

4.10 Details, diction, and syntax reveal perspective

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to explain **tone** 语气.

You must be able to:

- state what shapes the tone a narrator conveys
- state what descriptive words do beyond modifying
- define tone in the CED's terms
- identify tone from adjectives and adverbs

1 Worked examples

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

■ What shapes tone

The narrators', characters', or speakers' backgrounds and perspectives shape the tone they convey about subjects or events in the text. Tone comes from perspective.

■ Descriptive words

Descriptive words, such as adjectives and adverbs, not only qualify or modify the things they describe but also convey a perspective toward those things. Every adjective is a small judgment.

■ Tone

The attitude of narrators, characters or speakers toward an idea, character or situation emerges from their perspective and may be referred to as tone. Tone is attitude made audible.

■ How to find it

Underline the adjectives and adverbs in a passage and ask what attitude they share. "Merely", "a little", "finally" are as revealing as any noun.

2 Practice

2.1 State what shapes the tone a narrator conveys. [2]

2.2 State what descriptive words do beyond modifying. [2]

2.3 Define tone in the CED's terms.

(a) State the definition. [2]

(b) State a practical method for finding it. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Tone emerges from [1]

- **A** perspective
- **B** page count
- **C** genre
- **D** publication date

3.2 Every adjective is [1]

- **A** a small judgment
- **B** neutral
- **C** decorative only
- **D** grammatically required

3.3 A narrator describes a gift as "adequate".

(a) State the attitude conveyed. [1]

(b) Explain how a single word carries it.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **4.10 Details, diction, and syntax reveal perspective** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Short Fiction II** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 the narrator's, character's or speaker's background and perspective.

2.2 they convey a perspective toward the things they describe as well as qualifying or modifying them.

2.3 (a) the attitude of a narrator, character or speaker toward an idea, character or situation, emerging from their perspective. (b) underline the adjectives and adverbs and ask what attitude they share.

3.1 A. perspective.

3.2 A. a small judgment.

3.3 (a) faint disappointment or withheld approval. (b) "adequate" states that a minimum was met, which implies more was expected and not given.