

# ANALYZING THE EFFECT OF WORD CHOICE ON TONE

For each of the following extracts, determine the tone of the passage, and then identify the words which help create this tone.

## 1 FROM JFK'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS, 20 JAN, 1961

For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forbears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

**TONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Words which create this tone:

## 2 FROM GREAT EXPECTATIONS BY CHARLES DICKENS

The candles that lighted that room of hers were placed in sconces on the wall. They were high from the ground, and they burnt with the steady dulness of artificial light in air that is seldom renewed. As I looked round at them, and at the pale gloom they made, and at the stopped clock, and at the withered articles of bridal dress upon the table and the ground, and at her own awful figure with its ghostly reflection thrown large by the fire upon the ceiling and the wall, I saw in everything the construction that my mind had come to, repeated and thrown back to me. My thoughts passed into the great room across the landing where the table was spread, and I saw it written, as it were, in the falls of the cobwebs from the centre-piece, in the crawlings of the spiders on the cloth, in the tracks of the mice as they betook their little quickened hearts behind the panels, and in the gropings and pausings of the beetles on the floor.

**TONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Words which create this tone:

## 3 FROM PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN'S DIARY, 25 JULY 1945

We met at 11:00 AM today. That is, Stalin, Churchill and the U.S. president. But I had a most important session with Lord Mountbatten and General Marshall before that. We have discovered the most terrible bomb in the history of the world. It may be the fire destruction prophesied in the Euphrates Valley era, after Noah and his fabulous ark. Anyway, we think we have found the way to cause a disintegration of the atom. An experiment in the New Mexico desert was startling—to put it mildly. Thirteen pounds of the explosive caused a crater six hundred feet deep and twelve hundred feet in diameter, knocked over a steel tower a half mile away, and knocked men down ten thousand yards away.

**TONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Words which create this tone:

## 4 FROM A LETTER BY VICTOR HUGO, 15 MARCH 1822

My adorable and adored, I have been asking myself every moment if such happiness is not a dream.

It seems to me that what I feel is not of earth. I cannot yet comprehend this cloudless heaven. My whole soul is yours.

My Adele, why is there no word for this but joy? Is it because there is no power in human speech to express such happiness? Sometimes I tremble lest I should suddenly awaken from this dream divine.

Oh, now you are mine! At last you are mine! Soon—in a few months, perhaps, my angel will sleep in my arms, will awaken in my arms, will live there.

All your thoughts at all moments, all your looks will be for me; all my thoughts, all my moments, all my looks, will be for you!

Adieu, my angel, my beloved Adele! Adieu! Still I am far from you, but I can dream of you. Soon perhaps you will be at my side.

**TONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Words which create this tone: