**TONE WORDS**

**Positive Tone/Attitude Words**

Amiable Consoling Friendly Playful

Amused Content Happy Pleasant

Appreciative Dreamy Hopeful Proud

Authoritative Ecstatic Impassioned Relaxed

Benevolent Elated Jovial Reverent

Brave Elevated Joyful Romantic

Calm Encouraging Jubilant Soothing

Cheerful Energetic Lighthearted Surprised

Cheery Enthusiastic Loving Sweet

Compassionate Excited Optimistic Sympathetic

Complimentary Exuberant Passionate Vibrant

Confident Fanciful Peaceful Whimsical

**Negative Tone/Attitude Words**

Accusing Choleric Furious Quarrelsome

Aggravated Coarse Harsh Shameful

Agitated Cold Haughty Smooth

Angry Condemnatory Hateful Snooty

Apathetic Condescending Hurtful Superficial

Arrogant Contradictory Indignant Surly

Artificial Critical Inflammatory Testy

Audacious Desperate Insulting Threatening

Belligerent Disappointed Irritated Tired

Bitter Disgruntled Manipulative Uninterested

Boring Disgusted Obnoxious Wrathful

Brash Disinterested Outraged

Childish Facetious Passive

**Humor-Irony-Sarcasm Tone/Attitude Words**

Amused Droll Mock-heroic Sardonic

Bantering Facetious Mocking Satiric

Bitter Flippant Mock-serious Scornful

Caustic Giddy Patronizing Sharp

Comical Humorous Pompous Silly

Condescending Insolent Quizzical Taunting

Contemptuous Ironic Ribald Teasing

Critical Irreverent Ridiculing Whimsical

Cynical Joking Sad Wry

Disdainful Malicious Sarcastic

**Sorrow-Fear-Worry Tone/Attitude Words**

Aggravated Embarrassed Morose Resigned

Agitated Fearful Mournful Sad

Anxious Foreboding Nervous Serious

Apologetic Gloomy Numb Sober

Apprehensive Grave Ominous Solemn

Concerned Hollow Paranoid Somber

Confused Hopeless Pessimistic Staid

Dejected Horrific Pitiful Upset

Depressed Horror Poignant

Despairing Melancholy Regretful

Disturbed Miserable Remorseful

**Neutral Tone/Attitude Words**

Admonitory Dramatic Intimate Questioning

Allusive Earnest Judgmental Reflective

Apathetic Expectant Learned Reminiscent

Authoritative Factual Loud Resigned

Baffled Fervent Lyrical Restrained

Callous Formal Matter-of-fact Seductive

Candid Forthright Meditative Sentimental

Ceremonial Frivolous Nostalgic Serious

Clinical Haughty Objective Shocking

Consoling Histrionic Obsequious Sincere

Contemplative Humble Patriotic Unemotional

Conventional Incredulous Persuasive Urgent

Detached Informative Pleading Vexed

Didactic Inquisitive Pretentious Wistful

Disbelieving Instructive Provocative Zealous

**Try combining words to get a more precise description of tone as in these examples:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| cautious speculation | dramatic revelation | philosophical resignation |
| weary resignation | unqualified endorsement | apologetic approval |
| analytic objectivity | tolerant acceptance | grudging admiration |
| unalloyed suspicion | gentle mockery | lofty indifference |
| excited enthusiasm | indulgent tolerance | fascinated curiosity |
| cautious skepticism | disapproving dismissal | politically offensive |
| delightfully sentimental | morally admirable | carelessly irrelevant |
| deep despair | pretended indifference | casual indifference |
| calm assurance | apprehensive resolve | excited expectation |
| unqualified appreciation | fundamental dissatisfaction | apathetic acceptance |
| violent indignation | apologetic regret | self-righteous pomposity |
| awe-struck fascination | affectionate delight | momentary doubt |
| solemn apprehension | flippant sarcasm | skeptical suspicion |
| aloof disinterest | sentimental regret | disguised irony |

Tone Continuum

For this exercise, we will investigate how we can use the words to describe the degrees of tone. Too often, when given something to read and determine tone, we rely heavily on imprecise words like “happy,” “sad,” “neutral,” etc. Not only can we find words that are more precise, but adjectives that we can choose also have varying degrees of intensity. For example, which is *more* happy – “amused” or “ecstatic”? Let’s think of *degrees* intensity on a continuum. According to *Merriam Webster*, a ***continuum***is “a coherent whole characterized as a collection, sequence, or progression of values or elements varying by minute degrees.”

Your task: Choose three “imprecise” words that you could use to label tone (you may not choose happy). For each word label a continuum with at least five more precise adjectives that range from less intense to most intense. You may be using the dictionary and thesaurus quite a bit to complete this. You may also use your Tone Word List. Be ready to defend your tone words’ placement on the continuum. See the example below:

Imprecise tone word: happy

 Pleased Cheerful Jovial Vibrant Exuberant

**LESS INTENSE MORE INTENSE**

Imprecise tone word:

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Imprecise tone word:

**LESS INTENSE MORE INTENSE**