

8.4 Using words and syntax for tone and style

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 12 marks**

KEY WORDS style 文体

Objective

Build the skills to control **tone** for a divided or resistant audience.

You must be able to:

- write in a register that neither flatters nor lectures
- use inclusive pronouns without presuming agreement
- adjust tone at a difficult point in the argument
- revise a passage whose tone works against its claim

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Between flattery and lecture

Flattery (“as intelligent readers will see”) makes disagreement a failure of intelligence. Lecturing (“it must be understood that”) assumes authority you have not earned. Both cost the reader’s goodwill.

■ Inclusive pronouns, honestly

“We all want good schools” is safe; “we all know the reform failed” presumes the conclusion. The first names a shared value, the second smuggles in the claim.

■ Tone at the difficult point

Where the argument is weakest, lower the temperature: state the evidence plainly and let it stand. Raising the volume where the case is thin is the most common tonal error.

2 Practice

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]

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

(a) State the effect on a careful reader. [1]

(b) State the better strategy. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 “We all know the reform failed” is problematic because it [1]

A	B
C	D

- 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	B
C	D

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

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