

Exercise walk-through

8.4

Using words and syntax for tone and style

AP English Language and Composition

Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

For your own writing, the safest use of irony is none.

What the sophistication point actually rewards is **control**: a consistent register, a vocabulary that is precise rather than inflated, and syntax that ranks ideas deliberately.

A vocabulary for tone

- **Modifiers** - words, phrases, or clauses - **qualify, clarify, or specify** information about the thing they modify.
- **Parenthetical elements** - though not essential to understanding what they describe - **interrupt** the sentence to add information, comment, or emphasis.

A vocabulary for tone, in detail

THE TONE	THE WRITER'S STANCE	POINT AT
measured	confident, and not trying to win by volume	qualifiers, concessions, low-temperature verbs
urgent	the cost of delay is the argument	short sentences, imperatives, time words
wry	amused, and not quite committed	understatement, an unexpected register
indignant	a norm has been broken and someone is loaded at fault	nouns, rhetorical questions
elegiac	something valuable is already lost	past tense, concrete detail, slow rhythm

A tone word is a claim - if you cannot point at the third column, you have not made it

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State what is wrong with “as intelligent readers will see”. [2]

2.2 Explain the difference between naming a shared value and presuming a conclusion. [2]

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State what is wrong with “as intelligent readers will see”. [2]

2.1

- it makes disagreement a failure of intelligence, so a reader who disagrees is insulted rather than persuaded
-

2.2 Explain the difference between naming a shared value and presuming a conclusion. [2]

2.2

- naming a shared value states something both accept; presuming a conclusion smuggles the claim in as though already agreed

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 A writer's tone becomes most emphatic where the evidence is weakest.

(a) State the effect on a careful reader.

[1]

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[1]

(a)

- they notice the mismatch and discount the claim

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A writer's tone becomes most emphatic where the evidence is weakest.

(b) State the better strategy.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A writer's tone becomes most emphatic where the evidence is weakest.

(b) State the better strategy.

[1]

(b)

- lower the temperature and let the evidence stand

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 “We all know the reform failed” is problematic because it

[1]

☐

A names a shared value

B presumes the conclusion

C is too formal

D is a concession

3.2 Where the argument is weakest, the better tonal choice is to

[1]

☐

A raise the volume

B state the evidence plainly

C add rhetorical questions

D flatter the reader

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 “We all know the reform failed” is problematic because it

[1]

☐

- A names a shared value
- B presumes the conclusion
- C is too formal
- D is a concession

3.1 B

- the disputed claim is asserted as common knowledge

3.2 Where the argument is weakest, the better tonal choice is to

[1]

☐

- A raise the volume
- B state the evidence plainly
- C add rhetorical questions
- D flatter the reader

3.2 B

- plainness invites assessment rather than resistance

Exercise 3.3

3.3 Revise for tone: “Obviously anyone who has thought about this for five minutes agrees that the current policy is indefensible.” [4]

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3.3

- removes “obviously” and the insult to dissenters; replaces assertion of consensus with an argued basis; tone suits a reader who may disagree