffering my mother had gone through for a most regrettable mistake.

Questions are on the next page.

1. How does Tan control her tone? Be sure to use precise tone words for the segment above that describe the tone.

2. How does Tan's transition between the anecdotes provide a shift in tone?

3. How does Chomsky's selection of details contribute to her tone?

4. On the large / macroscopic level, what organization patterns does Tan use throughout her essay?
