

Audience, Tone, and Purpose

When writing anything, whether it is an essay, poem, or novel, *how* you say something is just as important as *what* you say.

It is essential to know who will be reading your essay and why in order to determine which words to use and how to arrange the path of your essay. Here are some terms to review:

- **Audience** is the person or people who will be reading your essay
 - Even before you write one word in the planning stages, ask yourself:
 - What do my readers know about my topic?
 - What will they want to know about my topic?
 - What level of language is most appropriate for this particular audience?
- **Tone** is *how* something is said in a piece of writing
 - Once you have determined your audience, you must decide on the tone of your essay
 - Your word choice can be divided into five levels:
 1. *very informal*—like you talk to your friends
 2. *informal*—like you talk to your parent or guardian
 3. *formal*—like you talk to your teacher
 4. *more formal*—like you talk to the principal or your boss
 5. *highly formal*—like you would talk to a college professor or the President
 - Generally, the tone of your essay should be a 3, 4 or 5
- **Purpose** is your reason for writing
 - to entertain
 - to persuade
 - to analyze
 - to describe

Directions: For each of the examples below, identify the tone according to the scale above. Then, modify the sentence(s) to fit the intended audience. An example has been done for you.

Ex. *Audience:* the President of the United States

"So, Mr. President, if I see a change soon, and my homies do too, then we definitely gotta give you props."

Tone: 1

Modified Tone: "Mr. President, my colleagues and I would like to sincerely thank you for your work with our organization. Thanks to you, we look forward to earning the prestige our company deserves."

1. *Audience:* your teacher

"It ain't fair to make kids go to school. Like, I could learn so much by just working at, like, the mall, or something like that. It is totally stupid to make us do that."

Tone: _____

Modified: _____

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2. *Audience:* your parent or guardian

"A good friendship has 3 main things. One, you have to have trust. Don't nobody wanna to be friends with a liar."

Tone: _____

Modified: _____

3. *Audience:* your best friend

"In fact, it is essential that we educate ourselves in the phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax of words in order to better our vocabulary and strengthen our command of the English language."

Tone: _____

Modified: _____

4. *Audience:* your principal

"It's so not fair that I can't go out with my friends. It's not like we are doing bad stuff or anything. I totally hate being the youngest."

Tone: _____

Modified: _____

5. *Audience:* your boss

"So, if you want to get us working harder, Mister, then you better put a soda machine in the break room, or else you gonna be sorry!"

Tone: _____

Modified: _____
