

Attitude and Tone

Definition of Attitude

Generally, attitude is a behavior a person adopts toward other people, things, incidents, or happenings. In literature, the term “attitude” can be referred as **perspective or tone** of the writer he adopts in a certain work.

It is through the attitude readers come to know the **feelings of a writer regarding his topic, subject or belief. Attitudes influences behaviours & feelings.**

As written works have a central idea or theme for the audiences, different writers approach themes with different **attitudes and tone**, which are developed by the **choice of words and style**.

What is Tone in Literature?

<https://writers.com/what-is-tone-in-literature>

July 13, 2021 by Sean Glatch

Everything you read has a tone. Blog posts will have an engaging and conversational tone; **Textbooks** often have an **informative, matter-of-fact tone**. A piece of **satire** might have a **humorous or ironic tone**. Tone in literature encompasses the wide variety of **moods, thoughts, and feelings** that authors imbue their work with.

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Tone in literature refers to the author's attitude toward a certain topic. Through specific **word choice**, the **author reveals their feelings and opinions** to the reader, conveying the **author's intentions** behind the text. The tone of a story is always described using an adjective.

Types of Tone in Writing

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There are endless types of tone in writing, limited only by the range of human emotions. Let's look at some common tones you might encounter, with examples. Each example of tone in writing communicates the same information, but uses different word choice and details to convey the author's attitude.

Tone Word Example Sentence

Envious

His adorable new puppy explored the backyard with glee, and yes, it wiggled around on its back like it was making snow angels in July, and yes, it was a perfectly

precious thing which anyone's hearts would have been opened just to see, and he was very very lucky to have the new puppy all to himself.

Dour (serious and sad, and likely to judge people severely)

He got a puppy. What on earth would he want a puppy for? The wretched things pee everywhere, damage the furniture, and always manage to wake their owners up in the middle of pleasant dreams.

Curious

He got a puppy, which was mostly confusing for people, since he openly disliked dogs. What would he want with a pet?

Hopeful

Maybe this new puppy would open his heart toward the world—both such bruised and tender things that, perhaps, will heal with love.

Condescending

He got a puppy, isn't that adorable? Who does that anymore? So cute, so American, like a rich but terrible father trying to win his child's love before a custody battle.

Agitated

He got a puppy, but there's no need to talk about it, because it's no more exciting than someone getting a new car horn or a bigger stereo system, except both of those things are probably much quieter than a new puppy is, so just don't bring it up.

Educational

He got a puppy, but he made a lot of mistakes along the way. First, he never confirmed that the puppy was potty trained; second, he realized he didn't own the leash he thought he owned; and third, he ran out of paper towel trying to clean up the puppy's mess.

Accusatory

He got a puppy, like everyone knew he would, because he was hellbent on creating the worst living situation imaginable for everyone around him.

Unsure

Well, he did just buy a puppy, but he might have a bad habit of putting his dogs up for adoption once they get too big.

Ironic

He did what any normal, rational, totally sane, completely "in his mind" man would do, and bought a puppy.

Despondent

Why did he have to get a puppy? There goes my healthy sleep schedule.

Contemplative

He got a puppy which, if you think about it, was the best way for him to find motivation and love his life again.

Nervous

He got a puppy. A Rough Collie, in fact. A puppy with lots of germs, really sharp teeth, perhaps an inclination for blood. Nothing to worry about, right?

Relieved

There was no need to worry about him after he bought a puppy.

Apathetic

Eh, he got a puppy. I think it was brown.

Example 1 – O Level 2020**Text 2**

In the text below Grace writes about a visit to the library with her sister Tilly and Mrs Morton, their mother's friend.

Read the text carefully and answer Questions 5–13 in the Question Booklet.

- | | | |
|---|---|----|
| 1 | Tilly and I followed Mrs Morton down the High Street. She sailed, like a vessel, along the pavement, skirting around the pushchairs and people who had stopped to wipe ice cream from their babies' chins. The holiday had found its fiercest day yet. Even so there were those who still nurtured mistrust. We walked past raincoats bundled into shopping bags, and one woman who carried an umbrella wedged into her armpit, like artillery. The sky was ironed flat, and even the clouds had fallen from the edges in the faultless blue above our heads. | 5 |
| 2 | The library was inconveniently right at the end of the High Street, where the shops faded into offices for accountants and solicitors and architects, with their smart, black front doors and thick brass plates. My mother usually took me to the library but, since the previous week, her life seemed to have become disconnected from times and dates. | 10 |
| 3 | Mrs Morton pushed open the library door, and Tilly and I entered underneath her arm. After my bedroom, this was my sanctuary, my favourite place in the world. It smelled enticingly of unturned pages and unseen adventures, and on every shelf were people I had yet to meet, and places I had yet to visit. | 15 |
-
- 7 Explain what the following phrases suggest about Grace's attitude to the library and the books in it.
- (i) 'this was my sanctuary' (line 13)
- [1]
- (ii) 'unturned pages and unseen adventures' (line 14)
- [1]

- 4 Mrs Morton took out of her bag the books I had borrowed last time and placed them on the front desk.
 'Grace Bennett's books are returned on time,' said the librarian. She snapped shut the front cover of each one, sending little gusts of air across the counter. 'That must be a first.'
 Despite her obvious dislike of me, I gave her my biggest smile and she handed over the tickets and frowned. Her hands were covered in ink and it had leaked into the creases around her nails.

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- 8 (a) In Paragraph 4, what is the tone of the librarian's comment in lines 18–19?

..... [1]

- (b) What **two** other things did the librarian do to show her dislike of Grace?

.....
 [1]

Example 2 - O Level 2014

The article below is about modern sport. Read the text carefully and answer Questions 14–19 in the Question Paper Booklet.

- 6 Yet modifying the body through physical activity is not confined to the elite athlete. Even casual participants are encouraged to submit their bodies to the tyranny of exercise equipment. A brief wander through any fitness centre reveals a profusion of machinery to adjust a body's size, shape or capacity. At home also people are increasingly able to access and use the latest developments in food technology to follow diets which will help them to achieve their desired body shape. The latest dietary fads blare out from the television set or leap out of the pages of glossy magazines. Pedometers, heart monitors and iPods, which accompany even the most ordinary athletes on their daily run, are further evidence of the increasing use of electronic technology in everyday sport. In the twenty-first century, exercise and sport are not simply amusing diversions, but are serious undertakings, conducted with the expectation of physical modification achieved through discipline, hard work and, in many cases, the body's capitulation to the rigours of the machine.

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- 18 What tone is the writer creating in the phrase 'The latest dietary fads blare out' (line 48)?

.....[1]

Example 3 - O Level 2019

The text below describes the arrival of two people at a house in the countryside. Read the text carefully and answer Questions 5–13 in the Question Booklet.

- 6 At that moment another car came up the drive and stopped. Alice recognised her brother's car which was full to the brim with children and luggage. She smiled delightedly and went to greet them.
- 'My goodness, you've come prepared! I don't suppose amongst all your belongings you have a set of keys for the house? I seem to have mislaid mine.' 40
- 'I always bring the spare set, although of course it's very unlikely that either of my sisters would be stupid enough to forget her own.'
- He grinned and Alice saw him again as a young child, laughing mischievously as he picked on his sisters unmercifully. She linked her arm through his and they walked towards the house, followed by Kasim and the children. At last the holiday could begin. 45

- 11 In Paragraph 6, Alice's brother says '...although of course it's very unlikely that either of my sisters would be stupid enough to forget her own' (lines 42–43).

What is the tone of the brother's comment about his sisters?

.....[1]

Answers

Meaning of sanctuary: place of refuge, safety and protection.

7i : She has a reverent / appreciative/ thankful attitude to the library and the books in it.

7ii: She has an attitude of enthusiasm/ awe/ wonderment.

Note: Comfort & security are describing feelings not attitude. It's the attitude of reverence for something that creates the feeling of comfort. Attitudes influences behaviours & feelings.

Marker's Report

The text now moves on to their arrival at the library, and the next three questions were about Grace's feelings towards the library, and the adults' interactions with her. Question 7 focused on Grace's attitude to the library and the books in it, and candidates were asked what two given phrases suggested. Stronger candidates recognised the comfort she finds there, and her excitement at the thought of all the books she has not yet read. The vocabulary, especially in Question 7(i), seemed to be a difficulty for weaker candidates.

8i It was a mocking /insulting tone

8ii. The librarian snapped shut the front cover of the book Grace returned and frowned at Grace when handing over some tickets.

Marker's Report

Question 8 turned to considering the librarian and asked first for the tone of her comment and then for the two other things she does to show her dislike of Grace. The majority of candidates answered these straightforward questions correctly.

18. The writer uses an angry and exaggerated tone.

11. Teasing/playful tone. (He is making fun of his sisters, saying they would be 'stupid' to forget their keys. This is supported by the rest of the paragraph where he grinned and Alice's memory of him laughing mischievously and picking on his sisters.)