

Tone: author's or speaker's *attitude* toward the topic, the characters and the audience

Diction – connotation of the word choice (*how* the author words something)

Images – appeals to the five senses

Details – facts included or omitted

Language – is it formal, clinical, colloquial, plain, musical, choppy, etc.

Syntax/ Sentence Structure – jumbled, elegant, rhythmic, flowery, plain

Diction: Writers can manipulate their readers by selecting words that carry positive or negative connotations*. Imagine that two writers publish articles about a fashion show in New York City.

Writer 1 What makes Fashion Week so amazing and miraculous isn't just the designs – some of which are truly unique and creative – but being surrounded by all the models. Their slim, angular forms, so fair under the bright lights, make you feel like you are in another, ethereal, world.

Writer 2 What makes Fashion Week so shocking and abnormal isn't just the designs – some of which are truly incomparable and out there – but being surrounded by all the models. Their bony, angular forms, so sickly and pale under the bright lights, make you feel like you are in another, wraithlike, world.

*connotation: definition + emotional associations

for example: cheap vs. frugal
washed out vs. fair
brainy vs. intelligent
weird vs. eccentric

Images: Like diction, images can be positive or negative. Imagine two different guests at a party list their observations. They don't focus on the same things, but they are aware of all five senses.

Guest 1	hammering bass of the music	Guest 2	hum of excitement
	heavy body odor		charcoal smell of grill
	greasy food & overly sweet drinks		juicy hamburgers
	overheated, sweaty		warm, electric feel
	pulsing strobe lights		buffet table piled high with summer fruit

Details: Like images, the writer decides which details to include. Imagine a girl describing her new boyfriend to her parents; the same girl then describes the boyfriend to some friends she wants to impress. All the details are true, but notice how she manipulates them.

To her parents: He's a little older than I am but he is responsible. He has a job and pays all his own bills. Also, he takes care of himself – he works out a lot and is protective of me.

To her friends: He's older than I am and has been living on his own since his parents kicked him out last year. He works at a tattoo parlor – he has 12 tattoos so far – but spends a lot of his time doing martial arts. No one had better mess with me or he'll make them sorry!

Language: Whereas diction refers to specific words with certain connotations, language refers to the overall style of language. Imagine a doctor and a 7th grader both describing an illness.

Doctor This malignant cancer can be either acute or chronic, but in either case the disease starts in the marrow and affects the blood cells. Acute myelogenous leukemia and acute lymphocytic leukemia create subnormal cells and reduce the healthy blood cell count; in chronic myelogenous leukemia and chronic lymphocytic leukemia, the patient becomes anemic.

Seventh Grader This kind of cancer is, like, really bad. One kind makes the blood to not form real good and makes the patient bleed lots if they get cut. The other makes the blood to be real low in iron. That makes the patient feel weak and get sick real easy.

High/formal: polysyllabic, sophisticated, elegant

Neutral/standard: no elaborate words, some contractions, no slang

Low/informal: common, simple words, slang, jargon, contractions, relaxed and conversational

Syntax/ Sentence Structure: This element of tone considers how long and complicated the sentences tend to be. Complicated syntax probably shows up with more formal language and simpler syntax tends to go along with simpler, informal language, but not always. Here are some different types of sentence structure.

1. Sentence length

1-4 words = telegraphic (as in telegraphs)

5-7 words = short

18 average = medium

30+ words = long & involved

2. Beginnings – is there a pattern or is there variety?

3. Types – see the yellow pages in *Writer's Inc.*

4. Sentence features: word order (inverted? parallel?) Repetition? Repetition of conjunctions? Absence of conjunctions? Lots of prepositional phrases?

5. Rhetorical fragments.

6. Punctuation.

Consider these two examples for syntax (you may notice some other big differences, too).

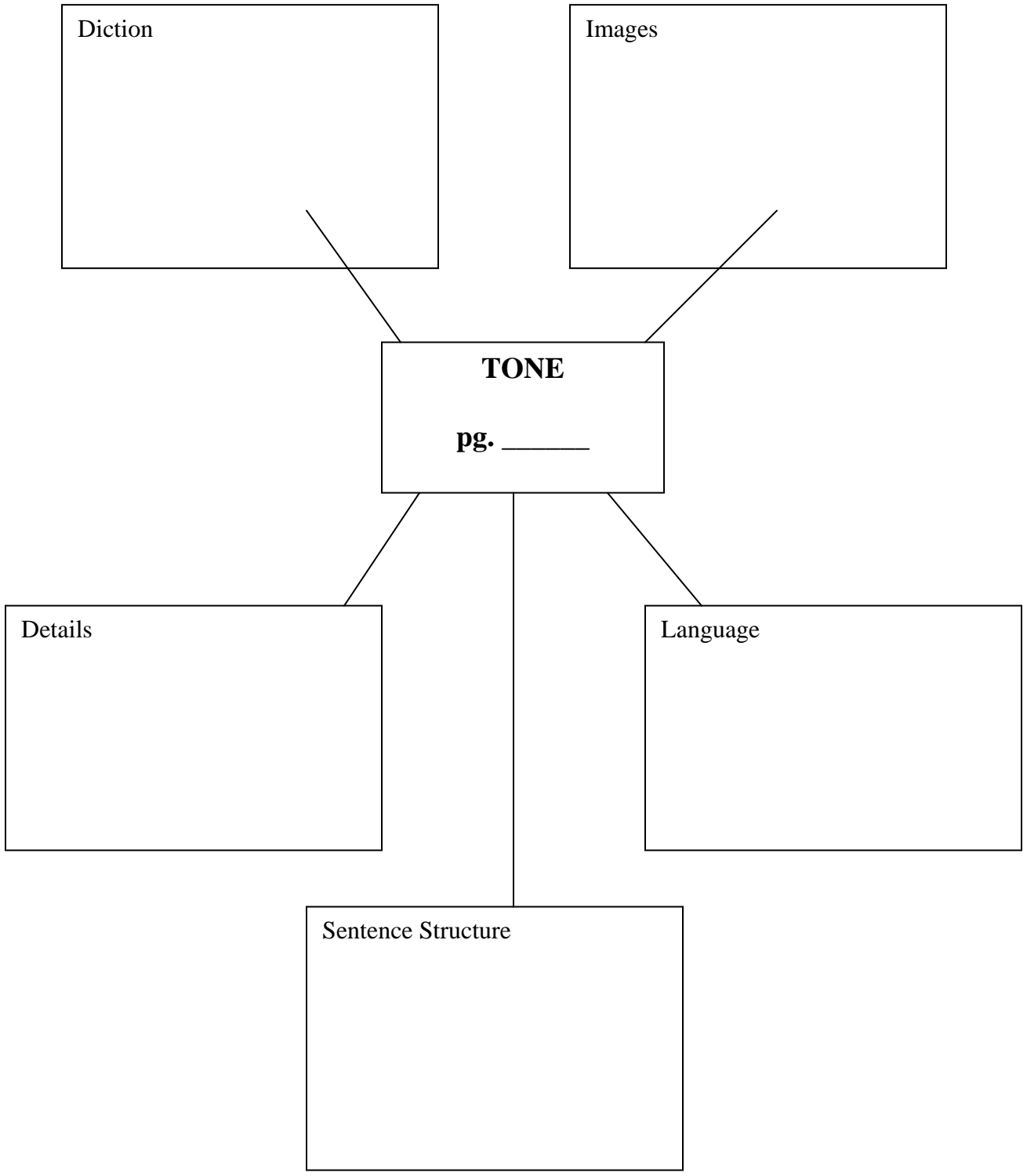
Henry James, Daisy Miller

At the little town of Vevey, in Switzerland, there is a particularly comfortable hotel. There are, indeed, many hotels, for the entertainment of tourists is the business of the place, which, as many travelers will remember, is seated upon the edge of a remarkably blue lake--a lake that it behooves every tourist to visit. The shore of the lake presents an unbroken array of establishments of this order, of every category, from the "grand hotel" of the newest fashion, with a chalk-white front, a hundred balconies, and a dozen flags flying from its roof, to the little Swiss pension of an elder day, with its name inscribed in German-looking lettering upon a pink or yellow wall and an awkward summerhouse in the angle of the garden.

Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants:

The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out flies. The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade, outside the building. It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes. It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went to Madrid.

'What should we drink?' the girl asked. She had taken off her hat and put it on the table.



Examples of Tone

(Look up the ones you don't know, because I'm going to be using these on multiple choice questions throughout the year.)

abstruse	jubilant
accusatory	judgmental
allusive (containing or characterized by indirect references)	lyrical
angry	malicious
apathetic	matter-of-fact
apologetic	mocking
arrogant	morose
audacious	nostalgic
befuddled	objective
belligerent	obsequious
bitter	optimistic
bored	patronizing
callous	peaceful
candid	pessimistic
caustic	pitying
childish	poignant
choleric	pretentious
cold/distant	proud
complimentary	provocative
condescending	quizzical
contemptuous	reflective
conventional (lacking any originality, individuality, spontaneity)	restrained
critical	reticent
cynical	reverent
defiant	ribald
derisive	ridiculing
detached	righteous
didactic (instructive, preachy)	sanguine
disdainful	sarcastic
disparaging	sardonic
dramatic	seductive
dreamy	sentimental
earnest	sharp
erudite	shocking
fanciful	silly
forthright	sincere
frivolous	somber
giddy	urgent
haughty	vexed
hollow	vibrant
humorous	whimsical
impartial	zealous
incredulous	
indignant	
intimate	
irreverent	
joking	
jovial	