

## S.O.A.P.S. Tone Analysis Strategy:

Adapted from an AP College Board Resource.

### What is the Subject?

**The general topic, content, idea in the text.** You should be able to state the subject in a few words or phrases.

### What is the Occasion?

**The time and place of the piece; the context that prompted the writing.** Note the **larger occasion**, that is, the *broad* issue which is the center of ideas, attitudes, and emotions. Also note, if present, the **immediate occasion**, that is, the event or situation that caught the writer's attention and triggered a response.

### Who is the Audience?

**The group of readers to whom this piece is directed.** Does the author identify an audience? Is it one individual, a group, many groups? What assumptions can you make about the intended audience? This choice of audience will affect how and why the writer creates a particular text.

### What is the Purpose?

**The speaker's reason for writing the text.** What does the speaker want the audience to think or feel or do as a result of reading this text?

### Who is the Speaker?

What **facts** do you know about the speaker? (These facts may help you make judgments about the speaker's point of view). What **assumptions** can you make about the speaker? (e.g., age, gender, class, emotional state, etc.) What does the writing say about the speaker? Remember that the author and the speaker are not necessarily the same.

### What is the Tone?

**The attitude of the speaker toward the subject.** What emotional sense do you take from the piece? What is the speaker's tone towards his or her subject? The *spoken word* can convey the speaker's attitude and help impart meaning through tone of voice. However, with the *written word*, tone is conveyed through the writer's **diction** (word choice), **syntax** (sentence construction), and **imagery** (metaphors, similes, vivid description).

*Some tone words:* accusatory, admiring, arrogant, bitter, cautionary, condescending, cynical, critical, compassionate, candid, disparaging, diplomatic, empathetic, earnest, flippant, fuming, grim, imploring, indignant, irreverent, impassioned, informative, indifferent, impartial, ironic, joyous, mocking, modest, naïve, nasty, nostalgic, outraged, optimistic, pragmatic, pretentious, playful, persuasive, reflective, righteous, sentimental, satirical, skeptical, sensationalistic, subjective, thoughtful, tolerant, unbiased, witty, whimsical

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Additionally, we should ask:

**HOW** does the speaker/writer try to achieve his/her purpose? Are these choices **EFFECTIVE**?

- Which **persuasive appeals** are used? Identify **key examples**. Are they **effective**? **Why/why not**?
  - Logos** (facts, statistics, hard evidence)
  - Pathos** (emotion)
  - Ethos** (trustworthiness, common values)

- What **figures of speech** are used? Identify **key examples**. Are they **effective**? **Why/why not**?

(e.g. alliteration, anaphora, antithesis, apostrophe, assonance, chiasmus, euphemism, hyperbole, irony, litotes, metaphor, metonymy, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, paradox, personification, pun, simile, synecdoche, understatement, etc.)

## The 20 Most Commonly Used Figures of Speech

By Richard Nordquist, About.com

<http://grammar.about.com/od/rhetoricstyle/a/20figures.htm>

1. **Alliteration** - repetition of an initial consonant sound.
2. **Anaphora** –
3. **Antithesis** -
4. **Apostrophe** –
5. **Assonance** - identity or similarity in sound between internal vowels in neighboring words.
6. **Chiasmus** -
7. **Euphemism** -
8. **Hyperbole** - an extravagant statement; the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect.
9. **Irony** – the use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. A statement or situation where the meaning is contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea.
10. **Litotes** –
11. **Metaphor** – an implied comparison between two unlike things that actually have something important in common.
12. **Metonymy** –
13. **Onomatopoeia** - the formation or use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to.
14. **Oxymoron** –
15. **Paradox** - statement that appears to contradict itself.
16. **Personification** - figure of speech in which an inanimate object or abstraction is endowed with human qualities or abilities.
17. **Pun** - play on words, sometimes on different senses of the same word and sometimes on the similar sense or sound of different words.
18. **Simile** - a stated comparison (usually formed with "like" or "as") between two fundamentally dissimilar things that have certain qualities in common.
19. **Synecdoche** –
20. **Understatement** –