

Literary Terms & Devices

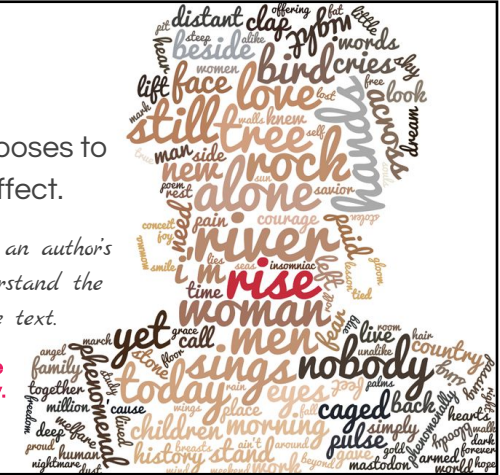
How authors convey their message using language

Diction

The words a writer chooses to create a specific effect.

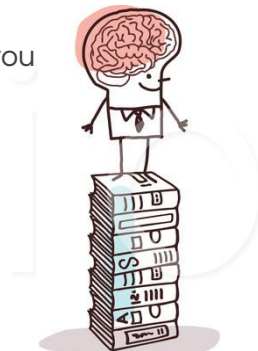
As readers, we can examine an author's diction to more closely understand the author's intentions in the text.

Diction is shaped by words that are exact, concrete, and carry imagery.



Connotation vs. Denotation

Write down as many synonyms as you can think of for the word "smart."



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Connotation vs. Denotation

CONNOTATION refers to a meaning that is implied by a word apart from the thing which it describes explicitly. Words carry cultural and emotional associations or meanings in addition to their literal meanings or denotations.

Words may have positive or negative connotations that depend upon the social, cultural and personal experiences of individuals.

In literary works, we find it a common practice with writers to deviate from the dictionary meanings of words to create fresher ideas and images.

DENOTATION refers to the literal or dictionary meaning of a word.

Connotation vs. Denotation



CHILD

Kid
Youngster
Brat
Little One
Small Fry
Urchin
Crumbsnatcher
Juvenile
Minor
Orphan

Tone

“Tone is detected through style, diction.”

The author's attitude towards the subject or events.

Tone

It was A LOW, DULL, QUICK SOUND -- MUCH SUCH A SOUND AS A WATCH MAKES WHEN ENVELOPED IN COTTON. I gasped for breath, and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly, more vehemently but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why WOULD they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men, but the noise steadily increased. O God! What COULD I do? I foamed -- I raved -- I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder -- louder -- louder!

The Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe

NERVOUS

GUILTY

INSANE

Tone

There was a steaming mist in all the hollows, and it had roamed in its forlornness up the hill, like an evil spirit, seeking rest and finding none. A clammy and intensely cold mist, it made its slow way through the air in ripples that visibly followed and overspread one another, as the waves of an unwholesome sea might do. It was dense enough to shut out everything from the light of the coach-lamps but these its own workings, and a few yards of road; and the reek of the labouring horses steamed into it, as if they had made it all.

OMINOUS

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

MYSTERIOUS

SECRETIVE

EVIL

TONE WORDS

- matter-of-fact
- anxious
- detached
- determined
- apprehensive
- musing
- assertive
- nostalgic
- hesitant
- hopeful
- optimistic
- humorous
- bold
- impassioned
- pensive
- earnest
- incredulous
- persuasive
- candid
- philosophical
- thoughtful
- optimistic
- carefree
- elevated
- playful
- informative
- enthusiastic
- inquisitive
- excited
- proud
- comical
- provocative
- reflective
- ironic
- reminiscent
- confident
- know-it-all
- resigned
- strong
- wondering
- sincere
- worried
- skeptical
- sarcastic
- solemn
- unapologetic
- upbeat
- urgent
- sentimental
- whimsical
- contemplative
- forceful
- formal
- agitated
- conversational
- forthright
- light
- critical
- frank
- lighthearted
- frantic
- lively
- amused
- friendly
- animated

*Examples of
tone in a story
include just
about any
adjective you
can imagine.*