Station 1: Tone

**Tone:** The tone of a literary work shows the author’s attitude or feelings toward the subject matter and/or characters.

Can you identify the tone and style of the following letters?

Read each letter below. As you read, try to determine the style and tone the author uses. On your worksheet, fill in the chart to describe the style and tone of each letter and words that helped you identify each.

**Letter One:**

I am writing regarding an error in my cell phone bill for the month of May. Although I have tried several times to contact you by phone, I have been unable to speak to any representatives who could help me with my problem. Clearly, I am disappointed in the type of service I have received from your company. After you have credited my account for the $150 I was overcharged, I will be obtaining phone service from a different company, one who values its customers.

**Letter Two:**

I hope this letter finds you well. Please allow me to give you a snapshot of the current Smith account. So far, we’ve had relatively few problems which were easily handled by our staff. Mr. Smith in particular has repeatedly shared his appreciation for the work our firm has done. He has even indicated that he would like for our firm to handle all future accounts as well. Once the project is completed, I’ll be sending you all official documents with final stats and figures.

**Letter Three:**

Hey! How are things up there in Maryland? Things are wonderful here. Ben and I are going on a family vacation to the Bahamas for Winter break. We’re all looking forward to it. Do you think you’ll be able to make it home for Christmas? It’s been so long since we’ve all seen each other. You won’t believe all of the growing these kids have done—Mary’s almost as tall as I am now! Let us hear from you and hope to see you soon!

Station 2: Poetry

Read the following excerpt from the poem, “Barter” by Sara Teasdale. Then complete the questions on your worksheet.

Life has loveliness to sell,

All beautiful and splendid things

Blue waves whitened on a cliff,

Soaring fire that sways and sings

5 And children’s faces looking up

Holding wonder like a cup

1. How many lines are in this excerpt of the poem? How many stanzas are in this excerpt of the poem?
2. What type of rhyme is used in lines 2, 4, 5, and 6 of this stanza?
3. What does the poet do to make the lines 2 and 4 look differently from the other lines?
4. What is the meaning of the simile in lines 5 and 6?
5. List several words/phrases from this stanza that create an image for the reader.
6. What is the central idea of this poem?

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Station 3: Main Idea

Read each passage and determine the main idea. Ask yourself, “What is the author trying to tell me?” Answer the questions that follow on your worksheet

**Passage #1:**

Being a clown isn't all fun and games.  Rodeo clowns expose themselves to great danger every time they perform.  When cowboys dismount or are bucked off of bulls at riding competitions, rodeo clowns jump in front of the bulls and motion wildly to get their attention.  In this way rodeo clowns provide an alternate target, and in doing so protect the rider.  So you see, sometimes clowning around can be serious business.

1. **What is the central idea of this passage?**
2. Bulls are afraid of rodeo clowns
3. Rodeo clowns should earn higher pay for their dangerous job
4. Rodeo clowns protect cowboys by putting themselves in danger
5. Cowboys should appreciate rodeo clowns more

**Passage #2:**

What do you get when you cross a robot and an astronaut?  A Robonaut!  Robonauts are robot helpers designed to work side-by-side with astronauts.  Work on the first Robonaut began in 1997, and by 2002 Robonaut B was revealed to the public.  Robonaut B may have featured interchangeable lower bodies, like four-wheel mode or hydraulic legs, but scientists and engineers continued to improve Robonaut.  In February of 2010, Robonaut 2 was released to the public.  Robonaut 2 moved four times faster than the first Robonaut.  An advanced version of Robonaut 2 was finally tested in outer space in 2011.  Robonaut functioned exactly as designed.

1. **What is the main idea of this passage?**

**Passage #3:**

A penny for your thoughts?  If it's a 1943 copper penny, it could be worth as much as fifty thousand dollars.  In 1943, most pennies were made out of steel since copper was needed for World War II, so the 1943 copper penny is ultra-rare.  Another rarity is the 1955 double die penny.  These pennies were mistakenly double stamped, so they have overlapping dates and letters.  If it's uncirculated, it'd easily fetch $25,000 at an auction.  Now that's a pretty penny.

1. **What is the central idea of this passage?**

**Passage #4:**

Harriet Quimby was famous for flying firsts. She was the first licensed woman pilot in the United States. She was also the first woman to fly across the English Channel. She made that flight in 1912!

Flying was very dangerous back then. Planes were made of not much more than paper, wire, and glue. Their cockpits were open to the weather. Pilots had no radios. Parachutes hadn't been invented yet. It took someone very brave, like Harriet Quimby, to fly those planes!

**Fill out the chart on your worksheet to determine text evidence to support the main idea of each paragraph.**

Station 4: Word Choice

Denotation: The definition of a word, such as you would find in a dictionary

**Connotation: The idea/feeling/tone of a word.**

Directions: Use the words in the box to complete the sentences. Pay attention to the connotation of each word, and use it to help you determine the best word for each sentence.

**smell aroma odor fragrance**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of freshly-brewed coffee filled the kitchen.
2. The perfume’s elegant \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was worth its high price.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of smoke alerted the family to the fire.
4. We saw a black and white blur of fur rush by the cabin, and soon the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of skunk wafted through the windows.

Directions: Below are more synonyms that have different connotations. Think about what their connotations suggest as you answer the questions.

**food cuisine nourishment chow**

1. Which is a fancy restaurant more likely to serve?
2. Which would a cowboy eat while out on the trail?
3. Which would a baby need in order to stay healthy?
4. Which do you eat on an everyday basis?

Directions: Look at the list of words below. On your worksheet, divide them into two groups: words with a positive connotation and words with a negative connotation.

**self-confident pushy stubborn firm**

**flexible indecisive casual old**

**mature sloppy workaholic assertive**

**conceited hard-working**

Station 5: Fact vs. Opinion

Read each passage and complete the charts on your worksheet.

**Passage #1: Meet Norman Rockwell**

Norman Rockwell was a famous American artist. He was one of the best artists the country has ever seen. Many of Rockwell’s paintings appeared on the cover of a magazine. It was called the *Saturday Evening Post*. Rockwell painted all kinds of pictures. When he painted scenes with lots of people, he sometimes ran out of models. Then he painted himself into the picture.

**Passage #2: An Unusual Race**

Many places have boat races. But the town of Rieti in Italy has a washtub race. What a silly event! The race takes place on the Velino River. The races, all men, kneel in the tubs. They use oars to paddle. If a racer isn’t careful, the tub tips over. Also, if a racer doesn’t paddle correctly, the tub spins around. You have to be a pretty good sport to participate in this race.

**Passage #3: Nesting Dolls**

Nesting dolls are sets of wooden dolls. It takes a lot of artistic skill to paint their detailed faces and outfits. You twist open each doll to find another, smaller doll inside. These dolls were first made in Russia in 1890. Today, major league baseball teams are handing out these dolls. They are called Stackable Stars. Each doll is painted to look like a player on the team. Many fans collect the dolls.

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Station 6: Text Evidence

Read the following excerpt. Complete the chart on your worksheet by finding textual evidence to support the claims.

**Apples: They can do that?**

It's hard to believe that one fruit can pack such a punch. The truth is, many fruits and vegetables do. But lately scientists have been pretty excited about apple research. Eating apples has been shown to lower the risk of cancer, stroke, and heart disease. There really is truth to that old saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." Here are some facts from research done throughout the world:

* Cancer: Laboratory work at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, found that certain nutrients in apples slow the growth of colon and liver cancer cells. And researchers in Hawaii studied lung cancer patients and another group that was cancer-free. They found that eating apples kept the risk of lung cancer low.
* Stroke: Researchers in Finland studied more than 9,000 men for 28 years and found that those who ate lots of apples had a low risk of stroke. A stroke happens when a blood clot in the brain causes damage or when there is bleeding in the brain.
* Heart disease: At the University of California- Davis, researchers found that eating apples kept "bad," or LDL, cholesterol from harming the body. LDL cholesterol causes changes in the arteries. These changes are the buildup of plaque (PLAK) on the inside walls of the arteries. Plaque can lead to blood clots and heart attacks. A heart attack is like a stroke, only the damage occurs in the heart.
* Other studies showed that people who ate apples regularly had better lung function. Their risk of dying from a heart attack was lower too.

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Station 7: Figurative Language

Read the following poem, “My Heart’s in the Highlands” by Bliss Carmen. Then complete the questions on your worksheet.

My Heart's in the Highlands

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;  
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;  
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe.  
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.  
5 Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,  
The birthplace of valor, the country of worth;  
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,  
The hills of the Highlands forever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;  
10 Farewell to the straths\* and green valleys below;  
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;  
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.  
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;  
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\*Straths: areas of grass along a river valley

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Station 8: Scavenger Hunt

Read the following poem, “The Final Deployment” by Anna Prokos. Then complete the scavenger hunt on your worksheet.

The Final Deployment

By: Anna Prokos

Selena strapped on her sneakers and ran to the airport

like a race horse sprints to the finish line.

She trotted past traffic and trees,

Zipped over curbs and cracks

And soon reached her final destination

Where a thousand of her closest friends waited.

And turned their owl eyes in her direction

She took a gasp so loud

it was heard on three other continents.

Selena spotted her brother

Thin, clean-shaven, and a fit fiddle

The siblings stared straight at each other

And ran to give hugs that had waited

Too long to be given.

Then, like champions taking their final lap,

Ran home to proclaim their memories back.

As family kissed and hugged

and cried a river of tears,

Selena kicked off her sneakers

That slumped with exhaustion near

combat boots that had a million stories to tell.