

Step 3: Tone descriptors

Source: Macquarie Learners Dictionary. The following words are just a small sample!

honest sincere	candid (honest, sincere, frank) earnest (serious or sincere) considerate; tactful; trustworthy credible (able to be taken seriously; worthy of trust and respect)
courteous	respectful; sympathetic; civil (courteous and polite) deferential (giving way in judgement, opinion or will especially with respect, courteous regard) conciliatory (to overcome someone's distrust by soothing or pacifying means; winning or gaining regard or favour) complaisant (disposed to please; obliging; agreeable; gracious)
friendly personal	affable (friendly, polite, easy to get on with) congenial (pleasant; suited or adapted in spirit, feeling and temper) amicable (friendly); amiable (friendly and agreeable) intimate (having a close personal relationship)
logical	sensible; reasonable; intellectual; rational; thoughtful
objective academic	impartial (not affected by personal opinions or prejudices when making decisions, judgements etc. ; not taking one side or the other) dispassionate (unbiased, not affected by your feelings or bias about something) ; academic; controlled; measured; formal stilted (too formal because you are not at ease) impersonal (not influenced by or showing any personal feelings or warmth); enlightened (giving someone more knowledge and understanding)
cautious mindful	circumspect (watchful on all sides, cautious, prudent); guarded diplomatic (saying the right thing in situations to avoid offending people) prudent (careful and wise in a practical way) contemplative (thoughtful); reflective warning; admonishing (scolding mildly) entreating (requesting in a sincere and serious manner)
strong forceful	forthright; convincing; arrogant; assertive (confident and positive) authoritative (having or showing power or an ability to control); determined tenacious (holding on firmly; persistent) dogmatic (saying what you think very forcefully and expecting others to accept it as true) imperative (very important or urgent); imperious (arrogant or bossy) intransigent (unwilling to compromise) emphatic (uttered with emphasis, strongly expressive) vindictive : (done as an act of revenge or spite)
critical	censuring (telling someone in a serious way that they have done something wrong or bad); castigating (severely critical) scathing (meaning to hurt your feelings by criticising you) reproachful (blaming or disapproving); ensorious (critical and fault-finding) derogatory (unfairly critical, tending to belittle) sceptical (not believing things that most other people accept without question; showing doubt)
emotional	sentimental (showing or relating to tender feelings) nostalgia (a longing for the past and all things belonging to it) poignant (keenly distressing to the feelings); sympathetic ; impassioned (filled with passion; ardent/ fervent); spirited
praising	praiseworthy; complimentary flattering (trying to please by compliments or praise even if you do not mean them)

moralising self-righteous	sententious (pompous moralising) didactic (wanting to teach or lecture others too much) edifying (increasing the faith, morality of a person; instructing or benefiting a person, especially morally)
put-down belittling	belittling (making little or less important; to speak about something in a way that makes it seem unimportant) disdainful (looking down on someone or something with scorn because you think they are not important or good enough for us) denigrating (saying that something has little or no importance or worth) disparaging (bringing reproach or discredit upon; lowering the estimation of; speaking or treating slightly) deprecating (expressing earnest disapproval of) demeaning (lowering in dignity or standing; debasing) scornful (jeering, showing strong disgust, disapproval or disdain) discrediting (lowering other people's opinion of; causing not to be believed; harming the reputation of) contemptuous (showing contempt — the feeling that someone or something is mean and disgraceful)
condescending	condescending (to act as if you are in a higher social position than others or as if you are doing others a favour; behaving as if one is conscious of descending from a superior position, rank or dignity) patronising (to treat kindly, but as if inferior) boastful; superior
dismissive threatening	dismissive ; (deciding that something is not true or important enough to be considered); cursory (short and rapid) indignant (angry at something you think is unfair, wicked or base; righteous anger); exasperated (very annoying) defiant (daring challenge to authority or opposing force) antagonistic (acting in opposition); confrontational intimidating (frightening in order to force someone into doing something) undermining (harming or weakening by secret or underhand means) inflammatory (easily set on fire; kindling passion or anger)
humorous mocking	frivolous (being foolish or light-hearted instead of serious; of little or no weight, worth or importance) ironical (characterised by irony — a figure of speech or literary device in which the literal meaning is the opposite of that intended) bantering (playfully teasing language; good humoured raillery) facetious (intended to be amusing at the wrong time or in an unsuitable way) cynical (distrusting the motives of others; like or characteristic of a cynic — someone who does not believe in the goodness of people or events and is often scornful of them) ridiculing (deriding; making fun of, jeering at); derisory (mocking) sarcastic (the saying of harsh and bitter things, especially by using the trick of saying the opposite of what you really mean, so as to hurt someone's feelings)
dishonest rude	insincere; misleading; deceitful; disagreeable; offensive hypocritical (making out that one has certain beliefs or morals that in reality one does not have); obnoxious (disagreeable or nasty) objectionable (unpleasant or offensive)
unfriendly pessimistic	hostile; inimical (unfriendly or hostile) despondent (feeling depressed, expecting things to turn out badly) alienating (making someone or something indifferent; adverse or estrange; making someone who has been a supporter or friend become opposed to you)
controversial biased	confronting; provocative ; (making angry or annoyed; stirring up) controversial; polemic (of, or relating to disputation or controversy) partisan (biased, prejudiced)