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As a writer, you know how important it is to choose the right word for the meaning youre trying to convey. And part of that is knowing what tone words are and which one to use in a particular context. The wrong one is like an errant note in an otherwise flawless performance. Even if it has the same dictionary definition, it just doesnt sound right. But where do you go to find the words with just the right tone and cadence to make the sentence flow as it should? Welcome to our ultimate list of tone words. Tone in writing is like the voice or mood that jumps off the page when youre reading a story or an article. For example, when listening to your favorite song notice how it can make you feel happy, sad, excited, or calm. Tone in writing works the same way but through words. Its the writers way of showing their point of view toward the subject or the audience. Understanding tone is like being a detective for feelings and attitudes, helping you get the real vibe of what youre reading. It makes reading more colorful and helps you connect with the written words. Any tone words list (worth the time it takes to make it) should provide the fuller meaning of each word i.e., not just the denotation (dictionary definition) but its connotations, too. For this tone words list, youll see each tone word example explained with a short definition or with synonyms that have the same general tone. All you have to do is open a thesaurus to find synonyms for a particular word to realize that some of those words do NOT have the tone youre looking for. Some are obviously negative. Some are positive. And the rest are more or less neutral. Related: 111 Negative Adjectives To Describe A Person The tone word you need for the moment is the one that evokes the right emotions and that allows your sentence to flow without speed bumps. Positive tone words are those that evoke positive emotions. If you hear a person described in words with a positive tone, youre more likely to think favorably of them, even before youve met. Adoring loving ardently; worshipping; venerating Amused entertained or diverted; pleased Animated lively; full of excitement or enthusiasm; vibrant; spirited; impassioned Appreciative grateful or thankful; showing gratitude, approval, or pleasure Assertive sure of oneself; brave or fearless; self-confident; authoritative Ardent passionate; enthusiastic; fervent; zealous Benevolent kind; generous; compassionate; tolerant; well meaning Blithe in good spirits; of a sunny disposition; happy; cheerful Bold audacious or daring; assertive; fearless or seeming to be fearless Calm serene or tranquil; unruffled or unshaken; placid Candid honest or truthful; straightforward; unreserved Celebratory paying tribute to; glorifying; praising or honoring; making merry Cheerful / cheery positive or uplifting; optimistic; salutary; Comforting consoling; healing; warming or calming; soothing Comic funny/humorous; amusing or entertaining; diverting Compassionate empathetic or sympathetic; nonjudgmental; quick to forgive Contented wanting for nothing; grateful; accepting Curious inquisitive or questioning; wanting to know more Direct straightforward; blunt; lacking in hesitation Earnest serious; wholehearted; sincere or showing deep sincerity or feeling Ebullient high-spirited; brimming with enthusiasm or excitement; exuberant Elated joyful or jubilant; in high spirits; happy or proud Elevated exalted; lofty; honored Eloquent beauty or fluidity of expression; Empathetic showing empathy; feeling the emotions of others Enchant cast a spell over; entrance; bewitch Endearing inspiring warmth or affection Enthusiastic excited; energetic; optimistic; bubbling over Exhilarated invigorated; enlivened or feeling alive; stimulated; made cheerful Forthright straight to the point; frank; outspoken; unambiguous; direct Gentle kind; considerate; tender; soft; not severe; gradual; moderate Hilarious amusing; uproariously funny; ridiculous or laughable Inspirational motivating; energizing; reassuring; instilling hope; catalyzing Intimate familiar; confidential; confessional; private Joyful filled with gratitude; elated or exuberant; supremely happy Laudatory praising; extolling; recommending Learned educated; knowledgeable; erudite; involved in the pursuit of knowledge Lighthearted positive; carefree; relaxed; optimistic; in good spirits Lively full of life; energetic; vigorous; animated; spirited; sprightly; vivacious Lofty exalted in rank; elevated in tone, style, or sentiment Loving affectionate; showing deep concern or solicitude for someone Modest free from ostentation; unpretentious; showing humility Objective without prejudice; fair; basing judgment on facts rather than feelings Optimistic hopeful; cheerful; expecting good; disposed to taking a favorable view Powerful potent; efficacious; having or exerting great power; forceful Reassuring restoring hope, security, or confidence Reflective given to reflection, meditation, or contemplation; thoughtful Relaxed calm; free or relieved of tension, trouble, or anxiety Respectful full of or showing politeness, sympathy, or deference Reverent showing deep respect; holding someone or something in high esteem Righteous morally right or justifiable; pious; guiltless; upright Romantic imbued with idealism; preoccupied with love, adventure, justice, etc. Sanguine hopeful; cheerfully optimistic; confident of a good outcome Scholarly learned; educated; committed to furthering ones education Self-assured having or showing self-confidence; bold or fearless; forward Sincere honest; truthful; not false or deceitful; free of hypocrisy; genuine Stable not likely to fall or give way (as a structure/support); steady Stately grand; imposing in size or magnificence; elegant; majestic Straightforward honest; straight to the point; not roundabout; direct Sympathetic understand what another is feeling; showing compassion Tender gentle; soft-hearted; compassionate; kind; delicate; young Thoughtful considerate of others; thinking before acting; pensive Tolerant open-minded; patient; charitable; sympathetic; lenient; accepting Tranquil calm; unruffled; unprovoked; peaceful; placid; serene Vibrant full of life and vigor; lively; full of vivid color; vivacious Whimsical playful or fun; offbeat; mischievous; quaint; capricious; fanciful Witty quick-witted; entertaining; amusingly clever; intelligent Wonder admiration; fascination; awe; curiosity; amazement; admiration Anything described in negative tone words is likely to leave you with a bad impression, whether the thing described is a place, a book, or a group of people. Choose your words carefully. If this is a time for honest negativity, this list will help you find the right words. Abashed embarrassed or ashamed; humiliated; shy Abhorring hating; despising; loathing; abominating; detesting Abstruse difficult to understand; esoteric; secret or hidden; obsolete Absurd laughable, ludicrous, ridiculous; senseless; illogical; untrue Accusatory suggesting someone (else) has done something wrong Acerbic biting, abrasive, cutting, or sharp; hurtful; severe Aggressive hostile, forceful, argumentative, contentious Angry irate or furious; menacing or threatening; resentful Annoyed irritated; agitated; provoked; disturbed; bothered Antagonistic argumentative or contentious; contrarian; belligerent Anxious focused on negative thought loops; feeling out of control Apathetic indifferent or lacking concern; unemotional; showing little interest Apprehensive worried or nervous; expecting the worst Arrogant conceited or self-important; overbearing; condescending Authoritarian domineering or bossy; insisting on complete obedience Belligerent bellicose or warlike; antagonistic; combative Bewildered baffled, confused, or flummoxed; lost Bitter angry; acrimonious; resentful or dwelling on past injury Boorish dull; pretentious; arrogant or self-absorbed Brusque abrupt or dismissive; rough; blunt Callous uncaring or unfeeling; indifferent; lacking in compassion Caustic making cutting or corrosive comments; intending injury Censorious critical or quick to judge or condemn; Choleric quick to anger; short-tempered; hot-blooded; irascible Churlish critical in a mean-spirited way; nasty; belligerent; bullying Clich overused; trite; stale; unimaginative; hackneyed; commonplace Clinical humorless; detached; unfeeling or uncaring; aloof; cold Complicated unnecessarily complex; difficult to comprehend Condescending patronizing; talking down to those you consider beneath you Confounded confused; befuddled or mystified; bewildered; damned Confused bewildered; unable to think clearly; vague; perplexed; disoriented Contemptuous hateful; spiteful; quick to hold others in contempt; toxic Contentious argumentative or combative; quick to stir the pot Critical finding fault; complaining or criticizing; disapproving Cruel causing pain or suffering; unkind; spiteful; devoid of humane feelings Cynical critical of motives; quick to assume the worst; mocking or sneering Derisive mocking; sarcastic; dismissive or scornful; snide Derogatory insulting or demeaning; disrespectful; unkind Detached aloof or distant; uncaring; unfeeling; frigid; machine-like Diabolic demonic or satanic; evil or malicious; Diffident lacking confidence in your ability or worth; timid or shy Disgusted appalled; repulsed; repelled; disappointed Disparaging critical; scornful; dismissive; insulting Distressing saddening or heartbreaking; troubling; disturbing Dogmatic thinking in black and white; intolerant; inflexible; close-minded Domineering imposing your beliefs and/or authority on others; tyrannical Dubious questionable or having questionable motives; inclined to doubt Egotistical ego-centric; self-centered or self-absorbed; vain; arrogant Enraged furious; unhinged; infuriated; extremely angry Evasive cryptic or unclear; avoiding; ambiguous; elusive or evanescent Facetious inappropriate or impertinent; flippant or dismissive; glib; shallow Farcical ridiculous; absurd; mocking; humorous and highly improbable Fatalistic pessimistic; expecting the worst as inevitable Fearful frightened; afraid; terrified; paralyzed or immobilized; shy Flippant casual or thoughtless; glib; inconsiderate; dismissive Foppish dandified; pretentious; vain; excessively refined and fastidious Foreboding dread; strong feeling of impending doom or evil Frivolous unnecessary and costing more than its worth; silly or lacking Frustrated feeling thwarted in your efforts; feeling besieged or undermined Ghoulish delighting in the loathesome, perverse, or revolting Grim serious or humorless; of dark intent; macabre; depressing Hapless unfortunate or appearing to be doomed to perpetual bad luck Harsh unkind or unmerciful; unnecessarily painful; unyielding Humble modest; deferential; self-confident; unassuming; respectful Inane foolish; stupid; silly or nonsensical; vacuous; empty; insignificant Incredulous disbelieving; unconvinced; suspicious; questioning; skeptical Malicious having ill intent; mean-spirited; spiteful; vindictive Nave unsuspecting; gullible or easy to deceive; unsophisticated Narcissistic self-admiring; pathologically self-centered Obsequious fawning; overly submissive or obedient; servile; groveling Outraged furious or extremely angered; deeply offended Pretentious affected; artificial; grandiose; flashy; superficial Satirical mocking to show a weakness; ridiculing; derisive; scornful Sarcastic ironic; saying the opposite of what you mean to mock or ridicule Scathing harsh; critical; cutting; unsparing; vicious; harmful or injurious Sensationalistic inaccurate; hyped up; exxagerated; provocative Subjective biased; prejudiced; based on emotion rather than facts Sulking resentful; sullen; bad-tempered; grumpy; self-pitying Tragic calamitous; disastrous; catastrophic; devastating Uneasy worried; ill at ease; edgy; nervous; unsettled Vindictive vengeful; spiteful; petty; unforgiving; hateful World-weary bored; tired; cynical; pessimistic More Related Articles: Learn How to Improve Writing Skills And It Will Change Your Life First Line Generator: 49 Sentences To Get You Started Writing 31 Ridiculously Simple Tips For Writing Your Next Book Some negative tone words leave you with an impression of sadness rather than disgust or anger. Heres a sampling of these, most of them described using other sad tone words. Apologetic full of regret or remorse; repentant; acknowleding failure Depressed lacking in energy or buoyancy; apathetic; emotionally blunted Despairing hopeless; sinking without an attempt to rise; seeing only darkness Disheartening discouraging; depressing; demoralizing; undermining; sad Gloomy depressing; dreary; discouraging; sad or low-spirited; pessimistic Grave serious; morose or moribund; solemn; weighty; important Hollow lacking substance; empty; meaningless; joyless Melancholy sad or prone to sadness; having a gloomy outlook Pathetic evoking pity; marked by sorrow or sadness; pitifully inadequate Somber gloomy; solemn; grave; melancholy; depressing Wretched miserable; sorrowful; distressed or in agony; despairing When you want a neutral tone in writing, it can be hard to find. It doesnt take much for us to associate words with an emotion or to feel the emotional undercurrent of a word whether positive or negative and to whatever degree. But some neutral words remain. Ambivalent uncertain; having mixed feelings; undecided Cautionary raises awareness; gives warning; admonishing Compliant in conformity with rules/expectations; flexible; acquiescent Conciliatory meant to pacify or placate; seeking to please Colloquial familiar; everyday language; casual or informal Defensive defending or guarding a position; watchful; preventing aggression Formal respectful; following accepted rules/styles; preserving form/custom Impartial objective; not favoring either side over the other Intense deeply felt; concentrated; passionate; earnest; extreme Introspective inward-focused or turning inward; contemplative Pensive lost in thought; introspective or reflective; contemplative Pragmatic realistic; dispassionate or detached; ruled by logic; practical Solemn serious; not funny; in earnest; sober; reverent; grave; mirthless Urgent insistent; implying something must be done as soon as possible Now that youve looked through our list of tones, which ones stood out for you the most? What kind of tone did those words have (positive, negative, or neutral)? Sometimes, our moods make certain words stand out for us as more fitting or more resonant. And sometimes we just see them because weve used them or heard them used recently in a way that made them stick. I hope your life gives you plenty of reasons to use positive tone words. But some situations and contexts call for the opposite. Your current work in progress might call for plenty of the opposite. And in certain contexts, even the neutral tone words sound more negative than otherwise. The right context can even change the tone of words that are usually considered positive. I hope the words you use to describe yourself are kind and encouraging. And at the end of the day, may the balance of your words leave you with a smile. Writers Write is a comprehensive writing resource. We have defined tone and put together this list of 155 words to help you describe an authors tone.What is tone?Tone refers to an authors use of words and writing style to convey their attitude towards a topic.What the author feels about the subject is often defined as the tone. What the reader feels is known as the mood.[Suggested reading: 140 Words To Describe Mood In Fiction]Tip:Dont confuse tone with voice. Voice can be explained as the authors personality expressed in writing.Tone = Attitude.Voice = Personality.Tone (attitude) and voice (personality) create a writing style.You may not be able to alter your personality but you can adjust your attitude. This gives you ways to create writing that affects your audiences mood. (Click here for examples of tone in a story.)The mechanics of toneTone is conveyed through diction (choice and use of words and phrases), viewpoint, syntax (grammar; how you put words and phrases together), and level of formality. It is the way you express yourself in speech or writing.How do you find the correct tone?You can usually find a tone by asking these three questions:Why am I writing this?Who is my intended audience?What do I want the reader to learn, understand, or think about?In formal writing, your tone should be clear, concise, confident, and courteous. The writing level should be sophisticated, but not pretentious.In creative writing, your tone is more subjective, but you should always aim to communicate clearly. Genre sometimes determines the tone.155 Words To Describe An Authors Tone Absurdillogical; ridiculous; silly; implausible; foolishAccusatorysuggesting someone has done something wrong, complainingAcerbicsharp; forthright; biting; hurtful; abrasive;severeAdmiringapproving; think highly of; respectful;praisingAggressivehostile; determined; forceful; argumentativeAggrievedindignant; annoyed; offended; disgruntledAmbivalenthaving mixed feelings; uncertain; in a dilemma;undecidedAmusedentertained; diverted; pleasedAngryincensed or enraged; threatening or menacingAnimatedfull of life or excitement; lively; spirited; impassioned; vibrantApatheticshowing little interest; lacking concern; indifferent; unemotionalApologeticfull of regret; repentant; remorseful;acknowledging failureAppreciativegrateful; thankful; showing pleasure;enthusiasticArdententhusiastic; passionateArrogantpompous; disdainful; overbearing;condescending; vain; scoffingAssertiveself-confident; strong-willed; authoritative;insistentAwestruckamazed, filled with wonder/awe; reverentialBelligerenthostile; aggressive; combatantBenevolentsympathetic; tolerant; generous; caring; well meaningBitterangry; acrimonious; antagonistic; spiteful;nastyCallouscruel disregard; unfeeling; uncaring;indifferent; ruthlessCandidtruthful, straightforward; honest; unreservedCausticmaking biting, corrosive comments; criticalCautionarygives warning; raises awareness; remindingCelebratorypraising; pay tribute to; glorify; honourChattyinformal; lively; conversational; familiarColloquialfamiliar; everyday language; informal;colloquial; casualComichumorous; witty; entertaining; divertingCompassionatesympathetic; empathetic; warm-hearted; tolerant; kindComplexhaving many varying characteristics;complicatedCompliantagree or obey rules; acquiescent; flexible;submissiveConcernedworried; anxious; apprehensiveConciliatoryintended to placate or pacify; appeasingCondescendingstooping to the level of one inferiors;patronisingConfusedunable to think clearly; bewildered; vagueContemptuousshowing contempt; scornful; insolent; mockingCriticalfinding fault; disapproving; scathing;criticisingCruelcausing pain and suffering; unkind; spiteful;severeCuriouswanting to find out more; inquisitive; questioningCynicalscornful of motives/virtues of others; mocking;sneeringDefensivedefending a position; shielding; guarding;watchfulDefiantobstinate; argumentative; defiant; contentiousDemeaningdisrespectful; undignifiedDepressingsad, melancholic; discouraging; pessimisticDerisivesnide; sarcastic; mocking; dismissive; scornful;snideDetachedaloof; objective; unfeeling; distantDignifiedserious; respectful; formal; properDiplomatictactful; subtle; sensitive; thoughtfulDisapprovingdispleased; critical; condemnatoryDishearteningdiscouraging; demoralising; undermining; depressingDisparagingdismissive; critical; scornfulDirectstraightforward; honestDisappointeddiscouraged; unhappy because something has gone wrongDispassionateindifferent; unemotional; coldDistressedin pain; suffering; sad; troubledEmpathetic;showing empathy; feeling the emotions of others; sensitive;understanding;caring;sympathetic;compassionate;tolerant;generous;kind; sensitiveEnthusiasticexcited; energetic; optimistic; bubbling over;enthusiastic;exuberant;energetic;optimistic; supportiveEntusiasticexcited; energetic; optimistic; bubbling over;enthusiastic;exuberant;energetic;optimistic; supportiveEvasiveambiguous, cryptic; unclearExcitedenthusiastic; energetic; optimistic; bubbling over;enthusiastic;exuberant;energetic;optimistic; supportiveExhilaratedinvigorated; enlivened or feeling alive; stimulated; made cheerful;energetic;optimistic; supportiveFamiliarcolloquial; everyday language; informal;colloquial; casualFamiliarcolloquial; everyday language; informal;colloquial; casualFamiliarcolloquial; everyday language; informal;colloquial; casual