

Audience, Tone, and Sentence Craft

AP English Language ■ Unit 8

AP English Language



Audience, Tone, and Sentence Craft

What we will cover

- 1 Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs
- 2 Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs
- 3 Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax
- 4 Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style
- 5 Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas
- 6 Writing Clear Sentences

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Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

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Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

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Unit 8 is the course's most advanced treatment of **style** 文体 – the point at which word choice, syntax, and audience stop being separate topics.

- Writers may make **comparisons** – **similes, metaphors, analogies, or anecdotes** 明喻、隐喻、类比与轶事 – in an attempt to relate to an audience.
- Writers' choices regarding **syntax and diction** 句法与措辞 influence **how the writer is perceived** by an audience.
- **Word choice may reflect a writer's biases** 偏见 and may affect their **credibility** with a particular audience.
- Because **audiences are unique and dynamic**, writers must consider the **perspectives, contexts, and needs** of the intended audience.

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Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs, continued

The third point is worth dwelling on. Diction does not only characterise the subject – it characterises the writer.

A reader who notices loaded word choice starts to discount everything that follows, which is why an unqualified vocabulary is a credibility risk, not a strength.

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Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

The instruction here is that **audiences are dynamic**: they change as they read. An argument that has just conceded something is being read by a slightly different audience than the one that began the essay.

Press first and concede afterwards, and the concession reads as retreat.

Where a reader will refuse

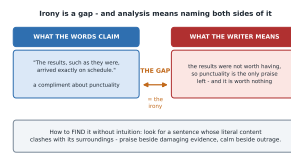


Mentioning an objection is not answering it. The fourth box is the difference, and it is where the **sophistication** credit lives

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Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

Irony is a gap — name both sides of it

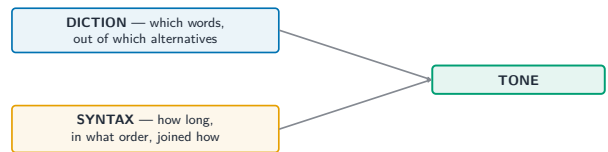


- A writer's **style** is the **mix of word choice, syntax, and conventions** employed by that writer. Style is a **composite**, which is why...
- Writers may signal a **complex or ironic perspective** through stylistic choices. **Irony** 反讽 may emerge from the difference between what is said...

Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

- A writer's **style** is the **mix of word choice, syntax, and conventions** employed by that writer. Style is a **composite**, which is why "the writer's style is formal" is not analysis – it names the result without any of the components.
- Writers may signal a **complex or ironic perspective** through stylistic choices. **Irony** 反讽 may emerge from the difference between what is said and what is meant, or between what is expected and what occurs.

Tone has two inputs



the same words in a different sentence shape carry a different attitude — which is why syntax is evidence and not decoration

The test: rewrite the passage keeping the **words** and changing the **shape**. What-ever changes was being carried by the syntax

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Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

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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

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 at fault	loaded nouns, rhetorical questions
eloquent	something valuable is already lost	past tense, concrete detail, slow rhythm

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

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Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas

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Writing Clear Sentences

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A concrete discipline: place modifiers next to what they modify, and use parentheticals sparingly.

One well-placed interruption creates emphasis; three in a paragraph destroy it, because a reader cannot tell which interruption mattered.

Exam tips

- **Style is a composite** – word choice, syntax, conventions. Naming the components is analysis; naming the result is not.
- Loaded diction **damages the writer's credibility**. Say so; it is examinable.
- Find irony **structurally**: a sentence whose literal content clashes with its surroundings.
- **Concede before you press**. The audience that reads your claim will already have decided whether you are fair.
- A **modifier** is where judgement hides. *The long-delayed report* has already evaluated it.
- Use parentheticals **sparingly** in your own writing. Three in a paragraph cancel each other out.