

SOAPSTone: A Strategy for Reading *and* Writing

SOAPSTone (Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Tone) is an acronym for a series of questions that students must address as they analyze (close read) the writing of others and when they begin their own writing.

Who is the Speaker?

The “persona” that tells the story: Who is saying this? What do you know about this character?

What is the Occasion?

The time and the place of the piece; the context that prompted the writing: What caused the writer to write this? Why was it important enough to merit writing about? (“It was assignment for school.” Maybe true, but the occasion is the reason you chose to approach the assignment as you did.) A writer may want to address the attitudes and emotions that surround an issue, or maybe a particular event or situation captured the writer’s attention and triggered a response.

Who is the Audience?

The group of readers to whom this piece is directed: Who is the writing for? Who is it designed to convince?

What is the Purpose?

The reason behind the text: What does the writer want the audience to do or think?

What is the Subject?

The topic stated in a few words: What is the writing about?

What is the Tone?

The attitude or “voice” of the author. How does the writer feel about the subject? When we listen to someone talking, we can determine tone from the sound of his/her voice. In writing, our word choice (diction), sentence structure (syntax), and imagery (metaphors, similes, and other types of figurative language) must convey the tone. Tone is usually described with an adjective: *angry, sarcastic, sweet, harsh, pleasant, cheerful, bitter, serious*, etc. Identifying tone in another person’s writing requires you to look carefully at these items and consider their effect on the reader. To develop and maintain a consistent tone in your own writing is a sophisticated writing skill.

Abbreviated from the work of Ogden Morse as found here: http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/preap/teachers_corner/45200.html

Title of Writing: _____ Writer: _____

S _____

O _____

A _____

P _____

S _____

Tone: _____