

tone passages

Part A: Identify tone, content, and style. These have been identified for you in the first passage.

Example: During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing along, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract or country, and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher.

Tone: melancholic and somber

Content (what clues): At dusk on a cloudy autumn day, a solitary horseman passes an isolated house, the atmosphere is oppressive.

Style (how it is written, what clues): the diction (dull, dark, oppressive, dreary, melancholy) and the syntax (writing style) are highly descriptive. There are complex sentences and long vowels, so it reads slowly with only commas for punctuation.

Your Turn!

“An Innocent at Rinkside” by William Faulkner

The vacant ice looked tired, though it shouldn't have. They told him it had been put down only 10 minutes ago following a basketball game, and 10 minutes after the hockey match, it would be taken up again to make room for something else. But it looked not expectant but resigned, like the mirror simulating ice in the Christmas store window, not before the miniature fir trees and reindeer and cozy lamp-lit cottage were arranged upon it but after they had been dismantled and cleared away.

Tone:

Content (what clues):

Style (how it is written, what clues):

“Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now” by Maya Angelou

In my young years, I took pride in the fact that luck was called a lady. In fact, there were so few public acknowledgments of the female presence that I felt personally honored whenever nature and large ships were referred to as feminine. But as I matured, I began to resent being

considered a sister to a changeling as fickle as luck, as aloof as an ocean, and as frivolous as nature.

Tone:

Content (what clues):

Style (how it is written, what clues):

"The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne

A throng of breaded men, in sad-colored garments and gray, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak and studded with iron spikes.

Tone:

Content (what clues):

Style (how it is written, what clues):

"Today is Very Boring" by Jack Prelutsky

Today is very boring, it's a very boring day, there is nothing much to look at, there is nothing much to say, there's a peacock on my sneakers, there's a penguin on my head, there's a dormouse on my doorstep, I am going back to bed.

Tone:

Content (what clues):

Style (how it is written, what clues):

"Life in Caves" by Franklin Folsom

Perhaps because bats are nocturnal in habit, a wealth of thoroughly unreliable legend has grown up about them, and men have made of the harmless, even beneficial little beasts a means of expressing their unreasoned fears. Bats were the standard paraphernalia for witches; the female half of humanity stood in terror that bats would become entangled in their hair.

Phrases crept into the language, expressing man's revulsion or ignorance—"Bat's in the Belfry," "Batty," "Blind as a Bat."

Tone:

Content (what clues):

Style (how it is written, what clues):

Part B:

Choose one of the selections from above and rewrite it in a different tone. Change words, imagery, and style as necessary.