Analyzing Tone in News Stories

Objective

Analyze the impact of an author's tone on article's meaning and message.

ELA Common Core Anchor Standard

- <u>CCSS ELA R.4:</u> Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Connect

Look at the following news headlines, and identify the emotion you associate with each.

- *Dark Days Ahead*

- *Historic Win for Candidate*

- *Flying Fish Makes Waves*

Tone in News Stories

On the previous slide, you may have noticed that the language of the headlines conveyed a range of emotions, from lighthearted to serious and foreboding.

These feelings relate to the concept of tone, which is the author's attitude toward the subject.

Tone is an important thing to consider when evaluating a news source. You will want to ask yourself:

- Does the tone suit the subject and purpose?
- Does the author use a particular tone to persuade? Is it effective?

Analyzing Tone

When analyzing tone, look for patterns in the author's diction, or word choice.

Notice words that repeat similar ideas and refer to the article's key points. Consider the words' connotations, or associations.

- Are they mainly positive or negative?
- What specific feelings do they convey?

If we look at the headlines from earlier, a word like "dark" conveys a negative, serious tone. On the other hand, "historic win" indicates a more positive tone, one that conveys hope and celebration.

Practice

Use Mucktracker to search for a trending or controversial news topic. Choose three articles that have differing views.

- In the comment box for each article, identify words that evoke a particular connotation, or emotional association. Then, explain the tone and whether it is appropriate for the article. Does the tone reveal any bias, or distract from the article?
- Use the matrix organizer to plot negative stories on the left side and positive tone on the right. Place the stories where they belong in terms of tone.

Extension: Choose a gif or emoji that best matches the tone of each article. Link to this gif in the comment box.

Launch Mucktracker

Wrap-Up

- When looking at news sources, it is important to consider the author's tone, or attitude toward the subject.

- Did you find a similar tone in the stories you saw in your search?

- Why do you think different stories use different tones?