

## DETERMINING TONE USING THE "MAD-GLAD-SAD" APPROACH



Use this list to help determine tone by first considering whether the tone is positive or negative overall, then considering if the author or speaker seems "mad, glad, or sad." Some of the words may fit in multiple categories, depending on the text, and some words do not exactly fit in the "m-g-s" categories (see Other).

MAD (negative overall, though it could seem "humorous" in the case of satire)

- accusatory--charging of wrong doing
- bitter--exhibiting strong animosity as a result of pain or grief
- burlesque--comic; mocking through caricature or comic exaggeration
- callous--unfeeling, insensitive to feelings of others
- caustic--intense use of sarcasm; stinging, biting
- choleric--hot-tempered, easily angered
- condescending--air/feeling of superiority
- contemptuous--expressing contempt, a lack of respect, or hate
- critical--finding fault
- cynical--distrust of people/human nature; questions people's sincerity/motives
- derisive--ridiculing, mocking
- disdainful--expressing contempt, dislike, or hate; scornful
- flippant--lacking proper respect
- frivolous--lacking in seriousness
- forthright--directly frank without hesitation
- gritty--courageously persistent
- hostile--extremely angry
- indignant--marked by anger aroused by injustice or unworthiness
- irreverent--lacking proper respect or seriousness
- judgmental--authoritative and often having critical opinions toward another
- malicious--purposely hurtful
- mocking--treating with contempt or ridicule
- patronizing--having an air of condescension
- pessimistic--seeing the worst side of things; having no hope
- pugnacious--combative; quick to argue or quarrel
- ribald--offensive in speech or gesture
- ridiculing--slightly contemptuous banter; making fun of someone/something
- sarcastic--marked by irony used to mock or show contempt
- snide--derogatory or mocking in an indirect way

GLAD (positive, pleasant overall)

- approving--showing or feeling approval
- awe--(noun) struck with wonder
- benevolent--well meaning; kind
- contemplative--studying, thinking, reflecting on an issue
- earnest--intense, a sincere state of mind
- euphoric--feeling of elation or great joy
- facetious--playfully humorous
- fanciful--using the imagination
- frivolous--lacking in seriousness
- gritty--courageously persistent
- jovial--happy
- laudatory--pertaining to or expressing praise
- optimistic--hopeful, cheerful

- reflective--illustrating innermost thoughts and emotions
- reverent--treating a subject with honor and respect
- romantic--demonstrating love toward someone
- sarcastic--sneering, caustic
- sardonic--scornfully and bitterly sarcastic
- satiric--ridiculing to show weakness in order to make a point, teach
- sincere--without deceit or pretense; genuine
- tender--showing gentleness and concern
- whimsical--odd, strange, fantastic; fun

#### SAD (negative overall)

- apathetic--indifferent due to lack of energy or concern
- bleak--not warm or friendly; not hopeful; gloomy and somber
- contemplative--studying, thinking, reflecting on an issue
- despondent--showing extreme discouragement or depression
- earnest--intense, a sincere state of mind
- forthright--directly frank without hesitation
- gloomy--darkness, sadness, rejection
- grim--forbidding; uninviting
- melancholic--deeply depressing/sad
- morose--gloomy, sullen, despondent
- ominous--giving the impression that something bad is going to happen
- pessimistic--seeing the worst side of things; no hope
- reflective--illustrating innermost thoughts and emotions
- reverent--treating a subject with honor and respect
- serene--calm, peaceful, and tranquil
- sincere--without deceit or pretense; genuine
- solemn--deeply earnest, tending toward sad reflection
- timid--fearful; lacking courage

#### OTHER

- candid--frank; honest and to-the-point
- colloquial--using a conversational style; informal conversation
- conventional--lacking spontaneity, originality, and individuality
- didactic--author attempts to educate or instruct or teach a moral lesson
- flippant--lacking proper respect
- frivolous--lacking in seriousness
- haughty--proud and vain to the point of arrogance
- humorous--causing laughter
- impartial--attitude of being unbiased
- intimate--very familiar
- matter-of-fact--accepting of conditions; not fanciful or emotional
- objective--an unbiased view; able to leave personal judgments aside
- pedantic--narrowly and often ostentatiously learned; unimaginative
- pious--devoutly religious
- reflective--illustrating innermost thoughts and emotions
- reverent--treating a subject with honor and respect
- ribald--offensive in speech or gesture
- straightforward--uncomplicated; easy to understand
- unbiased--without showing bias in any given direction

Resources for words & definitions:

<http://www.gaston.k12.nc.us/schools/highland/class/baron/index.htm>)

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www.webster.com