

Name _____

Date _____

Analyze Author's Tone

Tone is the author's attitude toward the subject, characters, or audience expressed through word choice, sentence structure, and literary devices. Tone can be formal, informal, serious, humorous, sarcastic, optimistic, pessimistic, or many other emotions. Authors may use tone to create atmosphere, reveal character traits, emphasize themes, or influence how readers feel about the subject matter.

Read the following letter to the editor and answer the questions.

To the Editor of the Westfield Gazette:

I am writing to express my deep disappointment regarding the recent decision to reduce our public library's operating hours. As a middle school student who relies heavily on library resources, I find this decision both shortsighted and deeply troubling.

The library has always been a sanctuary for students like me who lack adequate study spaces or internet access at home. By closing at 6:00 P.M. instead of 8:00 P.M. on weekdays, the city council has effectively slammed the door on countless young people who need these resources most. How are working parents supposed to bring their children to the library when it closes before many of them even leave their jobs?

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The council claims this decision was made due to "budget constraints," yet somehow they found \$300,000 for decorative streetlights downtown. Apparently, pretty sidewalks are more important than the education of the city's youth. This reveals the true priorities of our elected officials.

I urge the city council to reconsider this disastrous decision. If financial resources are truly limited, perhaps council members could forego their recent pay raises instead of cutting essential services. The library is not a luxury—it is a necessity for many students, senior citizens, and job-seekers in our community.

The council members may have forgotten what it's like to need public resources, but those of us who depend on the library certainly haven't. I sincerely hope they will correct this grave mistake before irreparable damage is done to our community.

Sincerely,
Jamie Rodriguez
Eighth Grade Student
Westfield Middle School

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1. What is the overall tone of Jamie's letter? Provide specific words or phrases that create this tone.

2. How does Jamie's tone change from the beginning to the end of the letter?

3. How does Jamie's tone reflect the purpose of the letter?

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Analyze Author's Tone - **Answer Key**

1. What is the overall tone of Jamie's letter? Provide specific words or phrases that create this tone.

The overall tone is indignant and critical. Phrases like "deep disappointment," "shortsighted," "slammed the door," and "disastrous decision" create a tone of outrage and frustration.

2. How does Jamie's tone change from the beginning to the end of the letter?

The tone begins with formal disappointment, grows increasingly frustrated and sarcastic in the middle ("pretty sidewalks" comment), then becomes more urgent and accusatory in the final paragraphs.

3. How does Jamie's tone reflect the purpose of the letter?

Jamie's passionate, critical tone reflects the purpose of persuading the city council to reverse their decision. The strong emotional language emphasizes the serious impact of the library hours reduction on students.