

# SOAPSTone

## STRATEGY FOR WRITTEN ANALYSIS

The SOAPStone Strategy is a 6-part analytical process used to written prose. Applying this strategy is ideal for reading texts, writing about texts, or planning for your own, original writing. Follow the steps below to effectively analyze the rhetorical choices in a written document.

### S SPEAKER

**STEP 1: DETERMINE THE SPEAKER.** Identify who is telling the story or giving the information. Is it an omniscient narrator, a character in the story, or the actual author? Why do you think the author chose that person to be the speaker? What details about this person are important to know?

### O OCCASION

**STEP 2: RECOGNIZE THE OCCASION.** The occasion refers to the time and place of the story or written document. When and where do the events take place? From what geographical and chronological context is the speaker thinking and acting? How does the time and place affect and inform the text? What details are given about the occasion in the text itself?

### A AUDIENCE

**STEP 3: DESCRIBE THE AUDIENCE.** Consider the primary, secondary, and even tertiary audiences of this text. Who was the text written for? Why was it written for them? What characteristics do you know about the audience and how do you know that the text was written with them in mind?

### P PURPOSE

**STEP 4: ESTABLISH THE PURPOSE.** Why would the author write this particular text for the audience you noted above? Determine the meaning and message underlying the prose and ask yourself: what value does this give to my audience? What does the author think or hope the audience of the text will think about the text or do as a result of it? How does the author effectively (or ineffectively) make his or her purpose clear and realize the purpose's goals?

### S SUBJECT

**STEP 5: INVESTIGATE THE SUBJECT.** Knowing the audience and purpose of the document, in conjunction with the occasion and speaker allows you to better understand the subject or topic of the text. What is the author really getting at? What belies the story or prose, possibly providing a deeper meaning? What does the author reveal (or not reveal) when addressing the subject?

### Tone

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**STEP 6: DISSECT THE TONE.** Evaluate the word choice, organization, and rhetorical patterns in the prose. How do the textual elements make the audience feel? How does the author feel about the subject? Is the message heavy-handed, or is it subtle? What can you say about the syntactical construction and structure of the text in regards to tone?

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