

USING A CONSISTENT TONE IN A PARAGRAPH

In a paragraph, maintaining a consistent tone is generally a good thing.

Readers appreciate when the tone of a paragraph is generally continuous. When the tone of the paragraph is changed mid-way through the paragraph, the reader may not appreciate the change (additionally, such a change may lead to some confusing perspective on the topic/subject). Therefore, we advise that you maintain the same tone throughout a paragraph.

TONE AS MODE OF DISCOURSE

Tone varies between types of discourse. A composition usually contains a tone related to its purpose/intent, whether *Persuasive*, *Expository*, *Descriptive*, *Reflective*, or *Narrative* (below the qualities of each type of tone are explained). When a tone is found exclusively throughout a text, we say that the text is composed within a specific mode (e.g., a persuasive mode, an expository mode, etc.).

Tone:	Persuasive	Expository	Descriptive	Reflective	Narrative
Action:	Persuades	Informs	Describes	Reflects	Tells a story
Voice:	3rd Person	3rd Person	1st/3rd Person	1st Person	1st Person
Orientation:	Oriented by Facts+ Thesis	Oriented by Facts + Details	Detail-Oriented	Oriented by Evaluation or Assessment	Story-Oriented
Formal/ Informal:	Formal	Formal	Formal/Informal	Formal/Informal	Informal
Examples:	Standard College Essays, Academic Arguments, Political Writing	Summaries, Encyclopedia Entries, Scientific Analyses/Reports, News	Travel Writing, Incident Reports	Film Reviews, Product Reviews, Appraisals, Sports Writing	Autobiography, Journal Entries, Biography

Remember: When composing, keep all of your sentences in the same tone within the paragraph.

FORMAL/INFORMAL TONES

Additionally, compositions may contain an *informal* or a *formal tone*.

EX:

(MIXED TONE)

Ignorant and intolerant people disturb me. I know that intelligent people are very helpful and usually kind. A student in a class suggested that President Obama was Muslim. They told me that he was sworn in on the Quran. His peers noted this statement and then supported him in saying some not so nice things about Muslims. Well, first of all, President Obama is Christian. More noteworthy, he was sworn into office on the same Bible that Abraham Lincoln was sworn into office on and that is amazing.

Notice how there is a switch from formal to informal, from first-person voice to third person voice, and so forth.

(CONSISTENT TONE)

Ignorant and intolerant people are disturbing. A student in a class suggested that President Obama was Muslim and suggested that he was sworn in on the Quran. His peers noted his ignorant statement and then supported him in condemning Muslims. Well, first of all, President Obama is not Muslim. In fact, he was sworn into office on the same Bible that Abraham Lincoln was sworn into office on...