

## Standards Focus: Tone and Mood

### Chapters 1-4

**Tone** is the emotional quality of the words that the author has chosen. It is also the author's attitude and point of view toward a subject; it reflects the feelings of the writer, and can affect the emotional response of the reader to the story. While we have all heard, "Don't use that tone of voice with me!" a writer does not have the advantage of the sound of his voice to reveal the tone of the story. As we read the page, the author hopes that the words he has chosen and the way he has arranged those words will help us hear a voice in our heads, which affects our emotions. Tone can be formal, informal, humorous, serious, cynical, sentimental, personal, impersonal, casual, passionate, etc.

Very closely related to tone is mood. **Mood** is the atmosphere or emotional state created by a piece of literature. Mood is *usually* described in expressions of feeling and emotions, such as fear, anger, hatred, contentment, loneliness, confusion, happiness, excitement or jealousy, to name a few.

*Directions: Read the following passages from Chapters 1-4. Then using complete sentences, answer the questions that follow.*

#### Passage One: Chapter One

"He had never disobeyed the order to hide. Even as a toddler, barely able to walk in the backyard's tall grass, he had somehow understood the fear in his mother's voice. But on this day, the day they began taking the woods away, he hesitated. He took one extra breath of the fresh air, scented with clover and honeysuckle and—coming from far away—pine smoke. He laid his hoe down gently, and savored one last moment of feeling warm soil beneath his bare feet. He reminded himself, "I will never be allowed outside again. Maybe never again for as long as I live."

1. There are clearly two very different moods in this passage. One of the moods is created by the writer's use of sensory descriptive details. To what senses does the writer appeal? Which words or phrases are used to create this mood? What mood do you feel has been created?

---

---

---

---

2. What additional mood or feeling do you get when reading this passage? Which words or phrases in the passage contribute to the creation of this mood?

---

---

---

---

#### Passage Two: Chapter Two

"Once I started showing, I didn't go anywhere. That wasn't hard to do—where do I go anyway? I didn't let Matthew or Mark leave the farm, for fear they'd say something. I didn't even say anything about you in letters to my mother and sister. I wasn't really scared then. It was just superstition. I didn't want to brag. I thought I'd go to the hospital to give birth. I wasn't going to keep you secret forever. But then... Then they started running all that on TV about the Population Police, how the Population Police had ways of finding out everything, how they'd do anything to enforce the law."

3. The tone of the Passage Two is: \_\_\_\_\_
- a. cheerful
  - b. indifferent
  - c. flippant
  - d. justifying
4. Which word best captures the mood of the passage as a whole? \_\_\_\_\_
- a. calm
  - b. annoyance
  - c. restlessness
  - d. contentment

Passage Three: Chapter Three

“Are you *trying* to be discovered? Dad had bellowed at Luke just that morning, when he’d held the shade a few inches from the kitchen window and peeked out longingly....” “He grabbed Luke by the arm and jerked him back a good three feet. Freed from Luke’s grasp, the bottom of the shade banged against the windowsill.”

5. In this passage, the writer expects the reader to feel: \_\_\_\_\_
- a. happy that Luke’s father saved him from being seen
  - b. sorry for Luke’s father for having to watch over Luke and keep him out of harm’s way
  - c. respect for Luke’s father
  - d. mad that Luke’s father is so angry, cold, and rough with Luke
6. Through which words is the mood of the passage best revealed? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- 

Passage Four: Chapter Four

**(a)** “Luke, honey? Can you eat sitting on the bottom step there? Dad thinks—I mean, it’s not safe anymore to have you in the kitchen. You can still eat with us, and talk to us and all, but you’ll be...over here....” **(b)** His chair wasn’t even in the kitchen anymore. For awhile, Luke watched Dad, Mother, Matthew, and Mark eating in silence, a complete family of four. Once, he cleared his throat, ready to protest again. *You can’t do this—it’s not fair— Then he choked back the words, unspoken.* They were only trying to protect him. What could he do? Resolutely, Luke stuck his fork in the pile of scrambled eggs.... He ate the whole plateful of food without tasting any of it.

- 7**(a)**. This part of the passage most clearly reveals a \_\_\_\_\_ tone.
- a. suspicious
  - b. formal
  - c. passionate
  - d. sympathetic

8. In this passage, the author uses tone to make the story more: \_\_\_\_\_
- a. dramatic
  - b. confusing
  - c. predictable
  - d. adventurous

- 7**(b)**. This part of the passage most clearly reveals a \_\_\_\_\_ tone.
- a. suspicious
  - b. formal
  - c. passionate
  - d. sympathetic