

S.O.A.P.S. Tone Document Analysis

The SOAPS Tone Document Analysis allows students to trace an examination of a document using the seven components listed. This approach to analysis is relevantly used in poetry, speeches, short stories, newspaper articles, and countless other documents. Oftentimes, this approach is introduced to AP students at the high school level. However, in this case, this approach is used in my classroom on all levels to stimulate and “prove” student’s point in analyzing particular documents. Remember, all components of this approach **MUST** be supported from the text and **MUST** be backed up by the words from the text.

Speaker

Who is the speaker who produced this piece? What is their background and why are they making the points they are making? Is there a bias in what was written? You must be able to cite evidence from the text that supports your answer. No independent research is allowed on the speaker. You must “prove” your answer based on the text.

Occasion

What is the Occasion? In other words, the time and place of the piece. What promoted the author to write this piece? How do you know from the text? What event led to its publication or development? It is particularly important that students understand the context that encouraged the writing to happen.

Audience

Who is the Audience? This refers to the group of readers to whom this piece is directed. The audience may be one person, a small group or a large group; it may be a certain person or a certain people. What assumptions can you make about the audience? Is it mixed racial/sex group? What social class? What political party? Who was the document created for and how do you know? Are there any words or phrases that are unusual or different? Does the speaker use language specific for a unique audience? Does the speaker evoke God? Nation? Liberty? History? Hell? How do you know? Why is the speaker using this type of language?

Purpose

What is the purpose? Meaning, the reason behind the text. In what ways does he convey this message? How would you perceive the speaker giving this speech? What is the document saying? What is the emotional state of the speaker? How is the speaker trying to spark a reaction in the audience? What words or phrases show the speaker’s tone? How is the document supposed to make you feel? This helps you examine the argument or its logic.

Subject

What is the subject of the document? The general topic, content, and ideas contained in the text. How do you know this? How has the subject been selected and presented? And presented by the author?

Tone

What is the attitude of the speaker based on the text? What is the attitude a writer takes towards this subject or character: is it serious, humorous, sarcastic, ironic, satirical, tongue-in-cheek, solemn, objective. How do you know? Where in the text does it support your answer?

(Courtesy Mr. Tadeja, Arch Ford Distance Learning Center, Arkansas)