

# Critical Reading Skills

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## INTRODUCTION

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In the previous Language Skill courses, you have done many reading activities. In doing them you have acquired the basic skills of reading. These skills enabled you to understand what the author says, and to comprehend the literal and factual content of the text. For example, if asked "What is the text about?", you can answer this. Now, In the first module of Advanced Reading, you will learn critical reading skills, that is, the ability to read carefully, to evaluate ideas, and to judge the value of a text.

It is expected that after you have done this module you are able to: (1) identify tone (2) recognize bias (3) identify the author's purpose (4) evaluate the author's opinion.

Why do you have to master these skills? Why are basic reading skills like skimming and scanning not enough?

Because writers do not always say something directly, straightforwardly. By using certain words, description, facts, by arranging their ideas in a specific way, writers often mean more than what they actually say. The following illustration makes it clear why it is so important for you to have critical reading skills:

- Brenda : I think it is a good idea to stop the production of nuclear energy.  
 Ellen : I'm surprised! Yesterday you told me exactly the opposite: you insisted that the world was not in danger from nuclear energy. What made you change your mind?  
 Brenda : I read another pamphlet, and it gave me a real scare.  
 Ellen : But why do you believe the second pamphlet more then the first one? Because you read it later?  
 Brenda : I really don't know. I guess because this pamphlet just kept on emphasizing how much danger we are all in. Ellen: Come on! You have to read these things more critically.

*From: Reading for Results*

With the reading skills acquired in the earlier language skills courses, Brenda surely does not have any difficulty understanding the content of the pamphlets. But because the writers of the pamphlets have opposite opinions on the benefits and dangers of nuclear energy, Brenda is confused; she does not know who she should believe. She can not decide because she does not have the critical reading ability to evaluate what she reads.

If you look at some reading materials, such as advertisements, editorials, jokes, poems, book and movies reviews, very often you have to read carefully and then draw your own conclusions if you want to know what they really mean.

The ability to read critically is applicable in your academic work, in your future life as a teacher, and in your daily life as well. You will be more skillful in doing academic reading and writing assignments; you will be a better language teacher and can help your students with their reading and writing problems. And you will also be good in understanding various reading materials, e.g. contracts, announcements, reviews, literary pieces.

Acquiring critical reading skills need time, of course, particularly because it involves the learning of many sub skills. Seven of the most useful are discussed in this module within the following topics: (1) The author's opinion (2) Tone (3) Bias (4) The author's purpose.

Along with the discussions you will find many exercises which will give you practice in acquiring these skills. In working on the exercises, try not to make unnecessary mistakes. You will, therefore, work more easily if you follow these suggestions:

1. Read every part of the module carefully!
2. Use a dictionary and an encyclopedia to guide your understanding of difficult words and unfamiliar facts!
3. Apply what you have learnt to other reading materials, such as newspaper and magazine articles, ads, short stories, etc!
4. Discuss your work with your friends in small group sessions, and with your tutor!

**UNIT 1****Evaluating an Author's Opinion****A. JUSTIFIED VS UNJUSTIFIED OPINIONS**

In Unit 1 you will learn the skill to distinguish between statements of fact, non-fact, and opinion. This skill is very closely related to the skill you are about evaluating an author's opinion. It would even be more accurate to say, if you cannot distinguish between fact and opinion, you cannot evaluate an author's opinion.

In evaluating an author's opinion, we have to be able to say whether an author's opinion is justified or not. What is a justified opinion? Let's go back to a while to the meaning of opinion. As you have gathered from Unit 1, an opinion is a person's (author's) feeling, belief, attitude, or judgment on a certain subject. And if somebody states an opinion, he usually wants his listeners and readers to believe him, to agree with him, Right? If so, he must try to give good, acceptable and logical reasons for such an opinion. If he simply utters an opinion, but cannot give reasons for it, he will, of course, fail in making people believe him. But if he gives neat and relevant arguments in defending his attitude or belief, he might easily persuade his audience to be on his side. In this case we can say that his opinion is justified. In other words, an opinion is justified if the author has given his readers an number of facts to support his opinion and to convince the readers.

Is it important for us to be able to evaluate an author's opinion? Yes, very much so. If we don't have this skill we can be easily misled. If we are not critical. We can be tricked into believing a dangerous opinion. For example, the statement "The most important factor in becoming a success is luck, not effort." If you cannot evaluate this opinion you may believe it, and you might stop working hard. Therefore, watch out for statements of opinions that are not supported by facts. Such opinions are unjustified opinion, and we should be careful in interpreting them. The Exercise below will help you see the difference between justified and unjustified opinions. Have a try!

Ok, now let's analyze the following paragraph by answering the questions. First read the following pair of paragraph carefully. Each paragraph expresses an opinion.

### Paragraph 1

The National Bureau of Standards investigated the Hyatt Regency accident in Kansas City, where many people died when a skywalk collapsed. Through that investigation it was discovered that the original design of the skywalk had been changed during the construction of the building. As a result, the loads those structures could carry were greatly reduced. In addition, a second study by the International Conference of Building Officials concluded that the building inspection procedures at the time of construction were not adequate. Given the results of these two studies, I would make the following suggestion: the design of buildings, especially if they incorporate novel features and are used by large crowds, should be carefully examined and evaluated at all states of construction.

### Paragraph 2

We Americans like to brag about progress, but, in fact, life was better in the nineteenth century than it is in the twentieth. People were happier and more at peace with themselves. There just wasn't the same kind of anxiety and tension that there is today. If we had a chance, we would probably all get into a time machine and go backward in time, rather than forward. All of our highly touted technological progress has not brought us contentment.

*From:* Reading for Results

### Questions

1. What is the author's opinion in each paragraph?
2. Which one is justified, which is not?

Question 1 should be easy for you, because you have answered many similar questions in Unit 1. So, if in identifying the author's opinions you decided to state them more or less as follows:

- a. "From now on, buildings with new features that are to be used by large crowds should be carefully evaluated through the whole process of construction" (Paragraph 1).
- b. "Life was much better in America a hundred years ago than it is now." (Paragraph 2), you have done a good job. In Paragraph 1 the last sentence is the topic sentence, and in Paragraph 2 the first one is. Both these topic sentences contain the author's opinions. They are opinions because they are statements that cannot be proven: in Paragraph 1 the

sentence contain the author's suggestion (suggestion, should); in Paragraph 2 it is the author's value judgment (... better than ...) The other sentences in the Paragraph are used to support the topic sentences, at the same time also intended to support the author's opinion.

Now we come to question 2. How did you do on that? You are not sure? All right, let's look at Paragraph 1. The author says that there should be a more careful examination and evaluation in building construction. He knows that his readers might not agree with him, because may be they are satisfied with the existing examination system. In order to convince them that he is right, he gives the readers some verifiable facts: he says that the current system has caused accidents (Hyatt Regency in Kansas City). This is his way of showing us that his opinion is justified. And after reading all the facts we have to agree that his opinion is justified.

Is the opinion in the paragraph also justified? The author believes that life was much better one hundred years ago than it is today. Does she give us facts to support her belief? Not even one! She might have mentioned the lower divorce rate figures a hundred years ago, and that is why she believes people were happier or she could have said the rapid development of industry and technology has made people more competitive, and that's why there is more tension and anxiety nowadays. But she doesn't say this; she simply presents her opinions, the remaining sentences are only a repetition of her opinion, not a support. Still she expects us to believe her. Therefore, her opinion is unjustified.

If you are still uncertain about how to differentiate between justified and unjustified opinions, exercise will help you develop your judgment.

### **Example**

The animals used in laboratory research are treated in a scandalously abusive fashion. In their pursuit of cures for human diseases, scientists do not seem to care how they treat their animal subjects. Considered inferior beings, animals can be tortured, starved, even killed, and no one cares. After all, the mistreatment is done in the name of medical progress for human beings. Because animals have no language to voice their pain, we ignore it and let their suffering continue.

*The answer is : U (unjustified )*

The 1979 book *Nim*, written by the psychologist Herbert Terrace, should be required reading for all those people who are convinced that chimpanzees can use sign language to "talk." It should be required because it places in serious doubt the notion that animals can "talk" like human beings. After four years of teaching *Nim*, a baby male chimp named for the linguist Noam-Chomsky, Terrace wrote an account of his experiments, and that account does not support popular claims for animal language. As Terrace points out in the book, *Nim*, by himself, seldom used any sign language at all. Instead, he confined himself to responding to his trainers. Fifty percent of the time his signs imitated part or all of his trainer's original signs. In addition, whenever he began to string together two or three words, he would become confused. He never developed the ability to construct sentences. (From *Reading for Result*)

*The answer is : J (justified)*

### **Explanation**

In the first paragraph the writer states his opinion that experimental animals are very badly treated. This paragraph is similar to Paragraph 2 on the previous page: it states an opinion but it does not give any facts to support that opinion. Every sentence after the first is just a repetition of how mistreated laboratory animals are. For this reason a **U** is put in the blank line.

The author of the second paragraph believes that the book *Nim* is doubtful about the ability of chimps to use sign language to talk like human beings. However, she does not simply state her opinion and expect people to believe her. She also provides us with facts from the book to justify her opinion. Therefore, a **J** is put in the blank line.

Now judge the authors of the following paragraph in the same manner!

- a) Transcendental meditation is a simple technique that can improve the quality of life. To practice TM, as it is commonly called, individuals just have to close their eyes and concentrate on a mantra, a word or sound used to focus concentration. Although meditators can let any and all thoughts enter their minds, they must always come back to their point of concentration, the mantra. When that simple procedure is followed twice a day for twenty minutes, meditators report some very beneficial effects. For example, in one study, conducted by Kenneth Pelletier at the

University of California, those trained in meditation indicated an increased ability to concentrate and remember, while L.C. Doucette of McMaster University in Canada has shown that university students practicing TM experienced less anxiety than other subjects in the study. Recently, the New York Times reported that transcendental meditation was being put to use in the men's prison of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and prison authorities have noted a reduction in violence as well as decreased use of drugs and alcohol among prisoners practicing meditation.

- b) A recent study by the Rand Corporation estimate that American teenagers watch at least five hours of television per day. Teen-agers should not be allowed to watch this much television; it's not good for them. Accustomed to the bright images of television, teen-agers will lose interest in books and reading. They won't want to do any homework because compared to television, homework will be too boring. It is not accompanied by enough pictures, and there isn't any music. If this trend toward more and more television viewing continues, the future generation will not be able to read, write, or think.

*From: Reading for Results*

- c) Knowledge and love are both indefinitely extensible: therefore, however good a life may be, a better can be imagined. Neither love without knowledge, nor knowledge without love can produce a good life. In the Middle Ages, when pestilence appeared in country, holy men advised the population to assemble in churches and pray for deliverance: the result was that the infection spread with extraordinary rapidity among the crowded masses of supplicants. This was an example of love without knowledge. The late War afforded an example of knowledge without love. In each case, the result was death on a large scale.

- d) I quite agree with the observation that the longer one stays in school the more salary he is likely to receive. The 1990 Census Report tells us that in 1989, of all men 25 years and older, those who complete eight years of grade school, received a median income of \$25330. Those with four years of high school received a median income of \$32850. Those who stuck out four years of college received a median of \$44070.

*From: Toward Reading Comprehension*

## B. RELEVANT VS IRRELEVANT FACTS

Just now you have been engaged in activities that taught you how to judge an author's opinion. The main focus of the activities was on how to distinguish between justified and unjustified opinions. You have learned that justified opinions are opinions supported by verifiable facts, while unjustified opinions are not accompanied by facts. In other words, only if an author gives facts to support his opinion, can we say that his opinion is justified.

But you should be careful: it is possible that even if an author gives supporting facts, his opinion can still be considered unjustified. This can happen if he has chosen the wrong facts. Wrong facts are those that are not related to the opinion stated; wrong facts are irrelevant facts. If an author provides his opinion with irrelevant facts, his opinion remains unjustified. The example below will make this clear:

It is just not fair for smokers to be allowed to smoke when nonsmokers are present; there should be more regulations forbidding people to indulge in smoking if nonsmokers are present. In a recent study, the American Cancer Association has reaffirmed and strengthened its original position on smoking cigarettes. There is a clear-cut link between smoking cigarettes and the incidence of lung cancer. In addition, smokers are three times more likely to get heart disease and emphysema. (From Reading for Result)

In this text the writer expresses his opinion that smokers should be prohibited to smoke if nonsmokers are around, because it is not fair to the nonsmokers. He gives us the fact that smoking is dangerous for the smoker's health, and this danger is confirmed by the American Cancer Association. In other words, the fact he gives is scientifically proven right. But is this fact relevant? His opinion talks about the nonsmoker's danger, not the smoker's. So, his fact, although true, does not support his opinion. Therefore, we can say that his opinion is not justified.

In the following Exercise, you are to evaluate a number of paragraphs. Decide whether the opinions stated are justified or not. In doing this ask yourself:

1. What is the author's opinion?
2. Does the author support his opinions with verifiable facts?
3. Are the supporting facts relevant?



## EXERCISES

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### Exercise 1

Each of the following paragraphs contains a topic sentence that expresses a definite opinion. Underline that sentence. Then on the blank line that follows, put a **J** for justified, if you think the author provides facts. Put a **U** for unjustified, if you think the author has not given any facts.

### Exercise 2

Read the following texts carefully. Underline the sentence that states the author's opinion. On the blank line, put a **J for justified**, if you think the author presented relevant facts. Put a **U for unjustified**, if you think the author has not given any facts or has given only irrelevant ones.

1. All over the country, union membership is down, and the percentage of successful strikes has diminished. Unions now win fewer battles with management each year than they did twenty years ago. In a recent article in the New York Times, union organizers said that they were having trouble recruiting new members. During interviews with prospective members, they all reported hearing the same comment: people no longer believe that unions can deliver on their promise to protect work interests. The signs are clear: at the present time, American unions are undergoing a serious crisis.
2. Although my running friends no doubt disagree, I still have to make my position clear. If you want to be healthy, walk, don't run. In a recent study, the Journal of Sports Medicine reported that 40% of all amateur runners experience some form of injury. In some cases, the injuries were relatively minor, like twisted ankles or shin splints. But in other cases, they were serious, with runner reporting broken arms and legs from falls taken while running on pavement. These injuries do not happen to people who walk rather than run for exercise. Similar studies which were done on people who walk a fifteen-minute mile twice a day report almost no injuries of any kind. The exceptions were those walkers who had been chased and bitten by dogs. However, even that kind of injury cannot be linked to the Exercise of walking as running injuries can, and that just proves my point: walking is better for you than, running.

*From: Reading for Results*

3. The chemist is essential in our life today. Aviation uses lightweight aluminum, magnesium, high-octane gasoline - all processed or created by the chemist-The automotive industry uses plastics, improved gasoline and oils, improved rubber, and other creations or discoveries of the chemist. The clothing industry uses rayon nylon, dacron, orlon all chemically-made fibers. From the chemist, too, come dyestuffs. Farming depends on the chemist for many fertilizers and insecticides. Medicine has received the miracle drugs and synthetic vitamins from the chemist. Our national security, our future power resources, and our advance in other scientific fields, such as geology and biology, depend in large part on our progress in nuclear chemistry. The housewife, too, has gifts from the chemist - among them foam rubber and dacron pillows, detergents for cleaning, plastic for furniture and dishes, and cosmetics to protect her beauty. Indeed, the chemist today is irreplaceable.

*From: Reading for Results*

### *Key to Exercises*

#### Exercise 1

#### **Explanation**

- a) J Opinion : Transcendental meditation is a simple technique that can improve the quality of life. It is supported by verifiable facts.
- b) U Opinion : Tee-pagers should not be allowed to watch this much television: it's not good for them. No facts given; instead additional opinions are stated.
- c) J Opinion : Neither love without knowledge, nor knowledge without love can produce a good life. It is supported by verifiable facts: pestilence in the Middle Ages and the disaster of World War II.
- d) J Opinion : I quite agree with the observation that the longer one stays in school the more salary he is likely to receive. It is supported by the Census fact.

## Exercise 2

1) *U*

Opinion: at the present time, American unions are undergoing a serious crisis. No facts are given to justify that unions win fewer battles.

2) *U*

Opinion: If you want to be healthy, walk, don't run. The author gives irrelevant facts. The facts support that running causes more accidents than walking, not that it less healthy.

3) *J*

Opinion: The chemist is essential in our life today. All the facts the author presents are verifiable and relevant.

**SUMMARY**

In order not to be misled by an author's opinion, we should have the ability to evaluate it. If we are sure whether or not an opinion is justified, we will not be tricked into believing it. An opinion is justified if the author provides verifiable, relevant facts to support his opinion. If no facts are given, or the facts presented are either not proven true or irrelevant, the opinion is unjustified.

The skill in evaluating an author's opinion is one step further into the mastery of critical reading skills. Judge what you have learned by doing the following form test.

**FORMATIVE TEST 1****Test 1**

Read the following text carefully. Then, answer the questions provided at the end of the text.

**The Great American Nose**

One of the strangest phenomena you will encounter in the United States is that of the Great American Nose. The American Nose may look like yours or mine, but in reality it's not. Something seems to have been left out of the American Nose. It is incapable of degrees of differentiation of odors. Whereas most of humanity is capable of

smelling a wide range of odors, the American Nose can smell only two good odors and bad odors, right odors and wrong odors. Of course the American Nose prefers good odors and right odors. It is quite virtuous, therefore. It must have inherited all its genes from its Puritan ancestors.

After a careful study of the matter, I have come to the conclusion that there are only three good odors, and that all the rest are bad odors. The three good odors - artificial flowers, artificial lemons, and artificial spices,- are used to mask all of the bad odors. Bad odors emanate from bathrooms, from garbage cans, from moldy old things, and most of all, from human bodies. All natural odors are bad odors, as you can see, and there are hundreds of American products in the three good odors designed to mask all the bad ones.

Wherever you find the Great American Nose, a hand holding a can to spray, a deodorant to roll on, an air freshener to stick up, or a cleaning solution to wipe on will not be far behind. Does the kitchen great amounts of artificial spice? Does the closet smell moldy? Spray it with odor of roses. Does a person smell sweaty? Roll on quantities of deodorant with scent of jasmine. Does the bathroom smell like a bathroom? Wipe down everything with scent of lemon cleaner.

You may think Americans are an independent lot, but they are not. They can't go anywhere without extra bathroom paper, disinfectant sprays and cleaners. I sometimes have the feeling that if the American civilization ever falls into decay, it will be because the American Nose could not tolerate the smell of it. It's remarkable to me that with such a handicap as the Great American Nose, Americans have survived this long...

*From: 25 Strategies*

### Questions

- 1) What is the author's main opinion? State it in your own words. Then, underline the sentence(s) in the text that contains this opinion.
- 2) Do you think he has supported his opinion with facts?
- 3) a. If he has, are his facts verifiable and relevant?  
b. If he hasn't, how did he try to defend his opinion?

## Test 2

If you read the following text carefully, you will notice that it contains two opinions. Comment on what you think about these opinions by doing the accompanying questions.

Teaching is supposedly to be a professional activity requiring long and complicated training as well as official certification. The act of teaching is looked upon as a flow of knowledge from a higher source to an empty container. The student's role is one of receiving information; the teacher's role is one of sending it. There is a clear distinction assumed between one who is assumed to know (and therefore not capable of being wrong) and another, usually younger person, who is supposed not to know. However, teaching need not be province of a special group of people nor need be looked upon as a technical skill. Teaching can be more like guiding and assisting than forcing information into a supposedly empty head. If you have a certain skill you should be able to share it with someone. You do not have to get certified to convey what you know to someone else or to help them in their attempts to teach themselves. All of us, from the very youngest children to the oldest members of our cultures should come to realize our own potential as teacher. We can share what we know, however little it might be, with someone who has need of that knowledge or skill.

*From: Reading How To*

## Questions

- 1) What is the writer's opinion, what does he believe? State your answer briefly in one sentence, in your own words.
- 2) Point out (quote) one sentence from the text that reflects his opinion.
- 3) Is his opinion justified? Why (not)?
- 4) The author repeatedly uses the words 'is supposed to', 'is looked upon', 'is assumed'. These words imply that there is another opinion besides the author's. Whose opinion is it?
- 5) What is this opinion? State it briefly in your own words.
- 6) Quote the sentence(s) in the text that expresses this opinion.
- 7) Is this opinion supporting or contrary to the author's?
- 8) Is this opinion justified? Why (not)?

**Feed Back**

After each activity, check your answers with the accompanying answer key. You have done well if you have at least 80% of your answers right, and you can proceed to the next activity. If you have less than 80% right, you should read again the explanations and examples, and do the activity once more. Proceed the same with the form tests; continue with next module only if you have an 80% mastery. The key of the form tests are provided at the end of the module.

$$\text{Level of mastery} = \frac{\text{the number of the right answers}}{\text{the number of the items}} \times 100\%$$

Level of mastery: 90 – 100% = very good

80 – 89% = good

70 – 79% = sufficient

< 70% = insufficient

## UNIT 2

## Tone

**A. WHAT IS TONE?**

At this point you have mastered various critical reading skills: distinguishing between fact and opinion, identifying the author's opinion, making inferences, and identifying generalizations. There are still a few skills that you should master. This unit will be concerned with the fifth reading skill: identifying tone.

You are of course familiar with tone of voice. It is not hard for you to know from somebody's speech whether he or she is angry, happy, disappointed, or excited. How do you know? Yes, his/her tone - a loud voice, a rising intonation, certain rude words - will give you the clue that the speaker is angry. Without him saying "I am angry!", you know that he is angry.

Tone in writing is like tone of voice: The author does not want to write something directly; so, by choosing a certain tone the author informs you of his feelings, attitudes, and views toward a topic, and purposes for writing about this particular topic. Like in speaking, his tone can be lighthearted or angry, optimistic or pessimistic. Therefore, if you want to know the author's feelings, attitudes, views toward a topic, and purposes for writing you must have the skill to identify tone. This skill will help you understand and correctly interpret the meaning of a passage.

However, identifying tone in writing is harder than in speech. In speech, loudness of voice, stress, pitch, intonation will help you identify the speaker's tone. Writing does not have these features, and you must use other means. What are these means? You should know that the author's main tool in setting up his tone is the careful choice of words. Certain words in his writing will establish his tone, and this tone will reveal his feelings: disapproval, hate, admiration, disgust, gratitude, and etcetera. Now, read the two paragraphs below, and pay attention to the words used. What tone do they try to establish?

Senator X is everything a statesperson should be. An eloquent speaker, she has the ability to choose the right word at the right moment. Filled with determination as she is, she will undoubtedly be elected governor.

Senator X is a true politician. A smooth talker, she knows just what to say and when to say it. Devoured by ambition as she is, she undoubtedly will be elected governor.

*From: Reading for Results*

After reading the first paragraph, we are quite sure that the author is in favor of Senator X; he takes an approving tone toward the subject of Senator X. What words set up this tone? Look at the words statesperson, eloquent, and determination. These are words indicating positive characteristics; through these words the author tries to convince the reader that the senator is a competent person, and to persuade him to support the senator. In contrast, the second paragraph uses the words politician, smooth talker, and devoured by ambition, words that have a negative connotation. Through such words the author establishes a critical tone: the author disapproves of the senator and tries to persuade the reader not to support him.

Look at the Exercise 1 and see if you can identify tone!

## **B. OBJECTIVE REPORTING VS SUBJECTIVE REPORTING**

The examples in our discussion above as well as the texts in Exercise 1 show that the author has a certain opinion accompanied by a particular attitude. The writer in Text A, for example, thinks that dogs are better pets than cats and implies that he likes dogs. We can say that he is subjective, because the opinion and attitude is his only and others may not agree with him. Because he is subjective, his writing is called subjective reporting.

You might conclude from the discussion and the examples that an author is always subjective and that his tone is always reflecting a certain attitude. However, this is not always the case; authors do not always use a particular tone. It is possible that the writer tries to be neutral and does not include his own personal feelings in his writing. This kind of writing is called objective reporting. Consequently, the words he uses do not need to be emotionally loaded, and he uses less connotative language than in subjective reporting. Below is an example of objective reporting where no particular tone and attitude are present. It is taken from a local newspaper.

Mr. and Mrs. Van Hilary are very wealthy and live in an expensive part of the city called Mission Hill. On April first, they gave a dinner party. It is said the food they served was spoiled and could not be eaten. We do not

know why. Some people say the event was to raise money for a charity, but we do not know this for a fact.

*From: 25 Strategies*

Proceed to Exercise 2 and find out if you have understood the difference between subjective and objective reporting!

### **1. Example**

Americans have always lusted for heroes, and lacking them, we have been driven to invent them. Such was certainly the case with the man born Joel Hagglund but christened Joe Hill. A poet and songwriter, Hill first came to public attention when he wrote a series of songs that were adopted by the early American labor movement. His name, however, did not become popular until he was arrested for armed robbery and murder. According to the story that people believed, Hill never committed the murder, and he was executed in an attempt to destroy the labor movement. Although it is true that Hill was tried and convicted on insufficient and inadequate evidence, it is equally true that his own story contained numerous contradictions and loopholes. At his best, he was a man unfairly tried and convicted; at his worst, he was a criminal who boldly proclaimed himself innocent. But in neither case was he a legendary hero, and the tendency to eulogize him is a misguided attempt to create a hero where none existed.

### **2. Explanation**

The author of the paragraph uses a skeptical tone: he doubts whether Joe Hill was a hero. The use of the plural pronoun *we*, along with highly connotative language, such as *lusted* and *misguided attempt*, tell you this is an example of subjective reporting.

Do the rest of the Exercise in the same manner!

- a. At the present time, cognitive psychology offers the promise of a scientific breakthrough. Although it has been unfashionable for more than half a century to theorize about the inner workings of the mind, more and more attention is being paid to the work of cognitive scientists, who hold that the functions of the brain, and ultimately the human mind, can be scientifically investigated. Despite the fact that much research needs to be done, scientists have already begun to explore the

complexities of memory and speech acquisition. By all accounts, it appears that the most sophisticated modern computers is no match for the intricacies of human thinking. Experiments have shown, for example, that even very small children can perceive complicated patterns and anticipate cause-and-effect relationships.

- b. Fifty years ago, parents could lean over the back fence and chat companionably with other adults who had the same family problems. Today things have changed, and we live in a highly urbanized society where it becomes harder and harder to meet our neighbors. Many single parents feel particularly isolated in their home; they lack the easy camaraderie an earlier generation enjoyed. As a result, many have turned to public and private support groups in which they can talk over problems and exchange information. Parents who feel unable or unwilling to cope by themselves can find a wide variety of services in these parent centers, including health information, crisis intervention, family counseling, and financial advice. For a long time, it has been assumed that only children needed the support of their peers. As a result, the emphasis has been on the creation of counseling centers and meeting places for young people. It's about time we thought of parents as well. They too need the guidance and friendship available in a peer group.
- c. The Japanese have accustomed themselves to the presence of robots in the work place. More than two-thirds of all industrial robots, in fact, are found in Japan. Although robots are not capable of assembling finished products, they can do the many simpler tasks that lead up to that stage, and they have proven to be a boon to their employers, increasing worker productivity by a substantial amount. For their part, Japanese workers are relaxed about the rise in the robot population. Most contracts guarantee the average worker employment until the age of fifty-five. In addition, the majority of workers participate in some kind of profit-sharing plan, with the result that robot productivity only increases the workers paychecks.
- d. William Howard Taft was the twenty-seventh president of the United States, and, by all accounts, his presidency was undistinguished. A huge bear of a man, Taft did not inspire confidence; even his own mother did

not support his candidacy. Instead she publicly maintained that the White House would be a mistake for her son's career. Taft himself is said to have claimed that any party nominating him would make a "great mistake." Once in office, Taft proved to be as incompetents as he had predicted, and he managed to alienate an old friend and mentor, Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was so outraged at Taft's conservation policy; he decided to challenge his former friend when re-election time came. Although Roosevelt did not win, he managed to split the Republican party sufficiently so that Woodrow Wilson was elected. Taft was not surprised at his loss and accepted defeat graciously.

*From: Reading for Results*

### C. VARIOUS TONES

By now you have familiarized yourself with a number of tones: angry, happy, disappointed, excited, serious, supportive/sympathetic, hateful, admiring, disgusted, grateful, emotional, approving, disapproving, skeptical, optimistic, pessimistic, light-hearted, or no particular tone at all. You should keep in mind, however, that a passage is not confined to just one tone. An author may set up a combination of tones: he may sound serious, admiring and optimistic at the same time.

There are many more tones that an author can establish. The more tones you are familiar with the easier for you to identify them if you face a reading. In our discussion about objective reporting, a writing taken from the local newspaper about a dinner party was used to exemplify no particular tone. In the following examples the tones that you need to be able to recognize are presented through writings by different people about the same topic. Each example tells you what happened at the dinner party, and each writer has used a different tone, depending on his or her viewpoint.

Now, look what happens to the text if the tone established is critical, cynical, sarcastic, solemn/somber/serious, ironic, sentimental, satirical, or humorous, and do the activities following the discussion of each tone.

1. **Critical tone.** It is true that many tones can be used to criticize, but the critical tone itself criticizes straightforwardly. The author points out the actions and beliefs of a person or institution which he judges to be

wrong. The following is a letter from a college professor to the local newspaper.

When we do not know the complete facts about a story, we must be careful not to draw conclusions that may not be true. We tend to tell stories if all the facts are not known, but in the case of the Van Hilarys' dinner, has there been any proof that the dinner was for charity? Has anyone proved that the food was inedible, or that it was purposely ruined? Until we learn more facts, if indeed we have the right or the need to know more facts, we should withhold our judgment.

- 2. Cynical tone.** Cynicism is a belief that people are motivated by selfish reasons and not by inner kindness. Thus, an author's cynical tone implies that he thinks human beings are basically corrupt and are always after personal advantages. Consider the letter below, written by a college student to his roommate.

I'll sure be glad to get back to the campus. It's deadly around here. The biggest thing that's happened all spring vacation is a big flap about a charity dinner. How can anyone believe in these so-called charity causes! The Van Hilarys, you know, the moneybags on the Hill, gave a huge dinner party, which nobody could eat because somehow the food was spoiled. The party was for charity, but I'm sure the Van Hilarys wouldn't have thought of anything charitable unless they needed a big write-off on their income taxes. As for the food, it was probably spoiled long before the party began. These do-gooders give me a pain. Who do they think they're fooling, anyway? Charity? There's no such thing as charity. Nobody cares anything about anyone except number one - me! Just spell charity that way - n-u-m-b-e-r o-n-e spells m-e, m-e, m-e!

- 3. Sarcastic tone.** Like criticism and cynicism, sarcasm is used to criticize, but on a more personal level. Sarcasm aims at hurting a person's feeling and can, therefore, be very sharp and painful. The writer uses words which show the writer's contempt, anger, spite, malice at a certain person. The following is a part of a political speech of a candidate opposing a candidate supported by the Van Hilarys.

You may think that the Van Hilarys gave that dinner party last Saturday night for charity, but I have never seen that the Van Hilarys give any

money go for anything they didn't benefit from. Ruined food, my eye! That wasn't ruined food, it was spoiled food, bought cheaply, and then purposely said to be ruined so that all the excess profits could go to some charity or other. Van Hilary's going to have a fine tax break from that. He's already thinking about how he can invest so he can get both the government and us next time round. However, once we get our investigative committee to look into it, there won't be a next time round for Van Hilary!

4. **Solemn/somber/serious tone.** The author uses this tone if he is serious about and dedicated to the topic. The example below is a part of a sermon.

We Americans must change our wasteful ways. One of our basic Christian tenets is that we must do acts of charity for others. When we use every resource God gives us for the betterment of humanity, then we will not deny our fellow man by being wasteful. An example of the worst kind of waste comes to mind. Can there be any greater waste than to purposely ruin food that could have helped others who do not have enough? Yet such a sordid occurrence took place in this very community not long ago. It seems that a dinner party was given at which the host and hostess became intoxicated, as evidently did their guests. Then everyone set about to ruin the food by putting the wrong seasonings in everything. Finally the food could not be served because it was inedible. So it was discarded.

5. **Ironic tone.** When the writer uses the ironic tone, he chooses words that are the opposite of what he means. It is used to criticize indirectly. The following paragraph is a continuation of the sermon above.

An exceptional dinner party, I've been told. Enjoyed by all and thus, a true blessing in this time of frustration and financial anxiety. A truly unique way to be charitable and to honor Our Lord with our deeds. When the wealthy give of their wealth to benefit the poor, it's a fine thing. Ah, you may say! How wonderful of the Van Hilarys to give such a bash and to make it such a fun affair. What harm can their be in having a little food spoiled? What does it matter that the money spent on the

food and its preparation could feed the poor of this city for an entire year?

6. **Sentimental tone.** A sentimental tone uses words and phrases that aim at making the reader feel pity, sympathy, affection, or tenderness towards a certain subject or topic. Look at the letter Mrs. Van Hilary wrote to her son Cyril.

Dear Cyril,

I hope that you and Joanna are enjoying your stay in Paris. We are having a delightful time with the children, and I really think they are enjoying their grandpa and grandma, though of course they miss you a lot. They are such little angels, how could we not grant them every little thing their hearts desire? After all don't they say that God made grandparents so they could spoil their grandchildren just a tiny bit?

The other day they were just precious, though your father thinks they did go a bit far. I had told them, Scott and Matthew, about April's Fools Day, and that it was a time they could do a trick - not a bad one - just a little trick, and then say "April Fool", and it would be all right. I'm afraid the little dears got a bit carried away. We had some people to dinner that night, and, unknown to us, Scott and Matthew played a few tricks on us - salt in the sugar, sugar in the vegetables, and so on. Well, we just made it into a grand party and, with a few more drinks, no one seemed to care anyway. It all ended up being great fun.

You may be sure, though, we explained to them that they mustn't carry things too far in the future. But boys will be boys, and I remember in your day you did a few tricks of your own. And you certainly turned out just fine. So you see, we're not spoiling the little angels so much.

Lovingly yours  
Mother

7. **Satirical tone.** This kind of tone criticizes indirectly. It combines humor, irony, exaggeration, sometimes sarcasm, to make people see their bad habits and foolishness. By using a satirical tone the author hopes that the criticism will work and that people improve. A good example of a satirical tone is found in the article below, quoted partly from the local newspaper.

I have just proclaimed myself president of the society for the Abolition of Charity Balls and Dinners, a society I have just decided to form .....

This ball, sponsored by the American and French Descendents of the Revolution was for the purpose of raising scholarships so that American students might study in France and French students study in America..... But back to the ball.

Charity functions may be uniquely American institutions, but they deserve the same fate as dinosaurs - extinction! Where else but in America can you imagine so much money being spent for charity in order to earn so little money? Take this ball. The *creme de la creme* was invited. In order to outdo each other, they spent thousands of dollars on new clothes. They spent hundreds more on the rental of a grand ballroom, and still more thousands on fine food, fine booze, and fine music. At the end of the evening, how much scholarship money was raised? Ah, that's the interesting point! It just so happens that with a little intrigue, I managed to get a final copy of the treasurer's accounting from Mrs. Abernathy. Here are the startling figures and my evaluation of them.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**  
**Les Fleurs de Lafayette Ball**

**Out go**

1000 engraved invitations	500.00	(312 people attended; evidently the <i>creme</i> is not very <i>cremey</i> )
Ballroom rental	1000.00	(The grandest ballroom in the city is not free!)
Flowers and candles for 50 tables at \$10.00 per table	500.00	(With space for 8 at each table and 312 in ghosts of Lafayette and soldiers past must have occupied 11 tables.)
Open bar - 902 drinks at \$1.00 per drink	902.00	(My, we certainly had a lot of liqueur among the <i>creme</i> .)
Orchestra	2400.00	(Why didn't they disco?)
Food - 328 plates at \$15.00 per person		(Sixteen two-headed - or at east two mouthed people?)
Incidental expenses of Ball Committee	328.00	(What did you ladies do?)
Total Outgo	10,550.30	(Evidently charity was extended to 14 needy guests.)

**Income**

Paid admissions - 298 at \$35.00 per guest	\$10,430.00	(Bad investment! Should have been given to the students!)
Donation by French Consulate	300.00	
Total Income	<hr/> \$10,730.00	
Total amount raised for	179.70	(What a prestigious scholar ship! Makes a Fulbright look like a piker!)

I wonder how far the \$179.70 profit will go. Perhaps two or three students will have enough money for a train ride from Paris to Bordeaux. But thank heavens for the French Consulate. Otherwise, this would have been a charity ball with negative charity. Imagine a ball where negative money is earned.

But I heard of one better, or worse, if you will, and that is why my society must take a firm stand not only against charity balls but against dinners as well. Seems there was recently a charity dinner in this town where all the food was spoiled and the drink contaminated. I heard that didn't make much money either. Well, between making no money for scholarships by dancing, drinking, and eating, and making a little money on rotten food, maybe the charity ball is the less of two evils. However, my society will pledge itself to work firmly against both of them. "Down with negative charity!" will be our watchword.

- 8. Humorous tone.** A humorous tone is also lighthearted and aims at amusing the readers. This tone is sympathetic to human nature and good-natured about man's whims and follies. There is no intention at all to hurt people's feelings. Read the passage below and see whether it makes you smile.

The other day my wife and I were discussing the pros and cons of having more or less money. She commented that the rich were just like you and me, only they had more money.

Well, I told her that she might be right, because she certainly knows more about the way they eat and dress than I do. But on the other hand, I certainly couldn't imagine our carrying off a party like the one the Van Hilarys gave on Mission Hill the other night.

Seems they had invited a few guests for an April Fool's dinner. It's not clear at this point who fooled whom, but there certainly was a good bit of foolishness on the Day for Fools. The story goes, according to one fool who gave it to the paper, that the Van Hilarys high-spirited grandchildren decided to spice up the party. Bright little boys, Matt and Scott. A great team. Matt put sugar in the salt cellars, and Scott put salt in the sugar bowl. Scott spiked the wine with vinegar, and Matt slipped handfuls of pepper into the gravy.

Well, when the dinner started, Mr. Van Hilary proposed a toast to April's Fool's day. Everyone raised glass on high, took a sip, and spluttered. Mrs. Van Hilary thought he'd planned the foolishness, and Mr. Van Hilary thought she'd had the inspiration, so with great aplomb they urged their guests to join in the fun of a foolish dinner. By the time the vegetables were sugared and the coffee was salted, everyone had gone to the fools.

I told my wife she would have liked the desert, though. Pickles with ice cream. Just what she used to request when she was pregnant with our youngest. Well, maybe she's right. Maybe we're not so different from the wealthy, after all. Ah, what fools we mortals be!

### *Example*

Haiti is a small Caribbean country of astonishing beauty, but it is also a land of heartbreaking poverty. Unemployment plagues more than 50 percent of the population, and the annual income is pitifully low, less than \$300 per year. It is no wonder then that many Haitians want to leave their island home. A large number want to escape to America, but unfortunately America does not welcome them. According to officials, economic devastation does not entitle Haitians to political asylum in the United States. As a result, many who enter this country illegally are returned to their homeland to face the consequences. Although no one is really sure what those consequences are, it is clear that the government of Haiti is not pleased with those who have tried to flee its shores, and those returned may face severe reprisals. If Haitian refugees are not allowed political asylum in this country, they will be returned to a life of misery and fear.

*From:* Reading for Results

- a) sympathetic    b) critical    c) no particular tone

*Explanation*

The tone of the paragraph is sympathetic of the plight of the Haitians. The words plagues and heartbreaking indicate a sympathetic tone. In addition, the author clearly suggests that political asylum for the Haitians should be considered. Used in this context, the words severe, misery and fear all have strong negative connotations, thus maintaining the author's tone and purpose.

Do the rest of the Exercise in the same manner!

- 1) Among the worst bores in the Western world are religious converts and reformed drunks. I did give up drinking more than a dozen years ago. This didn't make me feel morally superior to anyone. If asked, I would talk about going dry but, from the first, I was determined not to preach any sermons and not to judge any human being who took pleasure in drinking.

But I must confess that lately my feelings have begun to change. Drinking and drunks now fill me with loathing. Increasingly, I see close friends - humans of intelligence, wit and style - reduced to slobbering fools by liquor. I've seen other friends ruin their marriage, brutalize their children, destroy their careers. I've also reached the age when I've had to bury a few people who allowed booze to take them into eternity.

*From:* Efficient and Flexible Reading

- a) enthusiastic      b) disapproving      c) cynical

- 2) When American began settling this magnificent country, they had an optimistic and winning spirit. Nothing could stand in their way. But today's Americans have grown weak and apathetic. They no longer believe in the fulfillment of the American dream, and they are ready to give in to Russian aggression. It is not impossible, however, to regain the spirit of the past. We just have to retrieve our ideas and fight for them, refusing to take second place to any other nation. American can easily fulfill their dream if they would only stop giving in to defeat.

*From:* Reading for Results

- a) optimistic      b) apathetic      c) critical

- 3) In the world of comedy, Richard Pryor is without peer. The promise of his early work has finally matured into genius. When Pryor walks out on stage in movies like *Richard Pryor in Concert* and *Richard Pryor, Live on Sunset Strip*, the audience comes alive with eagerness and enthusiasm, and the star does not fail them. His comic monologues are masterpieces filled with wit and originality. In addition, his ability to imitate everything from lions to five-year-old children is astonishing. He has the vision of the great painters, and he manages to select just the right details to evoke not just a personality but a way of life. In the world of comedy, Pryor is the acknowledged master.

*From: Reading for Results*

- a) humorous            b) sentimental        c) admiring

- 4) Each time I visit my man in prison, I relive the joy of reunion - and the anguish of separation.

We meet at the big glass door at the entrance to the small visitor's hall at Lompoc Federal Correctional Institution. We look at each other silently, then turn and walk into a room jammed with hundreds of molded fiberglass chairs lined up side by side. Finding a place in the crowded hall, we sit down, appalled that we're actually in a prison. Even now, after four months of such clocked, supervised, regulated visits, we still can't get used to the frustrations.

Yet, as John presses me gently to his heart, I feel warm and tender, and tears well up inside me, as they do each weekend. I have seven hours to spend with the man I love - all too brief a time for sharing a lifetime of emotion: love and longing, sympathy and tenderness, resentment and anger.

*From: Efficient and Flexible Reading*

- a) appalled and angry    b) friendly and intimate    c) sad and desperate

**EXERCISES**

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**Exercise 1**

Read Text A and Text B! What tone does the author use in each text?

**Text A**

The cat is a stupid animal, incapable of learning any tricks. Whoever heard of a cat that would play dead or shake hands?

The dog, on the other hand, is quick to learn. He can be taught to beg, to shake hands, to fetch his master's slippers, and to guard, even with his own life, his master's child.

The cat is stubborn; she does as she pleases. If a child tries to play with her and she wants to sleep, she scratches the child and runs away.

But a dog is obedient and docile. If a baby pulls his ears, he takes the matter patiently. He asks only that baby loves him and that his master rewards him with a kindly pat on the head.

The cat is selfish and lacking in affection. She prefers being left in a cozy spot by the fire to being petted and played with.

But the dog is most loving. He lives, not by meat alone, but by the affection and caresses of his master. Dogs have been known to refuse food and even to die when a beloved master has left him.

Clearly, the dog is a much better pet than the cat.

**Text B**

The dog is a filthy fellow. He litters the dooryard with bones, old shoes, and other things he drags in. He wades through mud but protests when he is given a bath.

The cat, however, is clean. She never litters the house or the lawn, and she constantly washes herself, thus keeping her coat glossy and beautiful.

The dog appears more intelligent than he is because he aims to please. By patience, repetition, and praise, his master can teach him to perform many tricks. And if the dog is given food as a reward, he will learn more quickly than otherwise.

But the cat is shrewd. She knows how to get what she wants. A Persian cat once learned to pretend that she wanted to be let outside in order to get

her mistress out of bed. But when Miss Green got up, Pussy always went straight to the refrigerator, where the food was kept.

The cat, though affectionate (how she loves to be stroked), is independent. She is a free animal and will not cringe or fawn for favors.

But the dog is servile. Whip him, and he comes crawling like a slave. Truly, the cat, unlike the dog, is a noble animal, one worthy of respect.

*From: Reading II Module 3*

### **Exercise 2**

Read the following paragraphs. Decide if the author uses a certain tone. Then label each paragraph **S** for a subjective report or **O** for an objective report.

### **Exercise 3**

- 1) Who/what is the professor criticizing? .
- 2) Besides a critical tone is there another tone present?

### **Exercise 4**

- 1) According to the writer, what personal advantages are the Van Hilarys trying to get through this party?
- 2) What words does the writer use to establish the cynical tone?

### **Exercise 5**

- 1) Who is the object of attack in the text in Exercise 5 and who is being attacked in the above text?
- 2) What threat does the writer make to wound Van Hilary?
- 3) What words establishes the writer's sarcastic tone?

### **Exercise 6**

- 1) Why does the writer say that the dinner was the worst kind of waste?
- 2) Quote the sentence(s) that shows the writer's solemn tone.

### **Exercise 7**

- 1) What does the writer mean by the dinner was a 'true blessing'?
- 2) Quote from the test some examples of irony.

**Exercise 8**

- 1) By writing so sentimentally, what kind of feeling does Mrs. Van Hilary try to arouse in Cyril?
- 2) Quote words from the letter that establishes this sentimental tone.

**Exercise 9**

- 1) How many members do you think the Society for Abolition of charity Balls and Dinners has? How do you know?
- 2) The writer's remarks in the right hand column of the Treasurer's Report are satirical, but they play on other tones as well, as satire often does. Give examples of
  - a) sarcasm
  - b) irony
  - c) exaggeration

**Exercise 10**

- 1) Which words or phrases in the passage amuse you?
- 2) In what ways does the writer use the word fool? Why does the writer repeat it so often?

Now that you have accustomed yourself to a great number of different tones, do Exercise 11 as a last exercise.

**Exercise 11**

Read each paragraph carefully and decide on-the dominant tone used by the author by choosing among the options provided below each text.

*Key to Exercises***Exercise 1**

Both texts use an emotional tone, approving and disapproving at the same time, but the subject of approval and disapproval is different in each text; in Text A the writer approves of dogs and disapproves of cats, while in Text B it is the other way round.

The words establishing tone in Text A are:

positive words for dogs: quick to learn, obedient, loving

negative words for cats: stupid, stubborn, selfish

The words establishing tone in Text B are:

positive words for cats: clean, shrewd, affectionate, independent

negative words for dogs: filthy, more intelligent than he is, servile

### Exercise 2

- 1) S. The writer's tone is optimistic. He believes that the cognitive scientists will have success. He uses the words promise, breakthrough, the most sophisticated modern computer is no match for ....., even very small children can perceive and anticipate.
- 2) S. The writer's tone is serious and supportive/sympathetic towards the need of counseling centers and meeting places for parents. The words and phrases used are lean over the back fence, harder and harder, isolated, easy camaraderie, it's about time.
- 3) O. The writer's tone is without emotion. He simply states facts.
- 4) S. The writer's tone is emotional and disapproving. The words used are huge bear of a man, did not inspire confidence, even his own mother, incompetent, managed to alienate, defeat

### Exercise 3

- 1) The professor is criticizing the reporter's story who based his writing on insufficient facts.
- 2) A serious tone.

### Exercise 4

- 1) The Van Hilarys are trying to get a big income tax exemption.
- 2) How can anyone believe in.....?  
Wouldn't have thought of anything charitable unless.....  
There's no such thing as charitable. Nobody cares about.....

### Exercise 5

- 1) In Exercise 5 the object of attack is people in general; in Exercise 6, it is the Van Hilarys.
- 2) The writer threatened to investigate the case and not to vote for Van Hilarys candidate.
- 3) I have never seen the Van Hilarys give any money from which they didn't benefit. (contempt)

That wasn't ruined food that was spoiled food, bought cheaply, and then purposely said to be ruined so that .... (malice)

Van Hilary's is going to have a fine tax break from that. (spite)

However, once we get ..... for Van Hilary! (malice)

### Exercise 6

- 1) Because food that could have helped the hungry was ruined on purpose.
- 2) One of our basic Christian tenets is ... for others.  
When we use every resource God gives us ....

### Exercise 7

- 1) He means the opposite: in this time of frustration and anxiety an exceptional dinner is not a true blessing; it is to be condemned.
- 2) Other examples of irony:  
What harm can their be in having a little food spoiled?  
What does it matter if .... for an entire year?

### Exercise 8

- 1) She hopes that Cyril will not be angry at his sons" behavior.
- 2) Delightful time, such little angels, grandparents could spoil their grandchildren, they were just precious, the little dears, but boys will be boys

### Exercise 9

1. Just one, the writer himself. The article says that the writer has proclaimed himself president of a society he has just decided to form. There are no members yet.
2. Sarcasm: 312 people attended; evidently the creme is not very cremey.  
My, we certainly had a lot of liqueur among the creme!  
What did you ladies do?

Irony: What a prestigious scholarship!

Evidently charity was extended to 14 needy guests

Exaggeration: With space .... the ghosts of Lafayette and soldiers past must have occupied 11 tables.

Sixteen two-headed - or at least two-mouthed - people?

**Exercise 10**

- 1) Amusing words and expressions:
  - a) ... the rich were just like you and me, only they had more money.
  - b) Bright little boys, Matt and Scott. A great team.
  - c) By the time the vegetables were sugared and the coffee was salted, everyone had gone to the fools.
  - d) Pickles with ice cream. Just what she used to request when she was pregnant.
  
- 2) He uses it as a verb (who fooled whom), as a noun (Day for Fools, one fool who gave it to the paper), as an adjective (a foolish dinner). He keeps repeating it to emphasize the foolishness of the situation and of the persons.

Adapted from: 25 Strategies

**Exercise 11**

Explanation:

- 1) b The words slobbering, loathing shows his disapproval of drinking.
- 2) a The words not impossible, regain, retrieve, fight, refusing to take second place, easily fulfill shows the author's optimism.
- 3) c without peer, genius, alive with eagerness and enthusiasm, masterpieces, wit and originality, master, sets up an admiring tone.
- 4) b my man, joy of reunion, look at each other, gently, warm and tender, tears well up, love, longing, sympathy, shows that she is intimate with the reader: she opens her inner feelings.

**SUMMARY**

Like tone in voice, tone in writing is an aspect that reveals the author's feelings and contributes to the overall message. Many human emotions can be communicated through tone, e.g. disapproval, hate, admiration, disgust, gratitude. Because tone is very often the author's main tool in expressing his feelings and attitudes, it is very important for the reader to learn to recognize tone. An author's tone is primarily achieved through the choice of words and stylistic features.

In this unit you have done quite a number activities to develop this reading skill. If you did well on them you are ready for the formative test

**FORMATIVE TEST 2**

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**Test 1**

Read the text carefully and choose the correct option below the questions!

During the 1970 season, the Club played 42 matches. Of these, 34 were League and Cup games, and the remainder was friendly matches. In the League, the Club had a better season than in any previous year, and finished in third place, two points behind the champions. Out of 28 League games, 16 were won, 8 were drawn and 4 were lost, whilst the Club managed to reach the semifinal of the Challenge Cup for the first time in its history. Of the eight friendly matches, four were won, two were drawn, and two were lost, but these defeats were at the hands of visiting teams whose standards were generally much higher than those of players of this area.

At the same time, the standard of play shown by our own team was markedly superior to that seen in previous years, and this success is largely due to the intensive training programmed which has been supervised by the team captain. In this connection, the provision of adequate training facilities must remain a priority, and the erection of an indoor gymnasium or hall in which the players can practice on wet evenings is essential. It would do much to supplement the outdoor training being carried on, and would help the Club in the recruitment of younger players.

There are now 28 players registered with the Club, and many more have asked to join but have been discouraged by the fact that the Club fields only one team. With the improvement in the financial position, concerning which the Treasurer will report in a minute, I suggest that the Committee consider entering a team in the Second Division of the League.

The general tone of this report is....

- I. pessimistic II. positive III. adverse IV. encouraging V. discouraging
- A. I, II, III and IV  
B. I, II and IV  
C. II, III and IV  
D. II and IV  
E. III and V.

## Test 2

Read the text carefully and answer the questions following it!

What is energy crisis?

There's plenty of petrol in the pumps. Lots of gas in the pipes. The home fires are burning, and the lamps aren't going out all over Europe.

Fanny sort of crisis. Which is probably why we're not doing enough about it.

But although we can't see it or feel it, the energy crisis is costing us a bomb.

In eighteen months, the price of crude oil (which provides almost half the energy we use) has multiplied by five. And all our oil still has to be imported.

The bill we pay is 3,500,000,000 a year. Ten million pounds a day. A sum so big, it can't possibly be your problem.

It is, though. That 10 million works out at 20p a day for every man, woman and child in Britain. For a family of four, it's a millstone of 5.60 a week.

You can't shrug it off as a problem for the country to solve. Because the country is nothing more than every man, woman and child in Britain.

Of course, in a few years, North Sea oil will help us pay our way. But we'll still have debts to repay. And North Sea oil won't last forever.

We've simply got to Save It. Not just oil and petrol. But electricity, too, because oil generates a quarter of it. And the less coal and gas we use, the more they're available to take the place of place of oil.

What's more, we can save it without a lot of fuss and bother. Just with reasonable care.

Turn down a thermostat. Insulate a pipe. Clean out a furnace. Keep your car in tune.

You'll save a few pounds for yourself, and millions for Britain.

*From: Reading II Module 3*

- 1) How are the author's personal feelings about the subject?
  - a. worried
  - b. indifferent
  - c. enthusiastic
  - d. disgusted
  
- 2) The author's tone is
  - a. emotional

- b. neutral
- c. ironic
- d. solemn

**Feed Back**

After each activity, check your answers with the accompanying answer key. You have done well if you have at least 80% of your answers right, and you can proceed to the next activity. If you have less than 80% right, you should read again the explanations and examples, and do the activity once more. Proceed the same with the form tests; continue with next module only if you have an 80% mastery. The key of the form tests are provided at the end of the module.

$$\text{Level of mastery} = \frac{\text{the number of the right answers}}{\text{the number of the items}} \times 100\%$$

Level of mastery: 90 – 100% = very good

80 – 89% = good

70 – 79% = sufficient

< 70% = insufficient

## UNIT 3

## Bias

**A. WHAT IS BIAS?**

Recognizing bias is the last of the seven critical reading skills presented in this module. This skill is closely related to tone and the author's purpose. Tone helps us recognize the author's purpose. At the same time, through tone and purpose we can conclude whether or not the author is biased.

What is bias? What does it mean if an author is biased? In everyday life we often come across this term. People say someone is biased if he or she takes sides without reasons strong enough. For example, a teacher defends a truant student not because he/she knows the student has acceptable reasons for what he has done, but because the student happens to be the teacher's nephew. This teacher is definitely biased.

Bias in reading does not have a much different meaning. If an author is biased he is also taking sides: he or she takes one side of a controversial issue and does not want to consider what other people have to say about it. Thus, bias in reading refers to an author's partiality toward a certain viewpoint. Perhaps the best example of bias is in advertising. A magazine advertisement for a new car model, for instance, describes only positive, saleable features - the ad does not recognize the car's limitations or faults. By giving only a partial presentation of the facts or not at all the ad writer reflects his bias. Why is he so biased? Because his aim is to sell. If he is not biased, if he is objective, if beside the good features he also describes the bad features, he will never sell the car. The potential buyer will not be convinced that the car is a good car.

In one way or another, most writing is biased to some extent, because most writers want to express their point of view; this is the reason for their writing. Bias can be harmless or harmful. It can be harmful when it is used to hurt particular groups or society. Examples are the hate campaigns sometimes used in political campaigns or to criticize ethnic, religious, or racial groups. Bias can be harmless, and even amusing, when it attempts to convince buyers of the kinds of products they should buy. The following ad is an example of harmless bias and the bias is pretty obvious. See whether you can identify some features of bias by doing Exercise 1.

However, harmful or not, part of your task as a reader is to understand the author's bias. In the above ad you can easily recognize the writer's tone: full of praise. Why does he use such a tone? Because he wants to persuade the readers to buy the product by convincing them that it is the best. Why can we say that he is strongly biased? Because he only presents one side of AQUA's features, the good ones. How do we know he is positively biased? By the words and phrases he uses: look at the underlined words, they all have a very positive connotation.

By recognizing the writer's bias, you can evaluate his purpose. Now that you know the writer is biased towards AQUA, you will not be so easily convinced that AQUA is the best. You can evaluate for yourself the truth of what the writer has written. In this way, you will avoid making generalizations based on misinformation or lack of information.

## **B. HOW TO IDENTIFY BIAS**

Sometimes the writer's bias is direct and obvious, like in the above ad; other times the bias is hidden and left for the reader to find out. In the latter case the job of identifying bias becomes more difficult. Your experience in doing Exercise 1 must have given you some tips how to go about identifying bias. In arriving at the bias in the AQUA ad you first tried to identify tone and purpose. From these you were able to infer that the writer was biased: a praising tone and persuasion as a purpose always imply bias. Then you looked at the words and phrases used and you discovered that most of them had a very positive connotation. Again you inferred from here that the writer was positively-biased. Finally, you wanted to know whether the writer presented another viewpoint, but he did not; he only gave his own viewpoint. You concluded then that the writer was not only positively biased but very strongly so.

To identify bias in a passage where the bias is hidden or not so strong, you still can use the same procedure as you did with the ad, and apply the following:

1. Analyze the tone and purpose. The author's tone and purpose provides important clues.
2. Analyze-connotative meanings. Can you find many positive or negative terms toward the subject?

3. Notice descriptive language. What impression does the author want to give his readers?
4. Look for opposing viewpoints. Does the author present only one viewpoint (his own) or does he give both sides of the issue?

Now, read the description of the environmental protection group called Greenpeace! Exercise 2 will help you apply the above guidelines.



## EXERCISES

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### Exercise 1

Read the ad below, and then answer the questions following by choosing the best option!

#### **From Nature with Love and technology**

Fresh and Tasty

Safe and Healthy

Straight from a self-flowing springy Processed and Bottled with modern, hygienic high technology equipments.

The most unique product

AQUA - natural mountain spring water

Pioneer of the bottled water industry in Indonesia

First awarded the Indonesian Industry Standard - SII No. 2040-90

- 1) What is the tone of the writer?
  - A. emotional
  - B. sentimental
  - C. praising
  - D. serious
- 2) What does the writer hope to accomplish?
  - A. persuade the readers
  - B. describe the features
  - C. explain the process
  - D. attract the audience

- 3) What is the object of the writer's bias?
- A. AQUA bottled water
  - B. all bottled water
  - C. bottled water industry
  - D. bottled water standard
- 4) What bias do the underlined words reveal?
- A. weakly negative
  - B. weakly positive
  - C. strongly positive
  - D. moderately positive

### Exercise 2

Read the following passage and underline words and phrases that reveal the author's bias! What is the subject of the author's bias?

Example: Greenpeace is an organization dedicated on the preservation of the sea.

Answer : dedicated; this word has a positive connotation and reveals the author's positive bias.

Please continue the exercise!

Greenpeace is an organization dedicated on the preservation of the sea and its great mammals, notably whales, dolphins, and seals. Its ethic is nonviolent but its aggressiveness in protecting our oceans and the life in them is becoming legendary. In their roving ship, the Rainbow Warrior, Greenpeace volunteers have relentlessly hounded the profiteering ships of any nation harming the resources Greenpeace deems to be the property of the world community. Whales, they believe, belong to us all and have a right to exist no matter what the demand for shoe-horns, cosmetics, and machine oil (In 1985, the Rainbow Warrior was sunk in a New Zealand harbor by French military saboteurs just before it was to sail into the South Pacific to protest French nuclear testing there, killing one member of the group).

*From: Efficient and Flexible Reading*

### Exercise 3

Read the following passage and underline words and phrases that reveal the author's bias! What is the subject of the author's bias?

Example: Not unlike drugs or alcohol, the television experience allows the participant to blot out the real world

Answer : to blot out; this word is a negative equivalent of to erase and shows a negative attitude.

**Treat the rest of the passage the same way!**

Not unlike drugs or alcohol, the television experience allows the participant to blot out the real world and enter into a pleasurable and passive mental state. The worries and anxieties of reality are as effectively deferred by becoming absorbed in a television program as by going on a "trip" induced by drugs or alcohol. And just as alcoholics are only inchoately aware of their addiction, feeling that they control their drinking more than they really do ("I can cut it out any time I want - I just like to have three or four drinks before dinner"), people similarly overestimate their control over television watching. Even as they put off other activities to spend hour after hour watching television, they feel they could easily resume living in a different, less passive style. But somehow or other while the television set is present in their homes, the click doesn't sound. With television pleasures available, those other experiences seem less attractive, more difficult somehow.

*From:* Efficient and Flexible Reading

**Exercise 4**

In Unit 5, Tone, you have done activities focusing on tone in a series of writings dealing with the same topic: the charity dinner at the Van Hilarys. Refer to these writings, particularly the Reverend's sermon, Mrs. Van Hilary's letter to her son, and the article on charity balls.

Answer the following questions, comparing and contrasting the writings.

1. What is the purpose of the writing?

Sermon \_\_\_\_\_

Letter \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the tone of the writing?

Sermon \_\_\_\_\_

Letter \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

3. How does the writer use the tone to achieve the purpose?

Sermon \_\_\_\_\_

Letter \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

4. In what way is the writer biased?

Sermon \_\_\_\_\_

Letter \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

5. Give words or phrases that illustrate the bias.

Sermon \_\_\_\_\_

Letter \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 5

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow!

I think the true discovery of America is before us. I think the true fulfillment of our spirit, of our people, of our mighty and immortal land, is yet to come. I think the true discovery of our own democracy is still before us. And I think that all these things are certain as the morning, as inevitable as noon. I think I speak for most men living when I say that our America is Here, is Now, and beckons on before us, and that this glorious assurance is not only our living hope, but our dream to be accomplished.

*From:* Thomas Wolfe, *You Can't Go Home Again*.

25 Strategies.

1) What is the main idea of the paragraph?

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Give the topic sentence

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Give all the ideas that support, expand, explain, or describe the main idea.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) What tone is the passage written in?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What is the author's purpose in writing?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6) In what ways do you detect the author's bias? With whom does his sympathy seem to be?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 6

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow!

Civilization is at present an imposture: we are a crowd of savages on whom a code of makeshift regulations is forced by penalties for breaking them. They are never explained to us. When I was sent to school I was confronted by a new set of rules and made aware that if I broke them I should be punished. As no other reason for obeying them was given to me I concluded naturally that I could break them without the slightest loss of self respect, and indeed with some pride in my independence and cleverness, as long as I was not found out. My hero in fiction was the rebel, not the goody citizen, whom I despised. This attitude became a habit which I have never been able to shake off quite completely. Yet it would have been easy without overstraining my childish powers of comprehension to make me understand that people cannot live together, and be fed, clothed, lodged, and protected from robbery and murder, unless they agree to do certain things at the same moments in the same order, and meanwhile abstain from doing certain other things however tempting: in short, that social behaviour is expected behaviour, and that to behave unexpectedly, to be original as we call it, though without this eccentricity there can be no improvement, is to assume a dangerous responsibility .... When I associated with other boys in secret gangs it was to do mischief for the fun of it, to wreck and steal and circumvent law and order, to emulate Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard, and generally to defy the commandments and do whatever our teachers and the police told us we must not do. If we had had even the simplest lessons in

citizenship we should have conspired to do good instead of evil. No doubt we should also have played at the cruelties of the criminal law; for children, who like exercising authority as their elders do, will, if not carefully policed, do diabolical things to one another in imitation of the vindictive side of the law and parental authority. To remedy this we must reform the law and re-educate the parents.

*From: Understanding and Enjoyment 3*

- 1) What is the main idea of the paragraph?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How does the author support, expand, explain, or describe the main idea? Give evidences.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What tone is the passage written in?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) What is the author's purpose in writing?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What is the subject of the author's bias? In what ways do you detect the author's bias?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Exercise 7**

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

This is a skeptical age, but although our faith in many of the things in which our forefathers fervently believed has weakened, our confidence in the curative properties of the bottle of medicine remains the same as theirs. This modern faith in medicines is proved by the fact that the annual drug bill of the Health Services is mounting to astronomical figures and shows no signs at present of ceasing to rise. The majority of the patients attending the medical out-patients departments of our hospitals feel that they have not received adequate treatment unless they are able to carry home with them some tangible remedy in the shape of a bottle of medicine, a box of pills, or a small jar of ointment and the doctor in charge of the department is only too ready to provide them with these requirements. There is no quicker method of disposing of patients than by giving them what they are asking for, and since most medical men in the Health Services are overworked and have little time for offering time-consuming and little-appreciated advice on such

subjects as diet, right living, and the need for abandoning bad habits, etc., the bottle, the box, and the jar are almost always granted them.

Nor is it only the ignorant and ill-educated person who has such faith in the bottle of medicine, especially if it be wrapped in white paper and sealed with a dab of red sealing-wax by a clever chemist. It is recounted of Thomas Carlyle that when he heard of the illness of his friend, Henry Taylor, he went off immediately to visit him carrying with him in his pocket what remained of a bottle of medicine formerly prescribed for an indisposition of Mrs Carlyle's. Carlyle was entirely ignorant what the bottle in his pocket contained, of the nature of the illness from which his friend was suffering, and of what had previously been wrong with his wife, but a medicine that had worked so well in one form of illness would surely be of equal benefit in another, and comforted by the thought of the help he was bringing to his friend, he hastened to Henry Taylor's house. History does not relate whether his friend accepted his medical help, but in all probability he did. The great advantage of taking medicine is that it makes no demands on the taker beyond that of putting up for a moment with a disgusting taste, and that is what all patients demand of their doctor -- to be cured at no inconvenience to themselves.

From: Kenneth Walker Patients and Doctors

Fluency in English

- 1) Why do doctors readily provide their patients with medicines?
- 2) What is the author's argument?
- 3) How does the anecdote about Thomas Carlyle illustrate the author's argument?
- 4) What tone does the writer use in presenting and illustrating his argument?
- 5) Do you think the writer is biased? Give evidence!

### **Exercise 8**

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow!

#### **The Qualities to Look For in a Wife**

Chastity, perfect modesty in word, deed, and even thought is so essential that without it, no female is fit to be a wife. It is not enough that a young woman should abstain from anything approaching boldness in her behaviour towards men; it is not enough that she casts down her eyes, or turns aside her

head with a smile, when she hears an indelicate allusion: she ought to appear not to understand it, and to receive from it no more impression than if she were a post. A loose woman is a disagreeable acquaintance; what must she be then, as a wife? Your "Free and hearty" girls I have liked very much to talk and laugh with; but never, for one moment, did it enter my mind that I could have endured a "free and hearty" girl for a wife. A wife; I repeat, is to last for life, she is to be a counterbalance to troubles and misfortune: and therefore must be perfect. Sobriety. By the word "sobriety," in a young woman, I mean a great deal more than a rigid abstinence from the love of drink; I mean sobriety of conduct. The word "sober" does not confine itself to matters of drink: it expresses steadiness, seriousness, carefulness, scrupulous propriety of conduct. Now sobriety is a great qualification in the person you mean to make your wife. Playful, frivolous, careless girls are very amusing, and they may become sober, but you have no certainty of this. To be sure, when girls are mere children they should play and romp like children, but when they arrive at that age when they begin to think of managing a house, then it is time for them to cast away the levity of the child.

If any young man imagines that this sobriety of conduct in young women must be accompanied by seriousness approaching gloom, he is according to my experience, very much deceived. The contrary is the fact; for I have found that gay and laughing women are the most insipid of souls and are generally down in the dumps. A greater curse than a wife of this description would be somewhat difficult to find. I hate a dull, melancholy thing: I could not have existed in the same house with such a thing for single month. Whereas a sober women is underneath joyful and contented.

Industry. By industry, I do not mean merely labour or activity of the body, for purposes of gain or of saving; for there may be industry amongst those who have more money than they know what to do with. Industry in the wife is always necessary to the happiness and prosperity of the family. If she is lazy then the children will be lazy: everything, however urgent, will be put off to the last moment, then it will be done badly, and in many cases, not at all: the dinner will be late, the journey or visit will be delayed; inconveniences of all sorts will be continually arising: there will always be a heavy arrear of things unperformed; and therefore a lazy woman must always be a curse.

Finally beauty ... the last in point of importance. But the great use of female beauty, the great practical advantage of it, is that it naturally and

unavoidably tends to keep the husband in a good humour with himself, to make him pleased with his bargain. Beauty is, in some degree, a matter of taste, what one man admires, another does not; and it is fortunate for us that it is so. But still there are certain things that all men admire; and a husband is always pleased when he perceives that a portion, at least, of these things are in his own possession: he takes his possession as a compliment to himself: there must have been he thinks, some charm, seen or unseen, to have caused him to be blessed with such an acquisition.

*From: Practice Tests for Proficiency*

- 1) In presenting his argument what tone does the writer use?
  - A. cynical
  - B. critical
  - C. emotional
  - D. self-righteous
  
- 2) The tone in the last paragraph is somewhat different. Can you identify it?
  - A. cynical
  - B. critical
  - C. emotional
  - D. self-righteous
  
- 3) For what purpose does the writer write this passage?
  - A. to share an experience
  - B. to criticize
  - C. to give advice
  - D. to ridicule
  
- 4) What is the writer's bias?
  
- 5) What are the signals that the writer is biased?

*Key to Exercises*

Exercise 1

- 1) A. Praising; notice the words fresh, tasty, healthy, modern, hygienic pioneer, first awarded.
- 2) A. Persuade to buy AQUA.
- 3) A. AQUA bottled water.

- 4) C. Strongly positive. The author doesn't mention any shortcomings at all.

### Exercise 2

The author expresses a favorable attitude toward the organization and a negative one toward whale hunters.

- 1) Favorable: nonviolent, protecting, and legendary. These words imply that the writer thinks Greenpeace is a peaceful and hardworking nature protecting group.
- 2) Negative: relentlessly hounded, profiteering. These words imply that the writer thinks whale-hunters are greedy and should be eliminated.

### Exercise 3

The author has a negative attitude toward television watchers and is, therefore, biased against them. The words and phrases revealing this bias are: not unlike drugs or alcohol, passive, effectively deferred, "trip" inchoately aware, addiction, overestimate, hour after hour, the click doesn't sound, less attractive, more difficult.

### Exercise 4

- 1) The purpose of the writing is
  - Sermon : to urge others to do the right thing.
  - Letter : to convince her son to agree with her.
  - Article : to indirectly criticize with the intention to improve.
- 2) The tone of the writing is
  - Sermon : solemn.
  - Letter : sentimental.
  - Article : satirical.
- 3) The writer uses the tone to achieve the purpose by
  - Sermon : stirring the readers' conscience so that they will be willing to do good.
  - Letter : arousing her son's emotions so that he will agree with her viewpoint.
  - Article : stimulating the reader's awareness of his foolish behavior, so that he might improve himself.

- 4) In what way is the writer biased?
- Sermon : he is strongly biased against wasteful people.  
 Letter : he is strongly biased toward her grandchildren's behavior.  
 Article : he is strongly biased against charity balls and dinners.
- 5) Give words or phrases that illustrate the bias.
- Sermon : wasteful, worst kind of waste, can there be any greater waste than to purposely ruin food, sordid, intoxicated, inedible, discarded.
- Letter : delightful, enjoying, such little angels, precious, the little dears, grand party, no one seemed to care, great fun, boys will be boys, you did a few tricks of your own, turned out just fine.
- Article : abolition, deserve the same fate as dinosaurs - extinction, outdo each other, spent thousands of dollars, enough money for a train ride, negative charity, take a firm stand against less of two evils, down with (negative charity).

#### Exercise 5

- 1) The writer thinks America's dream will be fulfilled soon.
- 2) I think the true discovery of America is before us (line 1).
- 3) a. the true fulfillment of our spirit, of our people, of our mighty and immortal land, is yet to come.  
 b. the true discovery of our own democracy is still before us.  
 c. all these things are certain as the morning, as inevitable as noon.  
 d. I speak for most men living when I say that our America is Here, is Now, and beckons on before us, and that this glorious assurance is not only our living hope, but our dream to be accomplished.
- 4) The tone is confident, high-spirited, admiring, and optimistic.
- 5) The author wants to give spirit to his audience.
- 6) The author is strongly and positively biased towards America's future. This can be detected from the use of emotive and figurative language: true discovery, before us, true fulfillment of our spirit, mighty and immortal land, certain as morning, inevitable as noon. Here, Now, beckons, glorious, living hope, dream to be accomplished.

## Exercise 6

- 1) The writer thinks that our laws are harsh, unexplained, and unreasonable.
- 2) The main idea is mainly supported by details of personal experience:
  - a. When I was sent to school ....I should be punished.
  - b. As no other reason for obeying them was given to me ... found out.
  - c. My hero in fiction was the rebel, not ...whom I despised.
  - d. When I associated with other boys ....told us we must not do.
- 3) The writer uses a critical tone.
- 4) The purpose is to criticize and point out that our laws are too harsh, very unreasonable, and authoritarian.
- 5) The author's main bias is against our laws. This is noticeable from the use of words with a negative connotation: imposture, crowd of savages, makeshift, forced, penalties, confronted, commandments, cruelties of criminal law, vindictive side of the law, remedy, reform. However, the author is also slightly biased against parents. We notice this from the words: parental authority, remedy, re-educate.

## Exercise 7

- 1) Because the patients ask for it, and for the overworked doctors it is a quick way to get rid of the patients.
- 2) The author says that even in this modern age we still have great faith that medicines can cure us.
- 3) The illustration is good because by telling that even a very well educated person believes in the power of any medicine the writer has well-supported his argument.
- 4) Humorous; he is making fun of us and our habits.
- 5) Yes he is. He only presents his own opinion, his examples are very one-sided; he doesn't consider the possibility that there might be a lot of people who do not like taking medicines.

## Exercise 8

- 1) D self-righteous: he sounds very sure that he is right.
- 2) A cynical: he thinks men are basically vain.
- 3) C to give advice.
- 4) The writer is biased toward maintaining the four qualities as the criteria for a good wife.

- 5) The writer only presents his own views, he is subjective. We can also find many words and phrases that show his bias: the frequent use of the word should;
- par. 1: essential, without it not fit to be a wife, disagreeable, endured, must be perfect.
- par. 2: great qualification, no certainty of this, cast away the levity of the child.
- par. 3: most insipid, down in the dumps, a greater curse, I hate, I could not have existed, joyful and contented.
- par. 4: always necessary, always be a curse.
- par. 5: the great use, keep in a good humour, pleased with his bargain, in his own possession, as a compliment to himself, there must have been some charm to have caused him to be blessed with such an acquisition.



## SUMMARY

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The writer reflects his/her bias when the writing does not give a thorough presentation of the facts, or when facts are only partially presented or even distorted or changed on purpose. Bias aims at convincing you that you should believe as the writer does. Most writing is biased to some extent, because most writers want to state and defend an opinion. Bias can be harmless or harmful.

To evaluate a piece of writing, it is important to recognize bias and an author's inclination toward a particular viewpoint.

Now, apply what you have learned to the formative test below.



## FORMATIVE TEST 3

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### Test 1

Read the following text very carefully! Then answer the questions following!

#### To the Editor

When are the newspapers going to expose all these blasted insurance companies? My home insurance company just notified me that it is placing a

\$50 deductible on my policy because I had five claims in three years. All claims were the result of kids busting windows, painting my house red during Halloween, and such things.

Why have insurance if you're not covered for such things? Why be penalized for something that isn't your fault?

My car insurance has sky-rocketed in the past five years, despite the fact that I didn't have one claim in years and years.

It's interesting to note that my insurance agents no longer come to my home, as they did in the past. Instead, they always phone to give me the bad news. They don't dare step into my house any more probably for fear I might shoot one of them in cold blood.

*From: Reading II Module 3*

- 1) What is the purpose of the letter?
- 2) What is the tone of the letter?
- 3) Who is the letter addressed to?
- 4) Is the writer biased? How do you know?
- 5) Underline the words or phrases that illustrate the bias.

## **Test 2**

Read the following text carefully first! Then do as you are told in the instruction following this text!

### **United We Stand**

Members of the National Rifle Association of America and other reputable gun owners are being maligned by sensational reporting on the part of some writers. By means of cleverly written articles, these authors are presenting vehement diatribes against firearms of all description, against NRA, and against gun owners in general. Some reek of bigotry and parochial thinking, while others appears to be a deliberate attempt to divide and conquer.

The time has come to make a positive effort to overcome the ignorance and misunderstanding about firearms and the people who use them. Those who appreciate and enjoy guns and shooting must share their knowledge and their beliefs with others in their home communities. They must emphasize to public officials and people in general the importance of firearms in America: the positive values of shooting and hunting; the necessity for firearms safety

programs and marksmanship training activities of the National Rifle Association and the contribution of these programs to the American way of life. Those who have most to gain, and most to lose, must convince their friends and associates that guns and shooting are an essential part of our priceless heritage which must be cherished and encouraged. They must make known the true facts about the RNA, its affiliated shooting organizations, and its members in every state of the Union.

The RNA, more than any other organization, promotes the best interests of gun owners and shooters. As a public service, it is dedicated to firearms safety education, marksmanship training, and shooting for recreation. It stands squarely behind the premise that the lawful ownership of firearms must not be denied to American citizens of good repute so long as they continue to use them lawful purposes. The NRA is recognized as the leading authority in the field firearms safety education and marksmanship training because of its nationwide programs for the youth of America. It has demonstrated the soundness of the theory that the educational approach is the most effective method of avoiding gun accidents in the home and in the field. It has developed shooting activities for young people which bring out the qualities of sportsmanship, fair play, self-control, and cooperation so essential to responsible citizenship and to success in life. Its instruction guides and training courses have been prepared as aids for teaching proper gun handling in local communities. The program is conducted on a volunteer basis by thousands of NRA certified instructors in schools, summer camps, shooting clubs and other youth groups, in cooperation with state agencies and local organizations. The NRA is the governing body of competitive rifle and pistol shooting in the United States and, in this capacity, establishes rules and regulations, sanctions tournaments, recognizes national champions, and maintains official records. It represents the shooters of America in the United States Olympic Committee and the International Shooting Union.

The strength of the NRA and therefore the ability to accomplish its objects and purposes depends entirely upon the support of loyal Americans who believe in the right to "keep and bear arms". Every reputable citizen who owns a gun or who shoots a gun should be a member. The small investments for dues will return to each individual member as valuable dividends, in tangible benefits and in the personal satisfaction derived from being a part a great patriotic organization.

Notwithstanding libelous statements and false information appearing in a few publications, the National Rifle Association of America is composed of loyal, law abiding American citizens. Anyone who has an affection for guns and shooting, and anyone who believes in the right to keep and bear arms, belongs in the NRA, because united we stand.

From: Reading II Module 3

Answer the following question by circling 'the correct responses! More than one response may be necessary.

- 1) The author's intent is:
  - A. to persuade the reader that the NRA should not be maligned by sensational reporting
  - B. to rally support against gun laws
  - C. to praise the magazine
  - D. to praise the NRA
  
- 2) The author's tone is:
  - A. humorous
  - B. serious
  - C. sarcastic
  - D. neutral
  
- 3) The author is strongly biased in favor of
  - A. gun control laws
  - B. the NRA and its services
  - C. keeping and bearing arms
  - D. all the above
  
- 4) Is the editorial mostly objective or subjective?

**Feed Back**

After each activity, check your answers with the accompanying answer key. You have done well if you have at least 80% of your answers right, and you can proceed to the next activity. If you have less than 80% right, you should read again the explanations and examples, and do the activity once more. Proceed the same with the form tests; continue with next module only if you have an 80% mastery. The key of the form tests are provided at the end of the module.

$$\text{Level of mastery} = \frac{\text{the number of the right answers}}{\text{the number of the items}} \times 100\%$$

Level of mastery: 90 – 100% = very good

80 – 89% = good

70 – 79% = sufficient

< 70% = insufficient

## UNIT 4

## The Author's Purpose

### A. APPARENT PURPOSES VS NON-APPARENT PURPOSES

Skillful reading implies critical thinking; critical thinking demands the ability to reason, to judge, and to draw your own conclusions. This skill includes the ability to know the writer's purpose. It is the aim of this unit to provide you with this skill.

The author's purpose may be a very simple one: to give information on a subject, to explain something, to share an experience, or it may be to entertain. Very often, however, writers have more complicated more serious purposes. They may want to criticize someone, to arouse sympathy, to persuade the reader to a certain point of view, or to ridicule a person. Or they may just want to express their feelings. If you can learn to recognize the purpose, it will be easier for you to arrive at the real meaning of a writing. If you, for example, recognize that the writer's purpose is to make the readers vote against a female chairman, you may conclude that the writer is prejudiced towards women. The careful reader always recognizes the purpose behind the author's words.

Many readings have very clear purposes, and are not hard to recognize, as in the following advertisements:

At Hair Design Salons we'll make you look better than you can imagine. Six professional stylists to meet your every need. Stop in for a free consultation to day. Puerto Rican white rum can do anything better than gin or vodka.

The first ad is written to encourage the readers to have their hair styled at Hair Design Salons. The purpose of the second ad is to encourage readers to use rum instead of gin or vodka in their mixed drinks. In both ads it is clear that the writer is trying to convince you to buy a certain product. However, in many other types of reading material, the writer's purpose is not so apparent. Even advertisements can at times be hard to interpret: we know that it aims at selling, but what does it exactly sell? For instance, in an ad for a particular brand of cigarettes, a stylishly dressed woman is pictured holding a cigarette. The caption reads, "You've come a long way, baby." The ad does not even mention cigarettes. It is left up to you, the reader, to infer that stylish women

smoke Virginia Slims. Certainly you have read many such puzzling advertisements.

It often happens that you can predict the author's purpose from the title of the article or by your familiarity with the writer. For instance, if you noticed an article titled "My Role in Watergate," written by Richard Nixon, you could predict that the author's purpose is to defend his previous actions as president.

Since titles of passages may either provide a good and quick clue or none at all as to the author's purpose, let's start our activities with titles.

## **B. HOW TO IDENTIFY THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE**

The first step in identifying the author's purpose in a text in which the purpose is not so obvious is to identify the author's main idea or topic. Then find out what he or she does to support this main idea. After you have done this you start thinking about what he/she is trying to accomplish through the writing and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Who is the intended audience? Who is the writer writing to? Who is the writer addressing? What type or group of people does he have in mind? Often, the level of language, the choice of words, and the complexity of the ideas, examples, or arguments included suggests the audience the writer wants to reach. Once you have identified a potential audience, it will be easier for you to decide what his/her purpose is.

A writer may write for a general interest audience (anyone who is interested in the subject). Most newspapers and periodicals such as *Time* and *Newsweek* appeal to a general interest audience. In this case the writer's purpose is to inform them about the latest events. On the other hand, a writer may write for medical doctors in the *Journal of American Medicine*, or for skiing enthusiasts in *Skiing Today*, or for antique collectors in *The World of Antiques*. Here the writer may have a more specific purpose: besides giving information, he may want to explain, to share experiences, to persuade. Also a writer may intend his or her writing for an audience with a particular political viewpoint with the aim to argue and to debate a certain issue.

2. What is the tone? Determine whether the author is serious or whether he or she is trying to poke fun at the subject. If a writer is ridiculing or making light of a subject, he probably wants to amuse or to entertain the

reader. If his tone is serious he may intend to advise, to explain, to argue. With a sad tone the writer may want to arouse the sympathy of his readers.

3. What is the point of view? Point of view is the perspective from which an article or essay is written. An event, for example, may be described from the point of view of someone who is present at the scene or from that of someone who only has heard or read about it. In the former case the writing is likely to be a subjective reporting while in the latter it might be more objective. A controversial issue may be discussed from an objective point of view, examining both sides of the issue, or a subjective one in which one side of the issue is favored. As such, point of view can often suggest the writer's purpose in writing: a subjective reporting may want to persuade the readers while an objective writing may simply intend to inform or explain.
4. Does the writer try to prove anything about the subject? If so, what? Try to determine if the article is written to persuade the reader to accept a certain point of view or to perform a certain action. For instance, a writer may write to convince you that inflation will cause a national disaster, or that abortion is morally wrong, or that the best jobs are available in health related fields.



## EXERCISES

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### Exercise 1

Decide whether or not the following article titles give a clue to the author's purpose. Write A (apparent) in the blank if it does, write NA if it doesn't. Formulate this purpose whenever it is apparent.

Example:

"A Lesson in Compassion" A

The purpose of the author seems to be to teach the reader how to have compassion towards suffering people.

Do the rest of the exercises the same way!

- 1) The Beef against ... Beef \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Is School Unfair to Girls? \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) Do the Poor Deserve Bad Schools? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Ms. Kidvid Calls it Quits \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) The Strange Burden of a Name \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Frankly, it's Not Worth a Damn \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Our Disappearing Wetlands \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Deep sea Geysers of the Atlantic \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 2

Read each paragraph below carefully and decide what the writer's main purpose was in writing it, by choosing among the options provided.

Example:

Audi's ten year warranty against body rust-through is unlike any other.

This is the only warranty of its kind in the world. And your reminder that an Audi retains its beauty and value far longer than other cars. Test drive the new Audi 100 and find out what makes A-di better than the competition.

- a. to inform      b. to entertain      c. to persuade

Answer:

- c. The text is an ad for cars, and aims at persuading you to buy Treat the rest of the articles the same way.
- 1) The Mormon settlement at Salt Lake City was a success from the beginning. The few difficulties with Indians and with government officials were settled by Brigham Young, the Mormon leader, with skill and understanding. The city grew and prospered. Salt Lake City today has a population of about 200,000 people. Most of them are Mormons.
 

a. to describe      b. to advertise      c. to inform
  - 2) Be grateful every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work, and forced to do your best, will help you develop self-control, strength of character, cheerfulness, and content. The idle will never know the hundred virtues which work and activity can provide.
 

a. to advise      b. to explain      c. to instruct

- 3) Magazines have flooded the market. You find them everywhere - in the stationary store, the drugstore, the beauty shop, the doctor's or dentist's office, the barbershop, railroad stations, bus terminals - wherever people seek a pleasant way to spend leisure time reading.

Perhaps the greatest reason for the magazine's popularity in America is the demand for short, interesting stories and informative articles with a wealth of lively, colorful illustrations. Another reason may be the exciting variety of magazines appealing to everyone's taste, whether for sports, fishing, the outdoors, romance, adventure, fashion, news, westerns, mystery, movies, science, etc.

a. to instruct      b. to explain      c. to entertain

- 4) Even though we were at sea, there was much for me to look at and to wonder at; for this was my first voyage. What amazed me most was the sight of the great ocean itself, for we were out of sight of land. All around us, on all sides of the ship nothing was to be seen but water, water - not a glimpse of green, not the smallest island, or speck of moss anywhere.

Never did I realize till now what the ocean was: how grand and majestic; how solitary; how vast and beautiful and blue. That day it gave no sign of storms or hurricanes, such as I had heard my father tell about. I could not imagine how anything that seemed so playful and placid could be lashed into rage. So, I was not prepared for what I was to see later.

a. to give information      b. to arouse sympathy      c. to express feelings

- 5) A famous doctor had cured a child of a very serious illness. The mother was grateful and went to the doctor's office to thank him.

"Doctor," she said, "there are some things we can't pay for. I thought that you would want to accept this wallet which I made for you with my own hands."

"Madam," answered the doctor rudely. "I don't practice medicine for sentimental reasons. You must pay me with money. Your bill is two thousand dollars."

The lady opened the wallet, took out the five thousand dollars she had put in it, and gave the doctor two thousand.

a. to give advice      b. to tell a story      c. to share an experience

- 6) One of the pleasantest things in the world is going on a long walk but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out-of doors, nature is company enough for me.

I cannot see the use of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I want to enjoy it. I go out of town in order to forgot the town and all that is in it. There are those who go to beaches and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room and less baggage. I like solitude, when I give myself to it, for the sake of solitude.

The joy of a solitary walk is liberty - perfect liberty- to think, feel, and do just as one pleases. We take a trip chiefly to be free of all inconveniences- to leave ourselves behind and, more, to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing space to think about different matters that I leave town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, the green grass beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner.

- a) to present an opinion.
  - b) to give an explanation.
  - c) to state a criticism.
- 7) From his pictures he appears to be swarthy, with black hair and sparkling eyes. But he was really very fair and had blue eyes. They were deep-set and piercing, though sometimes clouded by melancholy.

He had a broad forehead which was lined with wrinkles by the time he was thirty. His mouth was well-cut and his chin prominent.

He had a deep voice, but his speech was halting and often trembled with emotion as he spoke passionately of what interested him. At times he was friendly, but more often he was ungracious and reserved.

He was of medium height, broad-shouldered, and sturdy. When seated he seemed much taller than he really was. He was very restless; he had inherited from his native land the mountaineer's passion for walking and climbing, and a love of travel which remained with him nearly to his death.

- a. to describe
- b. to inform
- c. to ridicule

*From: Selections for Developing English Language Skills*

Test yourself now whether you can recognize the author's purpose by applying the questions above to the following activities!

**Exercise 3**

Read each paragraph below carefully and identify the author's tone! Then write fanciful, frantic, humorous, serious, friendly, or admiring on the line provided! Decide also what the writer's purpose was in writing it.

This could be:

- a. to inform    c. to persuade    e. to amuse    g. to explain  
b. to entertain    d. to share an experience    f. to advise

Then on the line before each paragraph write the a, b, c, d, e, f or g.

Example:

- b --    Once upon a time, there was a land called Endella. Every June, when the bright days of summer had come once more, the king of Endella would send a proclamation inviting all the knights to a grand tournament  
..... fanciful .....

Answer: The author uses a fanciful tone, he is telling fairy tale. His purpose is b, to entertain.

Do the rest of the Exercise the same way!

- 1) ----- "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." As he spoke these words, Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the moon. The historic date was July 20, 1969. Almost as amazing was the fact that the whole world was watching the event on TV.  
.....

- 2) ----- "When I was your age, my family lived near the Mississippi River. Every afternoon, on the way home from school, I'd stop and watch all that water rolling by on its way southward, and I'd wonder about all the other people who must have done the same thing. I could never feel lonely because I knew that somewhere along its hundreds of miles of banks there was someone else looking at the river and perhaps wondering about me."  
.....

- 3) ---- Captain Brave of the Cosmis Patrol raced to the time machine and set the dial for Egypt, 3000 B.C. He had to find the builder of the dreaded "Pharaoh's Man-trap" and learn its secret. If he didn't learn the secret, courageous Lieutenant Daring would remain trapped inside forever. Captain Brave worried, "Is it possible that I save my lifelong friend?" Then, just moments later the captain stepped out into the shadows of the Pyramids. His work could begin!  
.....
- 4) ---- Lucy looked up from her book. The whole class was laughing at something. She turned around and asked Maureen what was so funny. Maureen tried to explain, but she couldn't stop giggling. Everyone was looking at Lucy's feet. Lucy glanced down at her feet and saw a red shoe on one foot and a brown shoe on the other foot.  
.....
- 5) ---- Every student at Smithfield Junior High School has an opinion about what needs to be done to make this a better school. When student council elections are held next week, every student should express his opinion by voting for a candidate with the same views. Remember that it takes much less effort to mark your ballot than it does to grumble throughout the rest of the school year. Make your mark in the world -- vote!  
.....
- 6) ----- Norway is a beautiful country in northern Europe. Mountains cover 75 percent of the country, but the most famous feature of the landscape is the fiord. Hundreds of these narrow bays indent the coast of Norway, making it resemble the teeth of a comb. Many fiords are so deep that ocean steamers can travel far inland on them. Water-falls add beauty to the sheer rock walls of some Norwegian fiords.  
.....
- 7) ---- The safety pin was invented in 1846. Now, you are probably asking, what's the point of knowing that? I say the safety pin can hold its own among the great inventions of mankind. People of all ages make use of the safety pin. Take just one example --mothers all over the country confidently sending their children off to school knowing that the milk

money is safely pinned inside their pockets. I'm not claiming that the safety pin is the most famous of man's inventions. My point is that it deserves more credit than it gets.

.....

- 8) ---- There is just so much water on the face of the earth, and it seems man is trying to spoil as much of it as possible. The oceans may be used as a source of water supply for humans in the future, but right now man must rely on fresh water supplies. The rivers and lakes must be kept free from pollution. Factories and cities should be planned and built so that they do not pollute the very source from which they must draw water.
- .....

- 9) ---- My aunt makes lemonade the strangest way. Now you all know the way people usually make lemonade: they open an envelope of artificial flavoring, coloring, and sweetener and add it to water. Well, my aunt squeezer juice from real lemons and even adds real sugar to the juice. What some people won't do.
- .....

- 10) ---- In this age of automation and mechanical marvels, my car would be the one to develop a mind of its own! I take the family to a drive in movie. We all dislike the picture, but my car likes it. There we sit until the movie is over. Only then will the car start. I rent parking space in a new underground garage. The car doesn't like it and stops in the driveway every time. I plead with it. I kick the tires and pound the hood. I tell it the exhaust fumes are piped in from the streets so cars will feel at home. Nothing!
- .....

- 11) ---- After a long migratory flight, it would seem that birds would be completely exhausted. Actually this is not so. If they have not met with any severe storms along the route, the birds recover quickly. After a few hours of resting and feeding, the birds appear to be completely refreshed. Credit for this seems to belong to a bird's ability to soar and glide with the wind currents for long periods of time, making the trip less tiring.
- .....

**Exercise 4**

Read the paragraph below carefully and decide what the writer's main purpose was in writing it, by answering the questions following!

**Minority Group Representation and Ownership**

Blacks, Hispanics, and other minority groups have brought strong pressures to bear against the media in recent years. They seek a larger, more favorable role on the air, both in the number of minority performers and the elimination of false, stereotype images of minority individuals. Progress has been made. For example, a large increase is evident in the number of black performers in television commercials. However, on a more significant level, serious examinations of problems facing minorities have been shown more frequently on television recently - problems arising from history, economic injustices, and contemporary social attitudes. Among these presentations are "Roots," which made a tremendous impact on the American consciousness; "The Vanishing Family - Crisis in Black America," "Holocaust," "I Remember Harlem," "Playing for Time," and "The Women's Room." Some productions, such as "The Bill Cosby Show," provided an excellent showcase for actors from minority groups to display their talents. Some stereotyping still exists, but gradually it is being reduced through a sharpened awareness on the part of those who control television programming. Organized groups that focus attention on these evidences of stereotyping also help to promote more balanced programming.

*From: Efficient and Flexible Reading*

- 1) What is the subject of the passage?
- 2) What is the main idea of the passage?
- 3) How does the author support the main idea?
- 4) What audience is the author writing for?
- 5) What tone is the passage written in?
- 6) What is the author's point of view?
- 7) In conclusion, what is the author's purpose in writing the passage?

**Exercise 5**

Read the paragraph below carefully and decide what the writer's main purpose was in writing it! Complete the statements following by choosing among the options provided!

Example:

Subject and verb has to agree and placing a comma between subject and verb, is not correct.

The writer's tone is

- a. serious    b. humorous    c. satirical    d. ironical

Answer: d. ironical

### Go on with the Exercise!

If one is about to clean house, a good first step is to get rid of the garbage. But one man's garbage is another man's keepsake. Garbage is what a person wants to get rid of. What I want to get rid of is the human garbage that willfully perpetrates outrage against the rest of humanity and whom we have come to call terrorists.

*From: Efficient and Flexible Reading*

- 1) The writer's tone in this paragraph is:
  - A. serious
  - B. angry
  - C. critical
  - D. sentimental
  
- 2) The writer's intent is to
  - A. give advice
  - B. explain
  - C. express his feelings
  - D. to convince
  
- 3) Most readers would probably react to this writing with
  - A. amusement
  - B. mixed feelings
  - C. indifference
  - D. fear

### Exercise 6

Read the paragraph below carefully and decide what the writer's main purpose was in writing it, by answering the questions following!

Despite the rising rates of divorce and the tendency to delay marriage, sociological research has found a high, and very likely increasing, level of satisfaction with the quality of family life in America. Whether it's measured in terms of parents' interactions with their children, the strength and quality of relations with aged relatives, or the quality of couples' sex lives, the evidence often suggests that things are getting better, not worse. As we've seen, most opinion surveys find that people of every age still value family life above most other things; they are also, at least on the surface, remarkably happy with it. The recent Middletown study suggests that for blue-collar workers, family life has distinctly improved since the 1920s, when it was often dreary, bleak, and burdened by the twin afflictions of too much work and too little income. By all accounts, it was also characterized by what we would now regard as appallingly restricted communication between husband and wives and a similarly unsatisfying and narrow sexuality (Caplow et al., 1982, pp. 117-135).

*From: Efficient and Flexible Reading*

- 1) What is the subject of the passage?
- 2) What is the main idea of the passage?
- 3) How does the author support the main idea?
- 4) What audience is the author writing for?
- 5) What tone is the passage written in?
- 6) What is the author's point of view?
- 7) In conclusion, what is the author's purpose in writing the passage?

### **Exercise 7**

Read the article below carefully and do the exercises following the article!

Ladies: Why Not Creative Cussing?

#### **William Zinsser**

It was just a simple accident-the pretty girl sitting next to me at dinner spilled something on her dress-and I wouldn't have notice it at all except for her unusual reaction.

"D--it" she yelled

"Mercy me! I said. "What's the matter?"

"How the h--do they expect us to eat this cr-p?"

"Land sakes, who are you talking about?" I asked.

"Those sons of b--s out in the kitchen," she snapped

"Gracious, a thing like that could happen to any of us," I told her. and that seemed to calm her down. Still, the incident left me shaken and I didn't know what to make of it. Then I saw a headline in the New York Times:

WOMEN INFRINGING ON ANOTHER MENS'S PREROGATIVE:  
THE FREEDOM TO CURSE

"Tar nation!" I said to myself (for the headline really made me mad).

"Will they never stop this blasted infringing?"

The article said that "the use of obscene language among women, from coeds of the New Left to proper matrons at swank Manhattan cocktail parties, has risen sharply. Police have been amazed by the obscenity issuing from the lips of apparently demure girls at political demonstrations.

But why would an apparently demure girl want to do a thing like that? One theory suggested that the inhibitions came down when "the beautiful people and female movie stars started doing it." The theory is all right as far as it goes (which isn't very far), but it has one major flaw. For when the beautiful people started using foul language, didn't they become less beautiful people, or even somewhat ugly people? That's the trouble with having the beautiful people around as a new American class. Just when they're so beautiful it almost makes you want to cry, they turn around and do something gross, and then all our values go p-f.

So if it isn't a question of beauty, what is it a question of? Raw power, says a psychologist who taught at Columbia last spring and found that Barnard girls were much more likely than Columbia men to "curse a cop" during the campus riots. "They were aware that cursing was a weapon, one of the few they had", and they used it for two revolutionary ends--to exploit class differences and thereby enrage the police, whose own women don't curse in public, and to establish equality with Columbia men.

Thus feminism finds its ultimate tool--the four-letter word--and drives for total victory. And who shall hurl it back, this Anglo-saxon tide? I don't mind women having the vote, or holding male jobs, or going to men's colleges, or any that stuff. But how can the toughest cop withstand the obscenity of an apparently demure girl? Let him spray her with Mace; she

will spray him back with expletives and he will crumple. So much for law and order.

And how can a husband come home at night to a family where he is not only outvoted but also out sworn? This was one of his few areas of domestic competence - a rude skill, but at least his very own, the vestigial reward of his army years when he fought for his country, that immemorial proof of manhood, while the little woman stayed home and made apple pie. Now the little woman stays home to read dirty novels and practice her vocabulary, and a husband who opens the door to announce that he had a heck of a hard day, or that he got a darn good raise, will find himself blown back out on the sidewalk, a victim of a new equality. So much for the American home.

Well, swear away, girls, if that will make you feel manly. But at least break some new ground. Surely it's no victory just to use the same few tired words in which men have tried so long to wrap their virility or to bury their frustrations. Invent! Be creative! Bring feminine grace and feminist intellect to profanity's arid shores.

If a cop gets too nosy, call him a dirty scrutator. If you see him stealing an apple, tell him he's full of usufruct. Accuse him of manumission at least once a day. Taunt your husband for being intestate. Complain that he drinks too much to labialize. Say you caught him forsaking in the attic, or animadverting on your best friend. Coeds, demand fornication in the zoology lab and rectorial right on Sunday. Shout the new words with gusto at riots and rallies: sphagnum, flocculate, surd, ropery, ort, fuscous, lingulate, fancied, nard. They're all there in Webster's, ladies--hundreds of them. If you really want a weapon, that's how to knock the futtock out from under the ship of state.

*From: Reading II Modul 3*

- 1) T/F The author pretends to be upset at hearing demure women using profanity.
- 2) T/F The author places part of the 'blame' for the rise of women's use of profanity on the 'beautiful people.'
- 3) Circle the statements below which the author states are effects wo men's use of profanity are having on the male.
  - a. It is causing man to lose their masculine prerogative.
  - b. It is causing man to feel browbeaten-at home by cursing wives.
  - c. It is causing man to talk like sissies.
  - d. It is causing man to lose confidence in themselves.

- 4) The tone of the article can best be described as:  
a. serious    b. emotional    c. ironic    d. sarcastic
- 5) The attitude of the writer can best be described as:  
a. dead serious    c. tolerant  
b. disgusted    d. playfully ridiculing
- 6) T/F We can infer from the author's attitude and tone that he does not approve of women's use of profanity.
- 7) T/F When the author says ' all our values go p—f ' he is revealing his ironic tone.
- 8) T/F By acting naive and making such statements as "Mercy me!", "Land sakes," and "Gracious," in contrast to the girl's statements, such as "D--it" and "How the h--," the author is consciously creating tone.
- 9) T/F The author suggests that women should be creative in their cussing because it is no victory for women to use the same few words men have used for years.
- 10) T/F The article is aimed at women who cusses freely.
- 11) T/F The author's purpose in writing this article is to criticize this phenomenon and to get the readers to agree with him.

*Key to exercises*

Exercise 1

- 1) NA
- 2) A To give facts whether or not schools treat girls differently from boys
- 3) A To argue that the poor do not deserve bad schools.
- 4) NA
- 5) A To explain how one's name can influence one's life.
- 6) NA
- 7) A To warn us that our wetlands are disappearing.
- 8) A To give information on the deepsea geysers of the Atlantic.

Keep in mind that the answers in the key are just predictions. It is always possible that after reading the article the author's purpose turns out to be quite different. Why don't you try now to recognize the author's purpose of the texts in Exercise 2.

## Exercise 2

- 1) c to inform about the start and development of the Mormon settlement in Salt Lake City.
- 2) a to advise us how we should behave.
- 3) b to explain why magazines are so popular.
- 4) c to express the author's feelings of amazement at the ocean.
- 5) a to give advice that one should never be rude.
- 6) a to present an opinion that going on a walk should be done alone.
- 7) a to describe the physical characteristics and the personality of a man.

## Exercise 3

	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Tone</b>
1)	a to inform	serious
2)	d to share an experience	friendly
3)	b to entertain	frantic
4)	a to amuse	humorous
5)	c to persuade	serious
6)	a to inform	admiring
7)	a to amuse	humorous
8)	a to inform	serious
9)	a to amuse	humorous
10)	b, a to amuse, to entertain	fanciful
11)	g to explain	serious

## Exercise 4

- 1) The subject is minority representation in the media.
- 2) The main idea is that minority representation in the media is changing.
- 3) The author supports this main idea by using examples.
- 4) The passage seems to be written for an audience familiar with television programs.
- 5) The tone is serious and authoritative; the authors appears well informed on the subject.
- 6) The author's point of view is objective: he identifies the problem and mentions recent changes.
- 7) The author's purpose is to inform and to establish that media representation of minorities is increasingly fair, serious, and favorable.

## Exercise 5

- 1) b. angry. The writer chooses harsh words and expressions: to get rid, garbage, human garbage, willfully perpetrates outrage
- 2) c. to express his feelings.
- 3) b. mixed feelings. People react to somebody angry in various ways.

They may agree, disagree, feel shocked, they may even be amused.

## Exercise 6

- 1) Satisfaction with family life.
- 2) There is a high and increasing level of satisfaction with the quality of family life in America.
- 3) By mentioning research and survey findings.
- 4) It is addressed to an intellectual audience, interested in social behavior.
- 5) Serious
- 6) The writer is objective. He bases his thesis on research findings.
- 7) The writer's purpose is to inform the readers about this tendency and to explain why it is so.

## Exercise 7

- 1) T
- 2) T
- 3) a and b
- 4) c ironic
- 5) d playfully ridiculing
- 6) T
- 7) T
- 8) T
- 9) T
- 10) F; the subject and "title convey this idea, but the ironic approach is really aimed at the general public who might also have observed this new habit.
- 11) T



## SUMMARY

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Authors write for a variety of purposes: to inform or instruct the reader, to amuse or entertain, to arouse sympathy, to persuade the reader to do something or to accept a particular opinion. To be an effective reader you must be aware of the author's purpose. The writer's purpose may be obvious, or may be not so apparent. It will help you to arrive at the author's purpose if you know the audience the writer has in mind, his tone, and his point of view.



## FORMATIVE TEST 4

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Now, apply what you have learned so far to the formative test below!

### Test 1

Read the paragraph below carefully and decide what the writer's main purpose was in writing it! Complete the statements following by choosing among the options provided!

Through a very wild, outlying part of England there crawls, cautiously and laboriously, a long single track railway line. It is certainly the most unfortunate railway line that has ever been constructed, even through the scorching sands of a lonely desert or the hot, clammy under-growth of a stifling jungle. Grass grows between the rusty rails and warped sleepers, and the engine, which splutters and whistles a great deal as if trying to cheer itself up, as people do in the dark, has constantly to chug through dark, grimy tunnels and round dangerous sharp bends. The poor thing is often brought to a stop altogether by level crossings, which are extremely abundant, for the roads in this part of the country are much too proud to cross over bridges. And cows and sheep constantly stray on to the line and will not budge, no matter how much the driver or guard 'shoos' at them. The mountains on either side resent its intrusion into their privacy and state down icily at it, sometimes during a storm throwing down large boulders on the track. To make this poor railway even more miserable, the train only runs once a day and then seldom carries more than ten passengers, who mutter and curse at its slowness all the way.

At last the line feels so miserable that it can simply go no further, and stops altogether at a little town called lonely dale.

*From: Understanding and Enjoyment III*

- 1) In this text the writer's main focus is/are the
  - A. scenery
  - B. animals
  - C. obstacles
  - D. railway line
  
- 2) The writer's tone in this paragraph is:
  - A. humorous
  - B. angry
  - C. critical
  - D. sentimental
  
- 3) The writer's intent is to
  - A. describe
  - B. explain
  - C. express his feelings
  - D. amuse
  
- 4) The figurative language the writer mostly uses to establish this tone is
  - A. irony
  - B. personification
  - C. euphemism
  - D. paradox
  
- 5) Most readers would probably react to this writing with
  - A. amusement
  - B. irritation
  - C. indifference
  - D. puzzlement

## Test 2

Read the paragraph below carefully and decide what the writer's main purpose was in writing it, by answering the questions following!

### When Patients Call the Shots

There is nothing therapeutic about the somber process of checking into a hospital. Already ailing and disoriented, incoming patients must fill out endless forms, produce insurance cards and steel themselves for the inevitable probes, cuts. Needle prick and medications that mark a modern hospital stay. The last thing patients want to think about is the possibility that

they will never leave - that their illness or a medical mistake will leave them comatose and thus incapable of making life-and-death decisions for themselves.

Yet that prospect is what most Americans will now be asked to consider every time they enter a hospital, whether it is to undergo heart bypass surgery or to get a hernia repaired. A new law that goes into effect this week requires all federally funded hospitals, nursing homes and hospices to tell incoming patients of their right to fill out a living will, a document that specifies that if something goes wrong, they will not be kept alive against their wishes. Although the rule is long overdue, expert wonder whether hospital are up to the bureaucratic task and whether jarring questions - if not properly handled may stir needless fear and anxiety.

The concept of a living will has been around for decades. Moved by the tragic stories of comatose patients like Nancy Cruzan, the Missouri woman who was kept alive for seven years against her parents' wishes, more than 40 state legislatures have enacted laws aimed at encouraging patients to make their treatment preferences known beforehand. Some of the newest laws authorize people to appoint a surrogate, or proxy, who can make medical decisions for them when necessary. Widespread use of such measures could reduce the extraordinary expense of keeping terminal patients on life support systems that neither they nor their family desires.

Yet so far, just 15% of Americans have made out living wills, and the new federal rule is an attempt to encourage their use. At Chicago's Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center the admitting clerk reads a little speech to incoming patients: "Do you have a living will? Can we have a copy of it?" Those who answer are handed a pamphlet that goes over the Illinois law on the topic. A California health-care group has prepared special booklets describing the basics of living wills in 10 languages, including Chinese and Farsi.

Unfortunately, the law falls short of ensuring that patients will get what they want if and when the critical time comes. Many states allow the withdrawal of treatment or feeding tubes only under limited conditions, regardless of a patient's preferences. Removal may be permitted when death is imminent but not when a patient is suffering from a chronic condition like "persistent vegetative state." Even now, the decision on what is best for a particular patient often winds up in court.

At best, the new law is a mild nudge in the right direction. "It urges people to get their affairs in order," says the American Hospital Association's Fredric Entin. Like many medicines, the measures may at first be hard to swallow, but the consequences of not taking them could be incalculably worse.

- 1) What is the subject of the passage?
- 2) What is the main idea of the passage?
- 3) How does the author support the main idea?
- 4) What audience is the author writing for?
- 5) What tone is the passage written in?
- 6) What is the author's point of view?
- 7) In conclusion, what is the author's purpose in writing the passage?

### Feed Back

After each activity, check your answers with the accompanying answer key. You have done well if you have at least 80% of your answers right, and you can proceed to the next activity. If you have less than 80% right, you should read again the explanations and examples, and do the activity once more. Proceed the same with the form tests; continue with next module only if you have an 80% mastery. The key of the form tests are provided at the end of the module.

$$\text{Level of mastery} = \frac{\text{the number of the right answers}}{\text{the number of the items}} \times 100\%$$

Level of mastery: 90 – 100% = very good

80 – 89% = good

70 – 79% = sufficient

< 70% = insufficient

## Key to Formative Test

### *Formative Test 1*

#### **Test 1**

- 1) Main opinion: Americans can differentiate only two kinds of odors, good ones and bad ones, and they always try to cover up bad odors with good odors.

It is incapable of degrees of differentiation of odors the American

Nose can smell only two - good odors and bad odors. (par. 1)

The three good odors are used to mask all of the bad odors (par. 2).

- 2) No, he hasn't.
- 3) The first part of his opinion he has not supported at all, he simply stated that Americans can smell only two odors. He has tried to defend the second part, they always try to cover up bad odors with good odors, by statements that look like facts, but are actually additional opinions based on his subjective observations which are not proven to be true. For example:
  - a) Wherever you find the Great American Nose, a hand holding a can to spray, a deodorant to roll on, an air freshener to stick up, or a cleaning solution to wipe on will not be far behind (par. 3).
  - b) Should the Nose detect bad odors, you will hear the American complaining loudly, and very shortly excusing himself from their presence (par. 4)
  - c) They can't go anywhere without extra bathroom paper, disinfectant sprays and cleaners (par. 5).

#### **Test 2**

- 1) The writer believes that everybody can teach.
- 2) All of us, from the very youngest children to the oldest members of our cultures should come to realize our own potential as teachers. (last sentence)
- 3) No, it isn't. Because no supporting facts are given.
- 4) Most people's opinion. The common belief.
- 5) Teaching is a profession that needs special schooling and a certificate.
- 6) The first sentence of the text.

- 7) It is contrary to the writer's.
- 8) No, it isn't. Because no supporting facts are given.

### *Formative Test 2*

#### **Test 1**

D -- positive and encouraging.

#### **Test 2**

- 1) a Worried, because they have to pay so much for energy, energy is slowly diminishing, but people do not seem to care.
- 2) b Emotional. By using words like: cost a bomb, ten million pounds a day, millstone, simply got to Save It. Also by using short sentences, and imperatives: Turn down ....., Insulate ....., Clean ... , Keep ....

### *Formative Test 3*

#### **Test 1**

- 1) To share his experience, to arouse the reader's sympathy, to accuse the insurance company.
- 2) Serious, emotional, angry.
- 3) The letter is addressed to the newspaper and, consequently, also to all readers interested in insurance and insurance companies.
- 4) The writer is strongly biased against insurance companies. He presents only one side of the case - his own, and he uses words and phrases that have a very negative connotation.
- 5) Expose, blasted, penalized, they don't dare step into my house, I might shoot them in cold blood.

### *Formative Test 4*

#### **Test 1**

- 1) d the railway line.
- 2) a humorous.
- 3) a and d to describe and to amuse.
- 4) b personification.
- 5) a amusement.

## Test 2

- 1) The new federal law about living wills.
- 2) How far the new law about living wills is implemented at the federally funded hospitals, nursing homes and hospices and how effective it is.
- 3) By presenting facts and figures around the implementation of this law:  
Yet so far, just 15% ....  
At Chicago's Rush Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center.....  
A California health-care group.....
- 4) The general public interested in health and medicine.
- 5) The writer uses a serious tone.
- 6) The writer starts the article with an objective stand but close to the end he gives a subjective evaluation: he has a positive attitude towards this law but he is skeptical whether the law will be effective:
  - a) Unfortunately (par. 5).
  - b) At best (par. 6).
- 7) To give information, explanation, and his views about the implementation of the new law.

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