



Watch Your Tone

Tone Analysis Through Music and Nonfiction



K20 Center, Gage Jeter, Aimee Myers

Published by K20 Center

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Grade Level	10th – 11th Grade	Time Frame	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	120 minutes
Course	A.P. Language and Composition, A.P. Literature and Composition, American Literature		

Essential Question

How does someone's tone affect his or her message?

Summary

Students will use close reading strategies to analyze an author's tone within nonfiction texts. The class will begin with modern music lyrics, then shift to famous passages of nonfiction writers. Through collaborative exercises, students will scaffold knowledge of word choice and structure to analyze tone within several messages. Expansion of knowledge will develop through an analysis of the "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King, Jr., which will be assessed through written compositions. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 11th grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 10 through 11, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students act out a short scenario with partners in front of the class. Each group is given the exact same scenario to act out, and even though the scenario stays the same, the tone changes according to the word assigned to the group.

Explore

Students analyze lyrics from two different songs, both titled "Freedom." After analyzing the lyrics, students listen to the songs to confirm their interpretations of the tone. Students then create a Two-Voice Poem comparing/contrasting the tones of these two songs

Explain

Students analyze tone in small reading passages from famous pieces of writing by using the Why-Lighting strategy. Groups create a claim about their tones and defend their claims with textual evidence. Groups also use the Fishbowl strategy to share their tone claims and defense.

Extend

Students listen to an audio recording of the "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King, Jr., then use the Jigsaw strategy to analyze passages of the speech for tone. Students use the CUS and Discuss strategy to annotate the text. After sharing their assigned portion, students view a Word Cloud visual and discuss the text as a whole.

Evaluate

Students vote on a topic that is important to them. After a topic is chosen for the class, students may choose a tone word and write a paragraph addressing that topic in that tone. After the paragraph is complete, students are required to choose a tone that is the opposite of their original tone and write a new paragraph over the same topic. A literary analysis essay is also an option for evaluation. Students choose a two-word tone for the "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. and write a thesis statement building a claim for that tone. The essay has textual evidence to support the claim and commentary to offer analysis over the evidence provided.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

WME401: Analyze how the choice of a specific word or phrase shapes meaning or tone in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 10)

10.2.R.2: Identify characteristics of genres and analyze how they enhance comprehension of fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction.

10.3.R.4: Evaluate how literary devices impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:

- figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, symbolism)
- sound devices (i.e., onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance)
- irony (i.e., verbal, situational, dramatic)

10.3.W.2: Compose informative essays, reports, or technical writing that:

- objectively introduce and develop topics
- include a defensible thesis
- incorporate evidence
- maintain an organized structure
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision
- establish and maintain a formal style
- emulate literary devices from mentor texts

Attachments

- [Argument Essay Rubric—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Argument Essay Rubric—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Argument Essay Rubric—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Argument Essay Rubric—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Attitude Words Categorized—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Attitude Words Categorized—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Attitude Words Categorized—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Attitude Words Categorized—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Background Info on Civil Rights—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Background Info on Civil Rights—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Background Info on Civil Rights—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Background Info on Civil Rights—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Fishbowl Method—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Fishbowl Method—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Fishbowl Method—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Fishbowl Method—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [George Michael Lyrics—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [George Michael Lyrics—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [George Michael Lyrics—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [George Michael Lyrics—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Literary Analysis Essay Rubric—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Literary Analysis Essay Rubric—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Literary Analysis Essay Rubric—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Literary Analysis Essay Rubric—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Rage Against the Machine Lyrics—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Rage Against the Machine Lyrics—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Rage Against the Machine Lyrics—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Rage Against the Machine Lyrics—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Tone Passages—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Tone Passages—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)

- [Tone Passages—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Tone Passages—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Tone Scenario—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Tone Scenario—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Tone Scenario—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Tone Scenario—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Tone Words—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Tone Words—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Tone Words—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Tone Words—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Two Voice Poem—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Two Voice Poem—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Two Voice Poem—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Two Voice Poem—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)
- [Word Cloud—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Word Cloud—Watch Your Tone - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Word Cloud—Watch Your Tone.docx](#)
- [Word Cloud—Watch Your Tone.pdf](#)

Materials

- Argument Essay Rubric (attached)
- Attitude Words Categorized (attached; 1 per student)
- Background Info on Civil Rights (attached; 1 per student)
- Fishbowl Method (attached; 1 per student)
- George Michael Lyrics (attached; 1 per student)
- Literary Analysis Essay Rubric (attached)
- Rage Against the Machine Lyrics (attached; 1 per student)
- Tone Passages (attached; 1 per student)
- Tone Scenario (attached; 1 per pair)
- Tone Words (attached; 1 per student)
- Two Voice Poem (attached; 1 per pair)
- Word Cloud
- Highlighters
- Writing materials: pen, pencil, paper, etc.

Engage

Ask students to get with a partner, then give each pair the attached **Tone Scenario** handout.

Instruct pairs to choose (on their own) a tone with which they are familiar: joyful, sad, angry, happy, lively, etc. You could brainstorm a list of tone words together as a class and write them on the board. Pairs could then choose from this whole-class generated list for the first part of this activity.

Once pairs have chosen a tone word, they should brainstorm, practice, and perform the scenario they were given using a tone word of their choice. After each pair performs, students in the audience have to guess which tone is being used.

Distribute the attached **Tone Words** handout to students and have them repeat the previous exercise using one of the more complex tones from the list.

Teacher's Note

Students need little to no prior knowledge with tone to complete this assignment. Mood and tone are often confused by students. Tone is the author's attitude about the subject matter within the message. It is often displayed through specific word choice, imagery, figurative language, and other style elements. Since tone is very abstract to students, building a knowledge of this concept might need to come through steps. This is why the previous exercise is scaffolded with students first choosing a familiar tone and then working with a more complex, abstract tone from the Tone Words List.

Explore

Distribute the attached lyrics for both "Freedom" songs: **George Michael Lyrics** and **Rage Against the Machine Lyrics**.

Teacher's Note

Links to the lyrics are listed at end of documents under "Resources." These are also included under "Attachments" as a Word document so they can be distributed to students. By beginning with song lyrics, the teacher can meet students in an area with which they are more familiar, thus making them more confident and willing to draw inferences about author's tone and the overall purpose of speeches and famous writing.

Have students first analyze the song by Rage Against the Machine. Allow students to read the lyrics, then as a class, choose a tone word from the Tone Words List handout. After the class comes to an agreement on the tone, allow them to use highlighters to mark words, phrases, imagery, or symbolism that builds that tone for the song. (The tone of this song leans toward anger or, more specifically, bitterness.) Have students share out their highlighting. For the words/phrases shared, discuss why that word or phrase was chosen and ask students to write this information in the margin, next to the highlighted portion. This strategy is called [Why-Lighting](#). After examining the lyrics, allow students to listen to the song. The music is loud, fast and angry. It confirms for them that examining the text assisted them in evaluating the tone without having to hear the song first.

Teacher's Note

The song can be downloaded from iTunes or accessed on [YouTube](#).

Now, have students analyze the song by George Michael. They should use the Why-Lighting strategy and develop a tone for the song based on words from the list. Students should discover that even though this song focuses on the same topic and has the same title, the lyrics create a very different message from the previous song. Allow students to share their thoughts with the class. This song is more complicated than it seems in the beginning. On the surface, it is very upbeat and positive, but when breaking down the text, students should notice a rebellious or somber undertone. Encourage the class to come up with a two-word tone for this song (such as joyously resistant).

Teacher's Note

Here's a [link](#) to the YouTube version - be sure to not show the video and to stop at the 4:30 mark, as the song is repetitive and includes a curse word toward the end. The lyrics handout does not include the song in its entirety.

Allow students to get with a partner and distribute the **Two-Voice Poem** handout. Give students about 10 minutes to create a poem comparing/contrasting these two songs and their messages. A [Two-Voice Poem](#) is used just like a Venn Diagram. Encourage students to use textual evidence from their Why-Lighting in the margins. Ask for volunteers to share poems.

Explain

Ask students to get into groups of 4-5. Distribute the **Tone Passages** handout. Inform the groups that they are to read the passages and choose a specific tone for each passage. Students could use Why-Lighting again to annotate if they need visuals to help them break down the text.

Students should each record their group answers below the passage on their own individual sheets to use later for the Fishbowl activity.

Allow groups to choose a passage to defend in a Fishbowl activity. Use the attached **Fishbowl Method** instructions to assist. This activity is a strategy used to listen in on the thinking of a group of students. Students defending sit in a small circle in the middle of the room. The remaining students form a large circle on the outside of the room and watch. Each group should take a turn discussing a passage. They then share their claim for a tone and then as a group offer textual support from the passage to defend their tone. Students on the outside can ask questions.

Extend

To extend the idea of tone to historical documents, print or provide online access to the [I Have a Dream](#) speech transcript by Martin Luther King, Jr. It is very useful to allow students to listen to the speech before any analysis takes place.

A visual of civil rights issues with a short discussion is incredibly useful for creating an appreciation of the content within the M.L.K., Jr. speech. Photos and videos can enhance student engagement and understanding. If placing photos in a PowerPoint presentation, leave the last picture of M.L.K., Jr. up on projector while students listen to audio.

Teacher's Note

Background Info on Civil Rights contains suggested videos and photos to use. A link to the [audio](#) is listed on the background information document and under "Resources" on this page.

Use the [jigsaw](#) method for students to breakdown this text. Students should get into small groups of about three. Instead of reading the entire text, have students only examine an assigned portion of the text.

After students have received the assigned reading portion, draw their attention to a board where the [CUS and Discuss](#) strategy is posted for them to see. While students read and discuss their assigned passage, they should be annotating the speech with the CUS technique. Remind students to focus on tone words in order to determine how the speaker's tone affects his message, similar to the previous activities.

Teacher's Note

If copies of the text can't be used and students can't annotate in their textbooks, clear transparencies or post-it notes assist in the annotation process. Remind students that they are expected to discuss after they are done with annotations.

After all groups have completed their assigned portion of the speech, have groups present their findings to the class. This can be done in a quick one-minute share-out. Encourage the students in the audience to participate by adding the information presented by their classmates to their copy of the speech. If students will be doing a formal essay for the evaluation piece, taking notes over the other areas of the reading would be highly beneficial to their support and understanding of the text.

To assist students in understanding the structure of a text and the use of diction, show the **Word Cloud** Wordle image on an overhead, Smartboard, or in handouts. The image shows the words that are repeated or emphasized by King in the speech. Ask students leading questions about the representation of the speech (i.e., Is there anything on the visual that surprises you? What three words are emphasized more than any others? What is the connotation of a key word? Why would King choose "freedom" more than any other word?)

Teacher's Note

Have students complete Part B on the Tone Passages sheet if time allows.

Evaluate

There are several possible evaluations for this tone analysis lesson.

- **Creation:** Students show their knowledge of tone by creating pieces of their own writing with distinct tones. Students vote on a topic that is important to them. Topics such as required uniforms or cellphones in class are strong topics often chosen because they are provocative and popular. After a topic is chosen for the class, students may choose a tone word and write a paragraph addressing the topic in that tone. Students should focus on word choice, imagery, and details to develop the tone. After the paragraph is complete, students are required to choose a tone that is the opposite of their original tone and write a new paragraph over the same topic (i.e., if a student chooses a tone like *bitter*, in the second writing he or she should choose a word in the positive spectrum, like *victorious*).
- **Literary Analysis Essay:** Students choose a two-word tone for the "I Have a Dream" Speech by M.L.K., Jr. The student writes a thesis statement, building a claim for that tone and defending it in an essay. The essay shows textual evidence to support the claim and commentary to offer analysis over the evidence provided.
- **Argumentative Essay:** Students write an argumentative essay choosing which "Freedom" song most closely represents King's attitude in "I Have a Dream." Students need to consider both songs and choose which attitude toward freedom best matches King's tone in his speech. They need to search the speech and the song for similarities in tone, not content. A claim defending their choice of song needs to be developed through evidence from both the song and the speech. Well-developed commentary should build on their evidence to develop a solid argument.

Teacher's Note

Sample Literary Analysis and **Argument Essay rubrics** are attached. However, it is encouraged to design rubrics collaboratively for students to take ownership over their own learning and assessments.

Teacher's Note: Modification Recommendations

Consider focusing on one song if this concept is new to students. Two songs might be too overwhelming for an introductory concept. The Two-Voice Poem could be the song's tone in comparison with the student's attitudes toward freedom. This might help them to better understand the author's attitude toward the subject matter.

Instead of using the Fishbowl technique, have students to share all together to check for comprehension with all groups.

Ask students to turn in their Tone Passage sheets to check for comprehension before proceeding to the Expand section of the lesson.

To lower the difficulty, have students analyze just one portion of the M.L.K., Jr. speech.

To raise the difficulty, ask students to analyze the entire speech on their own and turn in annotations for a grade. Evaluation options are meant to raise or lower the difficulty of the lesson while still using writing as an evaluation tool.

Resources

- Definition of tone and examples: <http://depts.gpc.edu/~dunowl/handouts/authors-tone.pdf>
- Rage Against the Machine. (November 10, 1993). Freedom. AZLyrics. <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/rageagainsthemachine/freedom.html>
- George Michael (October 24, 1990). Freedom. AZLyrics. <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/georgemichael/freedom90.html>
- Paul Bisceglia. (March 29, 2013). VIDEO: "MLK: The Assassination Tapes" now a Peabody Award Winner. Smithsonian Magazine. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/multimedia/audio/128077288.html>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). CUS and discuss. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/162>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Jigsaw. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/179>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Two voice poems. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/133>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-lighting. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128>