



Teaching Literature

Advanced Placement Summer Institute

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The Great Questions

Great literature of all cultures deals with one or more of the following questions:

I. What is the nature of the universe—the cosmos?

Is the universe hostile / beneficent / indifferent to humanity?
What is the nature of evil? What is the source of evil?
Why, if God is good, does He allow evil to exist? (The Problem of Evil)
Why, if God is just, does He allow the good to suffer? (The Problem of Pain)

II. What is God's relationship to humans?

Does God exist?
Is God the Creator?
Is God concerned about humanity?
Is God indifferent toward humanity?
Should humans fear / obey / love /
sacrifice to / praise / propitiate /
pray to God?

What is the nature of God?

Is God (gods) basically:
an angry God? a proud God?
a jealous God? a kind God?
Is God all good?
Does God Himself bring evil to
humanity and cause suffering?

III. What is the nature of human beings?

Are humans basically good or evil?
Are people determined or do we have free will?
Are people noble—more divine than animal? or
Are people degraded, corrupt—more animal than spirit?
Are people a balance? If so, how is the balance preserved?
What is the human being's greatest faculty? reason? imagination?
Do humans have a soul? Can they achieve immortality? How?
Are humans in the universe by design or by chance? If by design, why?
What is a human's basic purpose in life? Is there a purpose?
To save the human soul?
To find happiness? If so, what is happiness and how are we to achieve it?
What is the "good" life for humans? How can life gain significance?
How can people give value to their lives?
How can people find their greatest satisfaction, completeness, fulfillment?
How do people establish values, ethics, morals? What are their bases?

IV. What is the relationship of one human to another?

How are we to treat people? Are all people to be treated as equals?
On what basis should we / do we evaluate our fellow humans?
Are we basically social animals or anti-social ones?
How are we to establish an orderly existence with other humans?
What is the "ideal" or "good" society? How can it be established?
Under what social system can people best flourish?
On what base should we regulate our association with other people?

Literary Terms: an incomplete list

1. allegory
2. alliteration
3. allusion
4. ambiguity
5. antagonist
6. apostrophe
7. archetype
8. aside
9. assonance
10. audience
11. ballad
12. blank verse
13. cæsura
14. central idea (theme)
15. characterization
16. climax
17. comedy
18. conceit
19. concrete poetry
20. connotation
21. consonance
22. convention
23. couplet
24. denotation
25. *deus ex machina*
26. detail
27. diction
28. elegy
29. epic
30. epiphany
31. exposition
32. farce
33. figurative language
34. first person (point of view)
35. fixed form
36. flashback (~forward)
37. foil
38. foreshadowing
39. free indirect discourse
40. free verse
41. hyperbole
42. iambic pentameter
43. image
44. *in medias res*
45. irony
46. literal language
47. litotes
48. lyric
49. metaphor
50. meter (iamb, trochee, dactyl, anapest)
51. narrator
52. naturalistic
53. octet
54. ode
55. omniscient (point of view)
56. overstatement
57. oxymoron
58. paradox
59. parody
60. persona
61. personification
62. plot
63. point of view
64. prosody
65. protagonist
66. purpose
67. quatrain
68. realistic
69. resolution
70. reversal
71. rhyme (interior, slant)
72. rhythm
73. romantic
74. satire
75. scan
76. sestet
77. simile
78. soliloquy
79. sonnet
80. speaker
81. stage direction
82. stock character
83. stream-of-consciousness
84. symbol
85. syntax
86. theme
87. tone
88. tragedy
89. understatement
90. unreliable narrator

Vocabulary for Writing about Literature

(an incomplete list)

To say what a writer or narrator does:

- alludes to
- alters
- asserts
- changes
- clarifies
- compares
- conjures up
- connotes
- constrains
- construes
- conveys
- creates
- delineates
- demonstrates
- depicts
- describes
- differentiates
- dispels
- elicits
- elucidates
- emphasizes
- enhances
- enunciates
- evokes
- explains
- explores
- heightens/lessens
- hints at
- ignites
- implies
- inspires
- invokes
- juxtaposes
- maintains
- manipulates
- masters
- paints
- portrays
- produces
- refutes
- repudiates
- reveals
- shifts
- shows (*weak*)
- solidifies
- stirs
- suggests
- tackles
- transcends
- twists
- uses (*weak*)
- utilizes (*über-weak*)

To name the tools the writer uses:

- comic details
- details
- diction
- figurative language
- foreshadowing
- imagery, images
- irony
- plot details
- point of view
- setting
- symbols
- syntax
- tone

To talk about the effect on a reader:

- anger
- awareness
- connections
- contrasts
- empathy, sympathy, apathy, antipathy
- impact
- intensity
- laughter
- mood
- pathos / bathos
- shock
- lassitude/tedium

Words to Know for Group Allusion Seminars

Mythology

1. Achilles' heel
2. Adonis
3. Aeolian
4. Apollo
5. Argus-eyed
6. Athena/Minerva
7. Atlantean
8. Aurora
9. Bacchanal
10. Bacchanalian
11. Calliope
12. Centaur
13. Chimera
14. Cupidity
15. Erotic
16. Furor
17. Gorgon
18. Halcyon
19. Harpy
20. Hector
21. Helen (of Troy)
22. Herculean
23. Hydra-Headed
24. Iridescent
25. Jovial
26. Junoesque
27. Lethargy
28. Martial
29. Medea
30. Mentor
31. Mercurial
32. Mercury/Hermes
33. Mnemonics
34. Morphine
35. Muse
36. Narcissism
37. Nemesis
38. Neptune
39. Niobe
40. Odyssey
41. Olympian
42. Paeon
43. Pandora's Box
44. Parnassus
45. Pegasus

46. Phoenix
47. Plutocracy
48. Promethean
49. Protean
50. Psyche
51. Pygmalion
52. Pyrrhic victory
53. Saturnalia
54. Saturnine
55. Sibyl
56. Sisyphean
57. Stentorian
58. Stygian
59. Tantalize
60. Terpsichorean
61. Titanic
62. Volcanoes
63. Vulcanize
64. Zeus

Bible

1. Absalom
2. Alpha and Omega
3. Cain
4. Daniel
5. David and Bathsheba
6. Eye of the Needle
7. Filthy Lucre
8. Goliath
9. Good Samaritan
10. Handwriting on the wall
11. Ishmael
12. Jacob
13. Job
14. Job's comforters
15. Jonah
16. Judas
17. King Ahab and Jezebel
18. Manna
19. Original Sin/The Fall
20. Pearl of Great Price
21. Philistine
22. Prodigal Son
23. Ruth and Naomi
24. Samson and Delilah
25. Scapegoat Sepulcher

26. Sodom and Gomorrah
27. Solomon
28. Twelve Tribes of Israel

Literature

1. Babbitt
2. Brobdingnag
3. Bumble
4. Cinderella
5. Don Juan
6. Don Quixote
7. Pangloss
8. Falstaff
9. Frankenstein
10. Friday
11. Galahad
12. Jekyll and Hyde
13. Lilliputian
14. Little Lord Fauntleroy
15. Lothario
16. Malapropism
17. Milquetoast
18. Pickwick
19. Pollyanna
20. Pooh-bah
21. Quixotic
22. Robot
23. Rodomontade
24. Scrooge
25. Simon Legree
26. Svengali
27. Tartuffe
28. Uncle Tom
29. Uriah Heep
30. Walter Mitty
31. Yahoo

History

1. Attila
2. Berserk
3. Bloomer
4. Bowdlerize
5. Boycott
6. Canopy
7. Casanova
8. Chauvinist
9. Derrick
10. Donnybrook
11. Dungaree
12. El Dorado
13. Hackney
14. Horatio Alger
15. Laconic
16. Limerick
17. Machiavellian
18. Marathon
19. McCarthyism
20. Meander
21. Mesmerize
22. Nostradamus
23. Sardonic
24. Shanghai
25. Spartan
26. Stonewall
27. Swift
28. Sybarite
29. Thespian
30. Uncle Sam
31. Utopia
32. Wagnerian
33. Waterloo

Allusion Research Jigsaw

An allusion is a reference, explicit or implicit, to previous literature or history. Using allusions, authors can enrich a passage by inviting readers to make associations that can deepen or broaden meaning. Readers unaware of allusions, however, will miss these meanings—not OK for an AP student.

Learn the following allusions well. Use whatever sources you wish: children’s tales, the Bible, encyclopedias, or reference books, or credible websites, not personal pages. For the Bible; prefer the Authorized (King James) Version, the one that’s had by far the greatest influence on literature. If you are up for the originals of much of the mythology, check out Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Britannia.com is a good site to start for Arthurian character and story information. For fairy tale research, try the Internet Public Library Pathfinder: <http://www.ipl.org/div/pf/entry/48473>.

Next, you are going to create a teaching document that includes, in your own words, an explanation of the story with an MLA (or APA) citation of the source. If you already know the story by heart double-check with an outside source for accuracy and cite the source. You will need to send me an electronic copy of your document and provide a hard copy in advance of your teaching day, so that photocopies can be made. A good website to help you create your MLA works cited page is Purdue’s OWL at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>.

The stories you explain need not be long; written, most should be a paragraph or so. The purpose here is to give all of you a working knowledge of allusion. You will be teaching this information to your classmates. A test will follow.

BIBLICAL GROUP 1

Creation
Adam and Eve
Cain and Abel
David and Goliath
Moses (birth to the promised land)
Abraham and Isaac
Tower of Babel
Jonah and the Whale
Samson and Delilah
Solomon
Job
Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors
Armageddon

BIBLICAL GROUP 2

Daniel in the Lion’s Den
Elijah
Jezebel
Sodom and Gomorrah
Birth of Jesus
Parable of the Prodigal Son
Lazarus
John the Baptist
Last Supper
Judas
Crucifixion and Resurrection
Doubting Tomas
Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

GREEK/ ROMAN MYTHOLOGY GROUP 1

Prometheus (and Io)
Narcissus
The Golden Fleece
Orpheus and Eurydice
Daedalus (and Icarus)
Cupid and Psyche
Pygmalion and Galatea
Daphne (and Apollo)
Perseus
Theseus

GREEK/ ROMAN MYTHOLOGY GROUP 2

Hercules
Oedipus (including Sphinx)
Antigone
The Trojan War (including the fall of Troy, Achilles, Hector, Paris, Helen, and the Trojan Horse)
Midas
Bacchus
Agamemnon, Orestes, and Electra (also known in whole as *The Oresteia*)
Leda and the Swan
Pandora
Odysseus/Ulysses (know who he is, do not study *The Odyssey*)

ARTHURIAN GROUP

Uther and Igraine and the story of Arthur’s birth
Arthur, Guenevere, and Lancelot (their stories & the love triangle)
Sir Gawain and “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight” (story in verse)
Merlin
Morgan le Fay
Nimue alias Vivienne, Lady of the Lake
Perceval
Mordred
Places: Avalon and Camelot
Objects: Excalibur, the Sword in the Stone, the Holy Grail

FAIRY TALE GROUP

The Ugly Duckling
Snow White
Rumpelstiltskin
The Princess and the Pea
The Pied Piper of Hamelin
Little Red Riding Hood
Hansel and Gretel
The Frog Prince
The Fisherman and His Wife
Cinderella
Bluebeard
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves
Aladdin

adapted from Jenna Gardner

Katherine Anne Porter

THE GRAVE



The Grandfather, dead for more than thirty years, had been twice disturbed in his long repose by the constancy and possessiveness of his widow. She removed his bones first to Louisiana and then to Texas as if she had set out to find her own burial place, knowing well she would never return to the places she had left. In Texas she set up a small cemetery in a corner of her first farm, and as the family connection grew, and oddments of relations came over from Kentucky to settle, it contained at last about twenty graves. After the Grandmother's death, part of her land was to be sold for the benefit of certain of her children, and the cemetery happened to lie in the part set aside for sale. It was necessary to take up the bodies and bury them again in the family plot in the big new public cemetery, where the Grandmother had been buried. At last her husband was to lie beside her for eternity, as she had planned.

The family cemetery had been a pleasant small neglected garden of tangled rose bushes and ragged cedar trees and cypress, the simple flat stones rising out of uncropped sweet-smelling wild grass. The graves were open and empty one burning day when Miranda and her brother Paul, who often went together to hunt rabbits and doves, propped their twenty-two Winchester rifles carefully against the rail fence, climbed over and explored among the graves. She was nine years old and he was twelve.

They peered into the pits all shaped alike with such purposeful accuracy, and looking at each other with pleased adventurous eyes, they said in solemn tones: "these were graves! trying by words to shape a special, suitable emotion in their minds, but they felt nothing except an agreeable thrill of wonder: they were seeing a new sight, doing something they had not done before. In them both there was also a small disappointment at the entire commonplaceness of the actual spectacle. Even if it had once contained a coffin for years upon years, when the coffin was gone a grave was just a hole in the ground. Miranda leaped into the pit that had held her grandfather's bones. Scratching around aimlessly and pleasurable as any young animal, she scooped up a lump of earth and weighed it in her palm. It had a pleasantly sweet, corrupt smell, being mixed with cedar

needles and small leaves, and as the crumbs fell apart, she saw a silver dove no larger than a hazel nut, with spread wings and a neat fan-shaped tail. The breast had a deep round hollow in it. Turning it up to the fierce sunlight, she saw that the inside of the hollow was cut in little whorls. She scrambled out, over the pile of loose earth that had fallen back into one end of the grave, calling to Paul that she had found something, he must guess what.... His head appeared smiling over the rim of another grave. He waved a closed hand at her. "I've got something too." They ran to compare treasures, making a game of it, so many guesses each, all wrong, and a final showdown with opened palms. Paul had found a thin wide gold ring carved with intricate flowers and leaves. Miranda was smitten at the sight of the ring and wished to have it. Paul seemed more impressed by the dove. They made a trade, with some little bickering. After he had got the dove in his hand, Paul said, "Don't you know what this is? This is a screw head for a *coffin*!... I'll bet nobody else in the world has one like this!"

Miranda glanced at it without covetousness. She had the gold ring on her thumb; it fitted perfectly. "Maybe we ought to go now," she said, "Maybe someone'll see us and tell somebody." They knew the land had been sold, the cemetery was no longer theirs, and they felt like trespassers. They climbed back over the fence, slung their rifles loosely under their arms—they had been shooting at targets with various kinds of firearms since they were seven years old—and set out to look for the rabbits and doves or whatever small game might happen along. On these expeditions Miranda always followed at Paul's heels along the path, obeying instructions about handling her gun when going through fences; learning how to stand it up properly so it would not slip and fire unexpectedly; how to wait her time for a shot and not just bang away in the air without looking, spoiling shots for Paul, who really could hit things if given a chance. Now and then, in her excitement at seeing birds whizz up suddenly before her face, or a rabbit leap across her very toes, she lost her head, and almost without sighting she flung her rifle up and pulled the trigger. She hardly ever hit any sort of mark. She had no proper sense of hunting at all. Her brother would be often completely disgusted with her. "You don't care

whether you get your bird or not," he said. "That's no way to hunt." Miranda could not understand his indignation. She had seen him smash his hat and yell with fury when he had missed his aim. "What I like about shooting," said Miranda, with exasperating inconsequence, "is pulling the trigger and hearing the noise."

"Then, by golly," said Paul, "whyn't you go back to the range and shoot at bulls-eyes?"

"I'd just as soon," said Miranda, "only like this, we walk around more."

"Well, you just stay behind and stop spoiling my shots," said Paul, who, when he made a kill, wanted to be certain he had made it. Miranda, who alone brought down a bird once in twenty rounds, always claimed as her own any game they got when they fired at the same moment. It was tiresome and unfair and her brother was sick of it.

"Now, the first dove we see, or the first rabbit, is mine," he told her. "And the next will be yours. Remember that and don't get smarty."

"What about snakes?" asked Miranda idly. "Can I have the first snake?"

Waving her thumb gently and watching her gold ring glitter, Miranda lost interest in shooting. She was wearing her summer roughing outfit: dark blue overalls, a light blue shirt, a hired-man's straw hat, and thick brown sandals. Her brother had the same outfit except his was a sober hickory-nut color. Ordinarily Miranda preferred her overalls to any other dress, though it was making rather a scandal in the countryside, for the year was 1903, and in the back country the law of female decorum had teeth in it. Her father had been criticized for letting his girls dress like boys and go careering around astride barebacked horses. Big sister Maria, the really independent and fearless one, in spite of her rather affected ways, rode at a dead run with only a rope knotted around her horse's nose. It was said the motherless family was running down, with the Grandmother no longer there to hold it together. It was known that she had discriminated against her son Harry in her will, and that he was in straits about money. Some of his old neighbors reflected with vicious satisfaction that now he would probably not be so stiffnecked, nor have any more high-stepping horses either. Miranda knew this, though she could not say how. She had met along the road old women of the kind who smoked corn-cob pipes, who had treated her grandmother with most sincere respect. They slanted their gummy old eyes sideways at the granddaughter and said, "Ain't you

ashamed of yourself, Missy? It's against the Scriptures to dress like that. Whut yo Pappy thinkin about?" Miranda, with her powerful social sense, which was like a fine set of antennae radiating from every pore of her skin, would feel ashamed because she knew well it was rude and ill-bred to shock anybody, even bad tempered old crones, though she had faith in her father's judgment and was perfectly comfortable in the clothes. Her father had said, "They're just what you need, and they'll save your dresses for school. . . ." This sounded quite simple and natural to her. She had been brought up in rigorous economy. Wastefulness was vulgar. It was also a sin. These were truths; she had heard them repeated many times and never once disputed.

Now the ring, shining with the serene purity of fine gold on her rather grubby thumb, turned her feelings against her overalls and sockless feet, toes sticking through the thick brown leather straps. She wanted to go back to the farmhouse, take a good cold bath, dust herself with plenty of Maria's violet talcum powder—provided Maria was not present to object, of course—put on the thinnest, most becoming dress she owned, with a big sash, and sit in a wicker chair under the trees. . . . These things were not all she wanted, of course; she had vague stirrings of desire for luxury and a grand way of living which could not take precise form in her imagination but were founded on family legend of past wealth and leisure. These immediate comforts were what she could have, and she wanted them at once. She lagged rather far behind Paul, and once she thought of just turning back without a word and going home. She stopped, thinking that Paul would never do that to her, and so she would have to tell him. When a rabbit leaped, she let Paul have it without dispute. He killed it with one shot.

When she came up with him, he was already kneeling, examining the wound, the rabbit trailing from his hands. "Right through the head," he said complacently, as if he had aimed for it. He took out his sharp, competent bowie knife and started to skin the body. He did it very cleanly and quickly. Uncle Jimbilly knew how to prepare the skins so that Miranda always had fur coats for her dolls, for though she never cared much for her dolls she liked seeing them in fur coats. The children knelt facing each other over the dead animal. Miranda watched admiringly while her brother stripped the skin away as if he were taking off a glove. The flayed flesh emerged dark scarlet, sleek, firm; Miranda with thumb and finger felt the long fine muscles with the silvery flat strips binding them to the joints. Brother lifted the odd-

ly bloated belly. "Look," he said, in a low amazed voice. "It was going to have young ones."

Very carefully he slit the thin flesh from the center ribs to the flanks, and a scarlet bag appeared. He slit again and pulled the bag open, and there lay a bundle of tiny rabbits, each wrapped in a thin scarlet veil. The brother pulled these off and there they were, dark gray, their sleek wet down lying in minute even ripples, like a baby's head just washed, their unbelievably small delicate ears folded close, their little blind faces almost featureless.

Miranda said, "Oh, I want to see," under her breath. She looked and looked—excited but not frightened, for she was accustomed to the sight of animals killed in hunting—filled with pity and astonishment and a kind of shocked delight in the wonderful little creatures for their own sakes, they were so pretty. She touched one of them ever so carefully. "Ah, there's blood running over them," she said and began to tremble without knowing why. Yet she wanted most deeply to see and to know. Having seen, she felt at once as if she had known all along. The very memory of her former ignorance faded, she had always known just this. No one had ever told her anything outright, she had been rather unobservant of the animal life around her because she was so accustomed to animals. They seemed simply disorderly and unaccountably rude in their habits, but altogether natural and not very interesting. Her brother had spoken as if he had known about everything all along. He may have seen all this before. He had never said a word to her, but she knew now a part at least of what he knew. She understood a little of the secret, formless intuitions in her own mind and body, which had been clearing up, taking form, so gradually and so steadily she had not realized that she was learning what she had to know. Paul said cautiously, as if he were talking about something forbidden: "They were just about ready to be born." His voice dropped on the last word. "I know," said Miranda, "like kittens. I know, like babies." She was quietly and terribly agitated, standing again with her rifle under her arm, looking down at the bloody heap. "I don't want the skin," she said, "I won't have it." Paul buried the young rabbits again in their mother's body, wrapped the skin around her, carried her to a clump of sage bushes, and hid her away. He came out again at once and said to Miranda, with an eager friendliness, a confidential tone quite unusual in him, as if he were taking her into an important secret on equal terms: "Listen now. Now you listen to me, and don't ever forget. Don't you ever tell a living soul that you saw this. Don't tell a soul. Don't tell Dad because I'll

get into trouble. He'll say I'm leading you into things you ought not to do. He's always saying that. So now don't you go and forget and blab out sometime the way you're always doing. . . . Now, that's a secret. Don't you tell."

Miranda never told, she did not even wish to tell anybody. She thought about the whole worrisome affair with confused unhappiness for a few days. Then it sank quietly into her mind and was heaped over by accumulated thousands of impressions, for nearly twenty years. One day she was picking her path among the puddles and crushed refuse of a market street in a strange city of a strange country, when without warning, plain and clear in its true colors as if she looked through a frame upon a scene that had not stirred nor changed since the moment it happened, the episode of that far-off day leaped from its burial place before her mind's eye. She was so reasonlessly horrified she halted suddenly staring, the scene before her eyes dimmed by the vision back of them. An Indian vendor had held up before her a tray of dyed sugar sweets, in the shapes of all kinds of small creatures: birds, baby chicks, baby rabbits, lambs, baby pigs. They were in gay colors and smelled of vanilla, maybe. . . . it was a very hot day and the smell in the market, with its piles of raw flesh and wilting flowers, was like the mingled sweetness and corruption she had smelled that other day in the empty cemetery at home: the day she had remembered always until now vaguely as the time she and her brother had found treasure in the opened graves. Instantly upon this thought the dreadful vision faded, and she saw clearly her brother whose childhood face she had forgotten, standing again in the blazing sunshine, again twelve years old, a pleased sober smile in his eyes, turning the silver dove over and over in his hands.

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER (1890-1980) was born in Indian Creek, Texas, grew up in Texas and Louisiana, and was educated in Germany and Mexico, locales she used in her fiction. Three collections of short stories—Flowering Judas (1930), Pale Horse, Pale Rider (1939) and The Leaning Tower (1944)—not only have given her an international reputation but also established her as one of America's most creative short-story writers of the last century. Her only novel, Ship of Fools, was published in 1962. In May, 2006, the United States Postal Service honored Katherine Anne Porter on a postage stamp.

Katherine Anne Porter

“THE GRAVE”

SETTING

The story is told in a flashback*. What is the setting of the flashback, and what is the setting of the frame* (or at least of the “half-frame”)?

SETTING is “the physical, and sometimes spiritual, background against which the action of a narrative (novel, drama, short story, poem) takes place.” It includes (1) geography (country / city/region), (2) time (day/night, season, century/year/era, historical and social conditions and values), and (3) society (class, beliefs, values of the characters).

CHARACTER

How much can you tell about Miranda and Paul?

CHARACTER is established through (1) direct exposition (comment by the author directly to the reader, although this is nearly always filtered through a narrator or other character, whose reliability you must always question), (2) dialogue (what the character says or thinks), and (3) action (what the character actually does).

SYMBOL

Find at least three symbols in the story and tell for what each stands.

SYMBOL is ‘something which is itself and yet stands for or suggests or means something else..., a figure of speech which combines a literal and sensuous quality with an abstract or suggestive aspect.’

THEME

Identify the theme of the story and state it in one sentence.

THEME (sometimes called “thesis”) is “an attitude or position taken by a writer with the purpose of proving or supporting it.” The topic is the subject about which a writer writes; the theme is what the writer says about the topic.

Definitions are adapted from C. Hugh Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*, Indianapolis: The Odyssey Press, 1972, Print.

T O N E

Some words to describe the tone of a work or passage

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| accusing | depraved | furious | mock-heroic | scared |
| admonitory | depressed | gleeful | mocking | scornful |
| affectionate | derisive | gloomy | mock-serious | selfish |
| allusive | derogatory | grave | moralistic | sentimental |
| ambivalent | desolate | greedy | mournful | serene |
| amused | despairing | grim | mysterious | serious |
| angry | desperate | gushy | nervous | shocked |
| annoyed | detached | haughty | nostalgic | silly |
| anxious | diabolic | hilarious | objective | simpering |
| apprehensive | didactic | holier-than-thou | ominous | sinister |
| audacious | diffident | hopeful | optimistic | skeptical |
| authoritative | disappointed | hopeless | outraged | sneering |
| baffled | disbelieving | horrific | outspoken | sober |
| bantering | disdainful | humorous | paranoid | solemn |
| benevolent | disgusted | impartial | passionate | somber |
| bewildered | disinterested | impatient | pathetic | staid |
| bitter | dispassionate | incisive | patronizing | stirring |
| blunt | distressed | incredulous | pedantic | stoic |
| bossy | disturbed | indifferent | pensive | straightforward |
| brusque | doubtful | indignant | persuasive | strident |
| burlesque | dramatic | inflammatory | pessimistic | suspenseful |
| candid | ebullient | informative | petty | suspicious |
| caring | effusive | insipid | pithy | sympathetic |
| casual | elated | insolent | playful | taunting |
| ceremonial | elegiac | instructive | pompous | tender |
| cheerful | empathetic | intimate | pretentious | tense |
| cheery | encouraging | introspective | proud | terse |
| choleric | enraged | ironic | provocative | thoughtful |
| clinical | enthusiastic | irreverent | psychotic | threatening |
| cold | euphoric | irritated | questioning | timorous |
| colloquial | excited | jocund | reflective | turgid |
| compassionate | expectant | joyful | regretful | uncaring |
| complimentary | exuberant | laidback | relaxed | unconcerned |
| conceited | facetious | learned | reminiscent | uneasy |
| concerned | factual | lethargic | remorseful | unhappy |
| conciliatory | fanciful | lighthearted | resigned | unsympathetic |
| condemnatory | fatalistic | loving | restrained | urgent |
| condescending | fearful | lugubrious | reticent | vibrant |
| confident | fervent | matter-of-fact | reverent | vitriolic |
| confused | flippant | measured | romantic | whimsical |
| contemptuous | foreboding | meditative | rousing | wistful |
| contentious | formal | melancholic | sanguine | worried |
| critical | frantic | melancholy | sarcastic | wrathful |
| cynical | frightened | mirthful | sardonic | wry |
| delightful | frustrated | miserable | satiric | zealous |

More Help Describing Tone

Another set of words to describe tone:

upset/concerned

Provocative = Stimulating, exciting
Audacious = Daring, bold, insolent
Persuasive = Written to convince or win over
Condescending = patronizing, arrogant
Disdainful = Arrogant, lordly, superior, unsympathetic
Sarcastic = Snide, mocking, sharp taunting that wounds
Sardonic = Derisively mocking, scornful and cynical
Satiric = Ridiculing, ironic, mocking, farcical, exposing folly
Mock-heroic = Ridiculing a “hero”
Apprehensive = anxious, uneasy, worried
Ominous = Fateful, ill-boding, foreboding, dire
Urgent = imperative, critical, intensely necessary
Threatening = Menacing, intimidating
Horrific = Appalling, shocking, gruesome
Disappointed = Deceived, crestfallen, let down
Regretful = Contrite, apologetic, sorry (spans mere disappointment to a painful sense of dissatisfaction or self-reproach)
Remorseful = Moral anguish, penitent, contrite, rueful over past misdeeds
Somber = Bleak, depressing, dismal
Elegiac = Lamenting, poignant, funereal

upbeat/neutral

Amused = Entertaining in a light and playful manner (directing attention away from serious matters in an agreeable & pleasing manner)
Bantering = Teasing, joking, playful
Simpering = Smiley in a silly, self-conscious, often coy way
Whimsical = Capricious, unpredictable
Reverent = Venerating, worshipping
Reflective = Contemplative, meditative, introspective
Intimate = Personal, informal, private
Sympathetic = Compassionate, sensitive, sharing or understanding feelings
Factual = Certain, absolute, irrefutable, unbiased
Detached = Aloof, impartial, disconnected emotionally
Pedantic = Scholarly, making a show of knowledge
Provocative = Stimulating, exciting

Adapted from materials from Ron Smith, Roby [Texas] HS and Susan VanDruten

Using a dictionary of synonyms

proud, arrogant, haughty, lordly, insolent, overbearing, supercilious, disdainful mean showing superiority toward others or scorn for inferiors

Proud may suggest a feeling or attitude of pleased satisfaction in oneself or one’s accomplishments that may or may not be justified and may or may not be demonstrated offensively <a *proud* man, unwilling to admit failure>. **ant** humble, ashamed

Arrogant implies a claiming for oneself of more consideration or importance than is warranted and often suggests an aggressive, domineering manner an *arrogant* business executive used to being kowtowed to>. **ant** meek, unassuming

Haughty suggests a blatantly displayed consciousness of superior birth or position <a *haughty* manner that barely concealed his scorn>. **ant** lowly

Lordly implies pomposity or an arrogant display of power <a *lordly* indifference to the consequences of their carelessness>..

Insolent implies insultingly contemptuous haughtiness <suffered the stares of *insolent* waiters>. **ant** deferential

Overbearing suggests a tyrannical manner or an intolerable insolence <wearing by demands from her *overbearing* in-laws>. **ant** subservient

Supercilious implies a cool, patronizing haughtiness <*supercilious* parvenus with their disdainful sneers>.

Disdainful suggests a more active and openly scornful superciliousness <*disdainful* of their pathetic attempts>. **ant** admiring, respectful

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1992, Print. [p. 310]

Cubing for Tone: Instructions

CUBING is a thinking technique used for generating ideas. It involves looking at a topic in a variety of different ways. By observing a subject from different perspectives, the mind becomes open to other aspects and considerations that might provide depth and breadth to writing.

This technique involves:

1. Re-reading the text, or part of it, several times
2. Making a cube 😊
3. Recording your ideas in columns or on separate sheets of paper.

The move-fast method

- Spend three to five minutes per side.
- Go quickly and do not censor your thoughts.
- This allows you to “loosen the soil” of your mind.

The take-your-time method

- Spend at least ten minutes per side.
 - Dig deeply.
Question, question, question!
“What more can I find here?”
- This allows you to unearth ideas that may be below the surface of your thoughts.

CUBING is also a great way for tapping into perceptions that may be deep within you and that you are not consciously aware of on a first or second reading.

Do the ‘move-fast’ method first, and then once you have loosened up your mind, do the ‘take-your-time’ method.

Do the move-fast method just before you go to bed. Let your mind work through the night and see what else comes to you in the morning.

Revisit your sheets a couple of days later (if possible) and add ideas.

Be aware! Be inquisitive!

There are many ways to identify and talk about tone!

The Tone Cube: Steps

1. Distribute the empty cube template.
2. Distribute the blank form, “Tone Cube: The Elements”
3. Dictate the contents for the cube using the PP presentation. Students fill in the form.
4. Explain the cube construction:
 - a) Copy the content from the form onto the cube template.
 - b) Decorate or color the cube sides in any way that does not detract from the content.
 - c) Assemble the cube. (You may want to fill it or to secure the seams with tape?)
5. Explain how students will use the cube, from “Cubing for Tone: Instructions”

Tone Cube: The Elements

| | <i>Contents of this side:</i> | <i>Notes:</i> |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 <i>Diction</i> | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |

Tone Cube: The Elements [Teacher notes]

Contents of this side:

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1 <i>Diction</i></p> | <p>Sound Association Language level</p> | <p>'close,' 'shut,' 'slam' "If I profane with my unworhiest hand..." "we chased, with the jawbones of deacons, the English and the bears" 'intoxicated,' 'drunk,' 'hammered'</p> |
| <p>2 <i>Detail</i></p> | <p>Objects Actions Observations conditions</p> | <p>"The old dog barks backward..."</p> |
| <p>3 <i>Imagery</i></p> | <p>Visual Auditory Tactile Olfactory Gustatory synesthesia</p> | <p>"...and Juliet is the sun" "...the grating roar /Of pebbles which the waves draw back" "Here's the smell of the blood still" "the brandy, the pudding and mince, coiling up to my nostrils..." "I see a voice..."</p> |
| <p>4 <i>Syntax</i></p> | <p>Word order Phrase order Sentence structure Sentence length Sentence complexity Word repetition Word omission</p> | <p>"the precious treasure of his eyesight lost" simple, compound, complex, compound-complex alternating long and short; set of long ones followed by one short compounding, subordination successive, scattered "I, now at Carthage. He, shot dead at Rome"</p> |
| <p>5 <i>Figurative Language</i></p> | <p>Allusion, euphemism, metaphor, metonymy, personification, simile, synecdoche Apostrophe, hyperbole, oxymoron Paradox, pun</p> | <p>"This statement is a lie."</p> |
| <p>6 <i>Irony</i></p> | <p>Statement vs meaning The expected vs what happens Narrator/character's words vs the reader's understanding</p> | <p>Sarcasm, understatement We know something they do not</p> |

