

AP English—Tone Words (compiled from a variety of sources)

Throughout the course of the year, you will be expected to discuss/describe/identify the tone of a passage, a poem, or a selection. Below is a list of words that can be used to describe tone. The more terms you know, the more precise you can be in discussing/identifying tone.

abashed	blunt	contented	ebullient
abhorring	brisk	contentious	ecstatic
accusing	brusque	conversational	effusive
acerbic	burlesque	critical	elated
admiring	calm	curt	elegiac
adoring	candid	cynical	elevated
affectionate	casual	demanding	eloquent
ambiguous	celebratory	depressed	embarrassed
ambivalent	ceremonial	depressing	empathetic
amused	cheerful	derisive	encouraging
annoyed	cherry	derogatory	enraged
antagonistic	childish	desolate	enthusiastic
anxious	choleric	despairing	eulogistic
apathetic	clinical	desperate	euphoric
apologetic	colloquial	detached	evasive
appreciative	comforting	diabolic	exhilarated
apprehensive	commanding	didactic	expectant
approving	compassionate	diffident	exuberant
audacious	complex	direct	facetious
authoritative	complicated	disappointed	factual
baffled	complimentary	disbelieving	familiar
bantering	conceited	disdainful	fanciful
belligerent	concerned	disgusted	fatalistic
bemused	conciliatory	disrespectful	fearful
benevolent	condemnatory	disturbed	fervent
bewildered	condescending	doubtful	flippant

biting	confident	dramatic	forceful
bitter	confused	dreary	foreboding
blithe	contemptuous	earnest	formal
forthright	irreverent	pessimistic	skeptical
frantic	irritated	petty	sly
frightened	jocund	placid	solemn
frivolous	jovial	playful	somber
frustrated	joyful	poignant	speculative
furious	joyous	pompous	sprightly
ghoulish	laudatory	powerful	stable
giddy	learned	pretentious	stately
gleeful	lighthearted	proud	stern
gloomy	lively	provocative	stolid
grand	lofty	psychotic	straightforward
grave	ludicrous	questioning	strident
grim	lugubrious	reassuring	subdued
harsh	lyrical	reflective	suspenseful
haughty	matter-of-fact	relaxed	suspicious
hilarious	meditative	reminiscent	sympathetic
holier-than-thou	melancholic	resigned	taunting
hollow	mirthful	respectful	tender
hopeful	mischievous	restrained	tense
hostile	mock-heroic	reverent	thoughtful
humorous	mocking	ridiculous	threatening
impartial	mock-serious	risible	timorous
impatient	modest	romantic	tragic
incisive	moralistic	sanguine	tranquil
incredulous	mournful	sarcastic	turgid
indifferent	mysterious	sardonic	uncertain
indignant	nervous	satiric	unconcerned

indirect	nostalgic	scholarly	understated
inflammatory	objective	scornful	uneasy
informal	ominous	seductive	urgent
informative	optimistic	self-assured	vexed
insecure	outraged	self-deprecating	vibrant
insipid	outspoken	selfish	violent
insistent	paranoid	sentimental	vitriolic
insolent	passionate	serene	whimsical
instructive	pathetic	severe	wistful
interested	patronizing	sharp	worshipful
intimate	peaceful	shocked	wrathful
ironic	pensive	sinister	