

## Tone and DIDLS

An analysis of tone will depend on our precise and accurate understanding of the author's attitude toward

1. the subject
2. the audience

**Note that in more complex passages the author will have a distinct tone for his subject and another tone for his audience.**

“ When you talk, the tone of your voice conveys as much as your words—possibly more. You can say “I’m sorry” in a tone that says you aren’t sorry at all and are only saying so because you think you must; you can say “I’d love to” in a tone that shows genuine pleasure or in one that shows complete lack of enthusiasm. If your words and tone say different things, which one is believed? If you have ever said something like “it wasn’t what he said that made me mad, it was the way he said it” you know that a listener often responds to the tone or style instead of the statement...

Written words also convey a tone, although not quite in the same way as spoken words. A speaker can depend on voice tones, gestures, and facial expressions to express meanings that the writer must express in words alone. It is certainly easier to recognize attitudes in the voice tones of a speaker but you can learn to notice tone in writing if you are alert to the clues the writer gives. Not catching the tone can mislead the reader more than not knowing the meaning of some of the words. If a writer is joking, for example, and you take him seriously, you may miss his point all together.”

University of Oregon Curriculum  
Language/ Rhetoric VI, p. 320

**In order to investigate TONE we will use the acronym DIDLS:**

**Diction:** The important and individual words that the author uses.

**Iimages:** The word pictures created by groups of words.

**Details:** Often confused with images, these are more precisely facts, and are notable not only for what is included but what is purposefully omitted.

**Language:** This term describes the characteristics of the body of words used; terms like slang, scholarly, and jargon denote language

**Sentence Structure:** Expressed in its most elemental form, this notes that short sentences are often emotional or assertive and that longer sentences move toward more reasonable or even scholarly intent.