

## Literary Tones and Styles

*Compiled By: Aparna Singh*

1	Abstract	theoretical without reference to specifics
2	Absurd	contrary to logic, but sometimes artistically viable
3	Accusatory	charging of wrong doing
4	Acerbic	harsh/ severe; bitter
5	Affected	assuming a false manner or attitude to impress others
6	Aggressive	forceful; tending towards unprovoked offensiveness, angry/indignant
7	Ambiguous	open to more than one interpretation/ doubtful or uncertain
8	Amused/Amusing	agreeable, pleasing, entertaining, cause pleasure
9	Analytical	inclined to examine things by studying their contents or parts
10	Anecdotal	involving short narratives of interesting events
11	Apathetic	emotionless; not interested/ concerned; indifferent; unresponsive
12	Apologetic	expressing remorse, regret, sorrow for having failed, injured, insulted or wronged another
13	Apprehensive	anxious, fearful, uneasy about the future
14	Archaic	in the style of an earlier period
15	Argumentative	type of discourse in which one debates a topic in a logical way
16	Arrogant	having of displaying a sense of overbearing self-worth or importance
17	Atmosphere	the pervasive mood or tone of a literary work.
18	Attitude	the author's viewpoint regarding his subject matter. attitude can usually be detected in author's tone.
19	Audacious	fearless, often recklessly daring, bold
20	Awe	solemn wonder
21	Bantering	good-humored, playful
22	Baroque	a grand and exuberantly ornamental style
23	Belligerent	aggressively hostile; bellicose
24	Biased	favoring one thing/person/group over another for personal reasons.
25	Bizarre	unusually strange or odd
26	Bland	non-disturbing, unemotional, uninteresting
27	Bombastic	pretentious and pompous
28	Breezy	quick-paced, but sometimes superficial
29	Callous	unfeeling; insensitive to feelings of others

30	Candid	unprejudiced, impartial, open & sincere
31	Caustic	intense use of sarcasm; stinging; biting; acerbic
32	Childish	immature (when applied to adults or writing)
33	Choleric	hot-tempered, easily angered
34	Cinematic	having the qualities of a motion picture
35	Classical	formal, enduring, and standard, adhering to certain traditional methods
36	Classification	organization wherein the writer explains the relationships between terms or concepts
37	Colloquial	characteristic or ordinary and informal conversation
38	Comic	humorous, light, funny (there are many levels)
39	Commiserating	feeling/ expressing sorrow for; empathizing with; pity
40	Condescending	patronizing; showing/implying patronizing descent from dignity/ superiority
41	Confessional	characterized by personal admissions of faults
42	Confused	unable to think with clarity or act with intelligence
43	Connotation	the range of further associations that a word or phrase suggests in addition to its straightforward dictionary meaning.
44	Contemplative	studying, thinking, reflecting on an issue
45	Contemptuous	expressing contempt/ disdain ; showing or feeling that something is worthless or lacks respect
46	Contented	satisfied with things the way they are.
47	Convention	a device of style of subject matter so often used that it becomes a recognized means of expression.
48	Conventional	lacking spontaneity, originality and individuality
49	Convuluted	very complicated or involved (as in the case of sentences with many qualifiers, phrases, and clauses)
50	Critical	finding fault
51	Cynical	displaying a belief that people are always self-seeking and never altruistic in their actions
52	Decadent	marked by a decay in morals, values, and artistic standards
53	Denotation	the precise literal meaning of a word, without emotional associations or overtones.
54	Depressing	sad, gloomy (without any of the redeeming qualities of true tragedy)
55	Derisive	unkind and displaying contempt ; ridiculing, mocking
56	Detached	separated, disconnected, aloof or impartial
57	Detached	disinterested, unbiased, emotionally disconnected
58	Dialect	the version of a language spoken by people of a particular region or social group.
59	Dialogue	the conversation of two or more people as represented in writing.
60	Diatribes	violently bitter verbal attack

61	Diction	the choice of words used in a literary work
62	Didactic	author attempts to educate or instruct the reader
63	Diffident	reserved in manner; timid
64	Digression	a portion of a written work that interrupts or pauses the development of the theme or plot.
65	Discursive	moving pointlessly from one subject to another; rambling
66	Disdainful	scornful
67	Disparaging	speak slightingly; depreciating; belittling
68	Dogmatic	asserting opinions in an arrogant manner; imperious; dictatorial
69	Dramatic Irony	a situation in which the audience knows more about the character's situation than the character does.
70	Dreamlike	having the characteristics of a dream
71	Earnest	intense, a sincere state of mind
72	Earthy	realistic, rustic coarse, unrefined, instinctive, animalize
73	Effeminate	soft, delicate, unmanly
74	Elegiac	expressing sorrow for that which is irrecoverably past
75	Elegiac	expressing sorrow or lamentation
76	Emotional	much given to strong feelings
77	Emotional	easily affected by feelings actuated by experiencing love, hate, fear and the like
78	Epigraph	the use of a quotation at the beginning or a work that hints at its theme.
79	Epistolary	a novel written as a series of documents. the usual form is letters, although diary entries, newspaper clippings and other documents are sometimes used
80	Erudite	learned, polished, scholarly
81	Ethical	dealing with principles of morality; honest; righteous
82	Eulogistic	involving formal praise in speech or writing, usually in honor of someone dead
83	Euphemistic	substitution of mild, indirect or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh or blunt
84	Evocative	having the ability to call forth memories or other responses
85	Expository	type of discourse in which one explains or describes
86	Expressionistic	stressing the subjective and symbolic is art and literature
87	Facetious	amusing, but light, unserious, frivolous
88	Factual	real, provides facts
89	Fanciful	using the imagination
90	Farcical	humorous but in a light way, comedy with high exaggeration
91	Fatalistic	believing that everything that happens is destined and therefore out of the hands of the individual

92	Flamboyant	conspicuously bold or colorful
93	Flashback	a way of presenting scenes or incidents that took place before the opening scene.
94	Flippant	disrespectful levity or casualness, pert.
95	Forthright	directly frank without hesitation
96	Gloomy	darkness, sadness, rejection
97	Grandiose	more complicated/ elaborated than necessary; pompous
98	Haughty	proud and vain to the point of arrogance
99	Horrific	terrifying
100	Humanistic	evincing keen interest in human affairs, nature, welfare, values
101	Humorous	funny and amusing
102	Hyperbole	a bold overstatement or extravagant exaggeration used either for serious or comic effect.
103	Idiomatic	peculiar to or characteristic of a given language
104	Illustration	organization wherein the topic sentence is stated and then followed by the details
105	Imagery	language that evokes sensation as opposed to an abstract idea.
106	Impartial	unprejudiced, not biased
107	Incendiary	causing strong feelings
108	Indignant	marked by anger; aroused by justice
109	Inference	a conclusion the reader can draw based upon details presented by the author.
110	Insolent	presumptuous and insulting in manner or speech, arrogant, disrespectful, rude, impertinent
111	Intimate	very familiar
112	Introspective	consider one's own internal state of feelings
113	Invective	direct denunciation or name-calling.
114	Irate	extremely angry, enraged
115	Irony	in its broadest sense, the incongruity or diff between reality and appearance
116	Irreverent	showing disrespect for things that are usually respected or revered
117	Jargon	the special language of a profession or group
118	Jovial	happy, jolly, full of good humor
119	Judgmental	authoritative and often having critical opinions
120	Juxtaposition	the side by side comparison of two or more object
121	Laudatory	praising; extolling; applauding
122	Local Color	the use of the physical setting, dialect, customs, and attitudes in a region
123	Lugubrious	mournful, dismal, gloomy, especially to an exaggerated or ludicrous degree

124	Lyrical	expressing a poet's inner feelings; emotional; full of images; song-like
125	Malapropism	the comic substitution of one word for another similar in sound but different in meaning
126	Malicious	purposely hurtful
127	Matter Of Fact	accepting of conditions; not fanciful or emotional
128	Metaphor	a direct comparison that does not use "like" or "as."
129	Metaphorical	having the characteristics of melodrama in which emotions are plot are exaggerated and characterization is shallow
130	Mocking	treating with contempt or ridicule
131	Mood	the prevailing emotional attitude in a literary work
132	Morose	gloomy, sullen, sourly, despondent
133	Motivating	impelling; inciting
134	Mournful	sorrowful, sadness, melancholy
135	Mundane	ordinary or common, as in everyday matters ("his mind was filled with mundane matters")
136	Narrative Pace	the speed at which an author tells a story
137	Naturalistic	tending to present things in art and literature as they appear in nature or actuality
138	Nostalgic	inclined to long for or dwell on things of the past; sentimental
139	Objective	an unbiased view - able to leave personal judgments aside
140	Obsequious	fawning; showing servile complaisance; flattering; deferent ; polite and obedient in order to gain something
141	Ominous	menacing, threatening
142	Optimistic	hopeful, cheerful
143	Parody	a satirical imitation of something serious, such as a comic takeoff of Romeo and Juliet (the parody must have enough elements of the original for it to be recognized)
144	Patronizing	air of condescension; haughty; looking down upon
145	Pedantic	overly concerned with minute details or formalisms,
146	Pedestrian	lacking vitality, imagination, distinction
147	Personification	the attribute of human qualities to inanimate objects or abstract ideas.
148	Persuasive	intended or having the power to induce action or belief
149	Pessimistic	seeing the worst side of things
150	Philosophical	interested in the study of basic truths of existence and reality
151	Picturesque	strikingly expressive or vivid
152	Pious	having or displaying a reverence for god and religion; sometimes used pejoratively, when the display is excessive and overly righteous
153	Poetical	having the qualities of poetry, such as pleasing rhythms or images

154	Poignant	affecting or moving the emotions
155	Pompous	displaying one's importance in an exaggerated way; sometimes this quality is found in comic characters
156	Populist	egalitarian; pertaining to the characteristics of common people/ working class
157	Provincial	limited in perspective; narrow and self centered
158	Provocative	inciting; stimulating; irritating; vexing
159	Prurient	preoccupied with lewd and lustful thoughts
160	Pseudonym	pen name, alias
161	Puritanical	strict or severe in matters of morality
162	Quizzical	odd, eccentric, amusing
164	Realistic	inclined to represent things as they really are
165	Reflective	illustrating innermost thoughts and emotions
166	Regretful	sorrowful because of what is lost, gone, or done
167	Restrained	held-back, deprived, checked
168	Reverent	treating a subject with honor and respect
169	Ribald	offensive in speech or gesture
170	Ridiculing	slightly contemptuous banter; making fun of
171	Romantic	fanciful; impractical; unrealistic; extravagant; exaggerated
172	Sanguineous	optimistic, cheerful
173	Sarcasm	harsh cutting personal remarks not necessarily ironic
174	Sarcastic	harsh, bitter derision; taunting; sneering; cutting remarks
175	Sardonic	scornfully and bitterly sarcastic
176	Satire	any form of literature that blends ironic humor and wit with criticism. seeks to correct through ridicule
177	Satirical	ironical; taunting; human folly held up to scorn/ derision/ ridicule ; ridiculing to show weakness in order to make a point or to teach
178	Sentimental	resulting from or colored by emotion rather than reason or realism
179	Simile	a comparison using "like" or "as."
180	Sincere	without deceit or pretense, genuine
181	Situational Irony	the contrast between what is intended or expected and what actually occurs.
182	Skeptical	doubtful, apprehensive in agreement
183	Solemn	deeply earnest, tending towards sad reflection
184	Soliloquy	a speech delivered while the speaker is alone, calculated to inform the audience of the character's thoughts.

185	Speculative	theoretical rather than practical; thoughtful; reflective; hypothetical
186	Stream-Of-Consciousness	a technique that allows the reader to see the continuous chaotic flow of half formed thoughts
187	Subjective	relying on one's own inner impressions, as opposed to being objective
188	Surrealistic	stressing imagery and the subconscious and sometimes distorting ordinary ideas in order to arrive at artistic truths
189	Technical	using terminology or treating subject matter in a manner peculiar to a particular field, as a writer or a book
190	Terse	effectively concise, brief
191	Timorous	funny, witty
192	Tone	the reflection in a work of the author's attitude toward his or her subject
193	Trite	lacking power to evoke interest through overuse or repetition; hackneyed
194	Turgid	excessively ornate or complex in style or language; grandiloquent
195	Unity	the quality of oneness in a literary work
196	Urbane	sophisticated, socially polished
197	Veneration	admiration, wonder
198	Verbal Irony	a contrast between what is said and what is meant
199	Vexed	distressed, annoyed, perplexed
200	Victorian	prudish, stuffy, and puritanical (qualities associated with queen victoria's reign)
201	Vitriolic	full of anger and hatred
202	Vituperative	cruel and angry criticism
203	Voice	the sense a written work conveys to a reader of the writer's attitude, personality and character
204	Whimsical	odd, strange, fantastic
205	Wry	devious in course or purpose; misdirected