

Recognising Tone

Main Curriculum References

Actual references covered will depend on the learner group and level, and how the resource is used by the teacher. Key elements are shown in italics.

Literacy

Rt/L2.2 Identify the purpose of a text and infer meaning which is not explicit

- (a) understand that different kinds of text have different purposes, that texts can have more than one purpose, and that the real purpose of some texts can be different from the explicitly stated purpose*
- (b) understand that format, structure, vocabulary and style provide clues to the purpose of a text*
- (c) understand that the relevance of a text depends on the reader's purpose as well as the purpose of the text*

Rt/L2.5 read critically to evaluate information and compare information, ideas and opinions from different sources

- (a) understand that selection and presentation of information is rarely completely objective*
- (b) understand that information on the same topic from different sources may have different, even contradictory emphases*
- (c) understand the concept of bias and that it can be the result of what is left out of a text as well as what is there*

ESOL

Rt/L2.2a identify the purposes of a wide range of texts, whether inferred or explicitly stated

- (i) be aware of the importance of shared background knowledge and knowledge of the world in obtaining meaning from texts, e.g.: knowledge of own world to help get meaning from text; previous knowledge about subject matter, such as using knowledge from previous employment as doctor when reading a journal article about medicine; cultural understanding, such as knowing what buying a round means in a narrative*
- (ii) understand that different kinds of text have different purposes, that texts can have more than one purpose, and that the real purpose of some texts can be different from the explicitly stated purpose*
- (iii) understand that the relevance of a text depends on the reader's purpose as well as the purpose of the text*
- (iv) understand that format, organisational structure, grammatical features, discourse markers, register, graphics, vocabulary and style) provide clues to the purpose of a text*
- (v) recognise the importance of register, to assist in identification of purpose, audience and desired outcome, by identifying formal versus informal structures and vocabulary, e.g. the use of the passive, the third person, the use and choice of abstract nouns, formulaic expressions, idiom and collocation.*

Rt/L2.5a read critically to evaluate information, and compare information, ideas and opinions from different sources

- (i) understand that selection and presentation of information are rarely completely objective*
- (ii) understand that information on the same topic from different sources may have different, even contradictory, emphases*
- (iii) understand the concept of bias and that it can be the result of what is left out of a text as well as what is there*
- (iv) be aware of how language is used to create different effects (e.g. descriptive language, formal register, imagery in poetry).*

Recognising Tone

Author's notes

The attached resource was first used in a Level 1-2 ESOL reading class but is also suitable for adult literacy classes.

Deciding on the **tone of a piece of writing** can be tricky.

Tone reveals: a writer's attitude to the reader a writer's attitude to his/her subject.

These resources are designed to be part of an elicitation of what the learners already know about tone.

The example text (page 3) can be used to demonstrate this:

Sample questions:

What's the tone of this letter?

What is Harry's attitude to Archie? What is Harry's attitude to football?

What features do you notice in this text?

Sample answers:

short sentences

slang

questions

negative adjectives & verbs

personal pronouns

It would be beneficial to have further sample texts to show sarcastic tone, friendly tone, authoritative tone and so on.

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Interesting web links

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/logos/cx-logos-corporatestandards/cx-logos-styleguide/cx-logos-plainenglish/cx-logos-tone.htm>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/652/01/>

Card matching activity (pages 5-7)

The laminated cards can be used to match features of language to a variety of tones.

Print the features cards (p5-6) on a different colour from the tone cards (p7).

Give each pair of learners sets of cards in separate colours.

Some feature cards are repeated because they apply to several tones. You may need to print extras of some or print the features cards twice.

Pre-teach the following vocabulary:

verbose, pompous, pretentious, long-winded, acronyms.

Dear Harry

I am fuming. My dad made me watch the match last night. I t was rubbish. I properly hate football. I t's so unfair.

I missed Eastenders and all because of a stupid game of soccer. Why can't parents just let you do what you want?

Text me – yeah?

Archie

Dear Harry

I am fuming. My dad made me watch the match last night. I t was rubbish. I properly hate football. I t's so unfair.

I missed Eastenders and all because of a stupid game of soccer. Why can't parents just let you do what you want?

Text me – yeah?

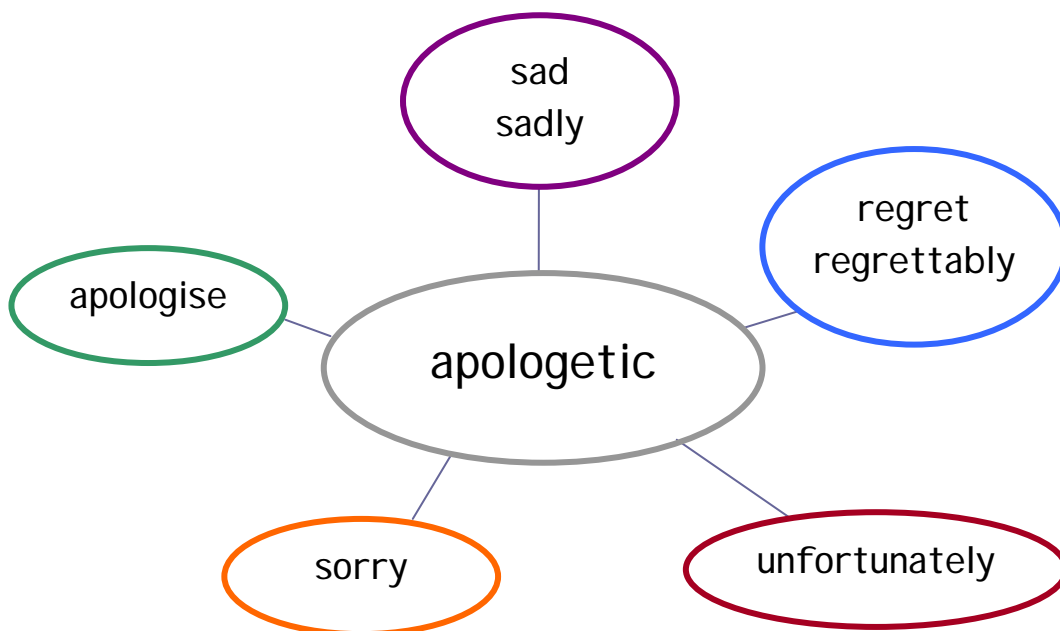
Archie

How do you test for a particular tone?

Use synonyms!

Example

If you think a text may have an apologetic tone, you should think of all the words with a similar meaning to apologetic:



Do any of these words appear in the text?

If not, it might not have an apologetic tone.

'Features of language' cards

adjectives that exaggerate slightly	short sentences
first person singular	the active voice
unfamiliar & old fashioned words/phrases	bureaucratic language
impersonal language	unusual words
overly complex language	technical terms
verbose language	pretentious language
long-winded language	talking directly to the reader
ACRONYMS without explanation	overuse of passive voice
points strongly made	very long sentences

'Features of language' cards - continued

use of personal pronouns e.g. 'we'	exclamation marks
short sentences	the imperative
the passive voice	the active voice
saying the opposite of what you mean	little use of personal pronouns
telling not asking	use of personal pronouns e.g. 'we'
questions	negative adjectives
negative adjectives	positive adjectives
slang	repeated adjectives (e.g. very, very)

Tone cards

cold tone	sarcastic tone	impersonal tone
apologetic tone	friendly tone	irritated tone
angry tone	critical tone	complaining tone
positive tone	pompous tone	authoritative tone
informal tone	persuasive tone	upbeat tone