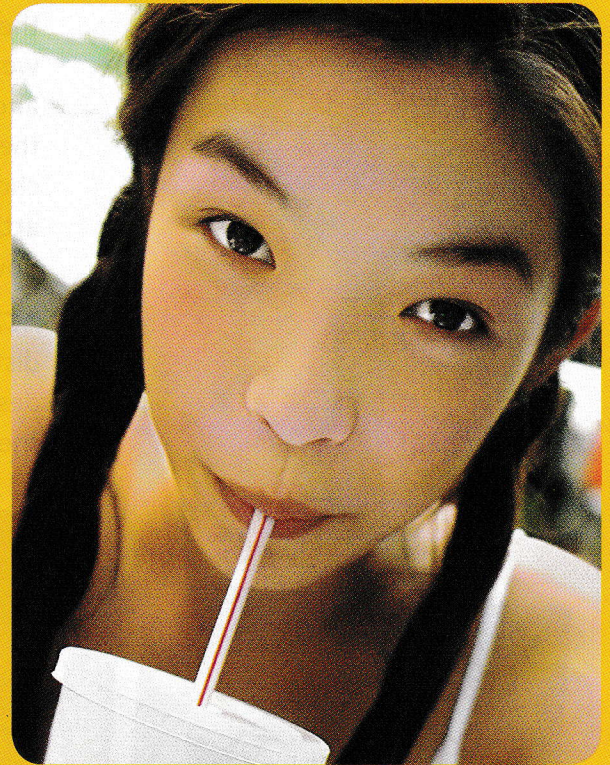
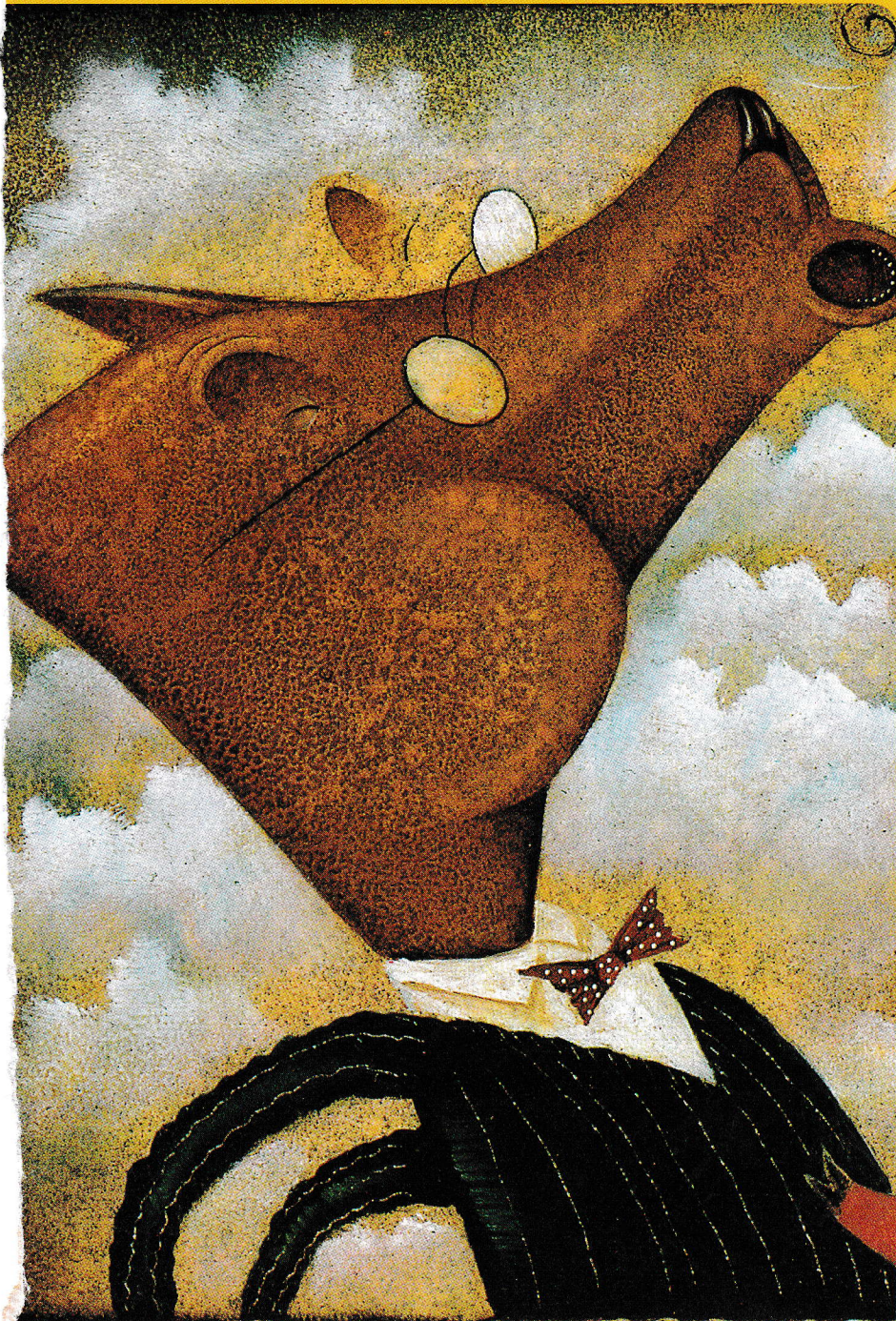


UNIT

# 4

## Writer's Craft



### MOOD, TONE, AND STYLE

- In Fiction
- In Nonfiction
- In Poetry
- In Drama
- In Media

## Who has STYLE?

Picture some people you know. How do they look? What are they wearing? Perhaps one person has neatly trimmed hair and wears a button-down shirt. Another is dressed in an old T-shirt and flip-flops, and has ten bracelets on each wrist. However these people look or act, each is displaying a personal **style**—the choices that make him or her unique. Writers, filmmakers, and artists also have a unique style. They display this style through how they choose to tell their stories or express their ideas.

**ACTIVITY** Think of a television or movie character who has a distinct personal style. Get together with a few classmates and describe your character's style without naming him or her. Can the others guess your choice?



*Reader* (1999), William Wegman.  
Color Polaroid, 24" × 20".



*Lion King* (1999), William Wegman.  
Color Polaroid, 24" × 20".



*Glamour Puss* (1999), William Wegman.  
Color Polaroid, 24" × 20".

ILLINOIS  
OBJECTIVES

## Preview Unit Goals

**LITERARY  
ANALYSIS**

- Identify and analyze tone
- Identify, analyze, and compare mood
- Identify and analyze elements of style, including point of view, dialogue, word choice, similes, sentence structure, and imagery
- Identify and analyze elements of style in fiction and nonfiction
- Identify and analyze imagery

**READING**

- Identify and analyze author's purpose
- Develop strategies for reading, including monitoring, connecting, visualizing, and setting a purpose
- Take notes and summarize

**WRITING AND  
GRAMMAR**

- Write a compare-and-contrast essay
- Identify and correctly punctuate declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences
- Use commas correctly with adjectives and items in a series

**SPEAKING,  
LISTENING,  
AND VIEWING**

- Prepare and deliver a power presentation
- Identify and analyze color, line, shape, and texture in illustrations
- Compare and contrast the style of illustrations

**VOCABULARY**

- Identify the meaning of compound words
- Use context clues to help determine word meaning

**ACADEMIC  
VOCABULARY**

- mood
- tone
- elements of style
- author's purpose
- summarize
- take notes

## Mood, Tone, and Style

Every story has its own unmistakable personality—one that you respond to either positively or negatively. In this workshop, you'll learn about the elements that make up a story's personality. These elements are mood, tone, and style.

### Part 1: What's the Difference?

**Mood** is the feeling that a writer creates for readers. **Tone** is a writer's attitude toward his or her subject. This example can help you understand the difference between the two: Your soccer team is playing a rival. In the final seconds of the game, you score the winning goal. The crowd cheers, and your teammates rush toward you. The mood is one of excitement.

Later, a player from the other team says to you, "Great game." Is she bitter or sincere? You could determine her attitude, or tone, by noticing *how* she says "Great game."

So, how can you identify mood and tone in a work of literature? A mood is often revealed through the description of a setting or of a character's feelings. A writer's tone comes across through his or her choice of words and details. Take a closer look at the examples shown.

#### MOOD

##### Words to Describe Mood

- joyful
- threatening
- exciting
- scary
- peaceful
- eerie

##### Example: Peaceful Mood

The highlighted descriptions of the setting help to create a peaceful mood.

They were standing in a sunlit field, and the air about them was moving with the delicious fragrance that comes only on the rarest of spring days when the sun's touch is gentle . . .

—from *A Wrinkle in Time*  
by Madeleine L'Engle



#### TONE

##### Words to Describe Tone

- mocking
- disgusted
- sarcastic
- humorous
- serious
- sentimental

##### Example: Mocking Tone

The highlighted details help you understand that the writer is making fun of his clumsiness.

. . . I worked in construction, mostly hitting my fingers with a hammer and making serious attempts at cutting something off my body with power saws while I tried to build houses. . . .

—from *My Life in Dog Years*  
by Gary Paulsen



#### ILLINOIS OBJECTIVES

##### READING STANDARDS

**1.6.23** Explain how the author's word choice creates imagery, mood, and tone

**2.6.12** Explain how literary devices contribute to meaning

### MODEL 1: MOOD

A young Chinese immigrant named Moon Shadow comes to San Francisco to join his father. Shortly after Moon Shadow arrives, he follows his father on a mysterious nighttime mission. As you read, notice the details used to describe the setting and create a mood.

from **DRAGONWINGS**

Novel by Laurence Yep

I counted to ten before I followed him outside. It was a night when the thick fog drifted through the streets and I could not see more than an arm's length before me, and everything seemed unreal, as if I were asleep and dreaming. The gaslights showed in the fog only as dull spots of light—like ghosts hovering. A building would appear out of the grayness and then disappear. The whole world seemed to have become unglued. If ever there was a night for monsters to be out, this was the night.

#### Close Read

1. The boxed detail helps readers to picture the nighttime setting. Find three more details that describe the setting.
2. Review the details you found. What mood do they help to create?

### MODEL 2: TONE

In his memoir, author Jerry Spinelli shares his memories of growing up in Pennsylvania. Read on to find out what Spinelli remembers about one important subject—his family's garbage can!

from **Knots in My Yo-Yo String**

Memoir by Jerry Spinelli

To lift the lid off the garbage can was to confront all the horrors of the creepiest movie: dead, rotting matter; teeming colonies of pale, slimy creeping things; and a stench that could be survived only in the smallest whiffs.

Ironically, the garbage can was never more disgusting than the day after garbage collection—for the collection was never quite complete. The garbage man would snatch the can from our curbside and overturn it into the garbage truck's unspeakable trough. He would bang it once, maybe twice, against the trough wall. This would dislodge most of the garbage, including a rain of maggots, but not the worst of it, not the very bottom of it, the most persistent, the oldest, the rottenest, the vilest.

#### Close Read

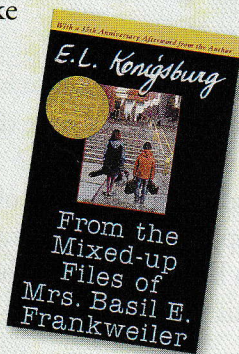
1. Many details, including the one in the box, help you to see or smell the garbage. Identify three other descriptive details.
2. Read aloud lines 1–4 as you think Spinelli would sound saying them. Would you describe his tone as amused, irritated, joking, or something else?

## Part 2: What Is Style?

You've seen how mood and tone can affect your reaction to a story. Style, though, is what really gives a story its one-of-a-kind personality. **Style** refers to a writer's unique way of communicating ideas. It is the result of many elements, including word choice, sentence structure, imagery, point of view, and dialogue. You'll learn about some of these elements as you examine two excerpts by authors with different styles.

### E. L. KONIGSBURG'S STYLE

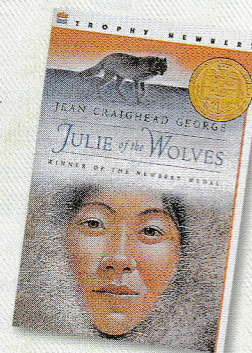
Claudia and Jamie awoke very early the next morning. It was still dark. Their stomachs felt like tubes of toothpaste that had been all squeezed out. Giant economy-sized tubes. They had to be out of bed and out of sight before the museum staff came on duty.



—from *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*

### JEAN CRAIGHEAD GEORGE'S STYLE

Miyax pushed back the hood of her seal-skin parka and looked at the Arctic sun. It was a yellow disc in a lime-green sky, the colors of six o'clock in the evening and the time when the wolves awoke.



Quietly she put down her cooking pot and crept to the top of a dome-shaped frost heave, one of the many earth buckles that rise and fall in the crackling cold . . .

—from *Julie of the Wolves*

#### WORD CHOICE

**Word choice**, or a writer's use of language, is a basic element of style.

- Konigsburg: Uses casual, informal language like *giant* and *squeezed out*.
- George: Uses precise, descriptive adjectives, such as *lime-green* and *dome-shaped*.

#### SENTENCE STRUCTURE

**Sentence structure** refers to the lengths and types of sentences a writer uses.

- Konigsburg: Writes in short, simple sentences, creating a straightforward style.
- George: Uses longer, complex sentences that are packed with descriptions.

#### IMAGERY

Some writers are known for their use of **imagery**, language that appeals to readers' senses.

- Konigsburg: Includes a humorous image—stomachs *like tubes of toothpaste*. This creates a playful style.
- George: Uses vivid images like *yellow disc in a lime-green sky*.

**MODEL 1: COMPARING STYLES**

Buried riches, greedy pirates, and wild adventures are all part of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island*. In this excerpt, a boy and his mother open a sea chest that once belonged to a ship captain. An evil blind man is in pursuit of the chest. As you read, you'll examine the elements that help to create Stevenson's dramatic and formal style.

from *Treasure Island*

Novel by **Robert Louis Stevenson**

When we were about half-way through, I suddenly put my hand upon her arm; for I had heard in the silent, frosty air, a sound that brought my heart into my mouth—the tap-tapping of the blind man's stick upon the frozen road. It drew nearer and nearer, while we sat  
5 holding our breath. Then it struck sharp on the inn door, and then we could hear the handle being turned, and the bolt rattling as the wretched being tried to enter; and then there was a long time of silence both within and without.

**Close Read**

1. One element of Stevenson's style is his use of imagery. Find three images that help you to hear what's happening. One example has been boxed.
2. Would you describe Stevenson's sentences as short and simple or as long and complex? Support your answer.

**MODEL 2: COMPARING STYLES**

The characters in this modern story are also startled by a sound at their door. As you read, you'll look closely at the elements that make Bruce Coville's style lighter and more informal than Stevenson's.

from *Duffy's Jacket*

Short story by **Bruce Coville**

"There's something at the door," I said frantically. "Maybe it's been lurking around all day, waiting for our mothers to leave. Maybe it's been waiting for years for someone to come back here."

*Scratch, scratch.*

5 "I don't believe it," said Duffy. "It's just the wind moving a branch. I'll prove it."

He got up and headed for the door. But he didn't open it. Instead he peeked through the window next to it. When he turned back, his eyes looked as big as the hard-boiled eggs we had eaten for supper.

**Close Read**

1. How do the boxed sentences compare with the sentences in *Treasure Island*?
2. Informal dialogue is one element of Coville's style. Reread the dialogue in lines 1–6. Which words or phrases make this sound like an everyday conversation?

## Part 3: Analyze the Literature

Now, you'll apply what you've learned by analyzing two excerpts. Both excerpts describe summer days, but they are strikingly different. Read on to see how mood, tone, and style help to create these differences.

The first excerpt is from the beginning of the novel *Tuck Everlasting*. Don't worry if you don't know exactly what's happening. This is an intentional choice by the author, and it's meant to draw you into the story.

from

# Tuck Everlasting

Novel by **Natalie Babbitt**

The first week of August hangs at the very top of summer, the top of the live-long year, like the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning. The weeks that come before are only a climb from balmy spring, and those that follow a drop to the chill of autumn, but the first week of August is motionless, and hot. It is curiously silent, too, with blank white dawns and glaring noons, and sunsets smeared with too much color. Often at night there is lightning, but it quivers all alone. There is no thunder, no relieving rain. These are strange and breathless days, the dog days, when people are led to do things they are sure to be sorry for after.

One day at that time, not so very long ago, three things happened and at first there appeared to be no connection between them.

At dawn, Mae Tuck set out on her horse for the wood at the edge of the village of Treetop. She was going there, as she did once every ten years, to meet her two sons, Miles and Jesse.

At noontime, Winnie Foster, whose family owned the Treetop wood, lost her patience at last and decided to think about running away.

And at sunset a stranger appeared at the Fosters' gate. He was looking for someone, but he didn't say who.

No connection, you would agree. But things can come together in strange ways. The wood was at the center, the hub of the wheel. All wheels must have a hub. A Ferris wheel has one, as the sun is the hub of the wheeling calendar. Fixed points they are, and best left undisturbed, for without them, nothing holds together. But sometimes people find this out too late.

### Close Read

1. One aspect of Babbitt's style is her use of colorful imagery. What images in lines 1–10 tell you what the first week of August is like?
2. The writer's tone might be described as both conversational and secretive. What words and phrases in lines 11–12 and 20–25 contribute to this tone?
3. Reread the boxed detail, in which the narrator delivers a strange warning. Also review the images you found in lines 1–10. What mood do these elements create?

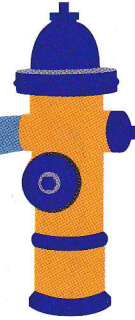


The summer days that Jewell Parker Rhodes describes in “Block Party” are ones that she herself experienced as a child. As you read this excerpt, you’ll analyze some of the elements that make Rhodes’s description so different from Babbitt’s.

from

# BLOCK PARTY

Memoir by Jewell Parker Rhodes



5 Summer block parties were the best. We’d close off traffic and sometimes the Fire Department would open the hydrants and we’d dance and sing while water gushed at us. A spray of wet beneath the moon and stars. Tonie, Aleta, and I pushed boxes together to make a stage and lipsynched to the record player, pretending we were The Supremes. *“Stop, in the name of love! Before you break my heart. Think it o-o-over! . . .”* and we’d giggle as the grown-ups clapped and the other children squealed, and everyone danced, even fat Charlie who could boogie so well you’d swear there was magic in his shoes.

10 The best block parties happened for no reason. Anyone—even a child—could wake up one day and call for “Block Party Day.” And we’d share ribs, corn, chicken, tater pie, and collard greens, and Miss Sarah who never married always made punch with vanilla ice cream and it would melt into a swishy mess. Finally, when legs wouldn’t move  
15 another dance step, then the record player was taken away, the street was swept. There were cries and whispers of good night. My real family and I, we’d go into the house. Grandma, Grandpa, Aunt, and Daddy would tuck us in bed and kiss me, Tonie, and Aleta good night. And I would wait until Tonie and Aleta were asleep in the small twin beds (I didn’t  
20 want them to think I was off my head) and I’d go to the window. Then, peeking over the ledge, I’d whisper my own private “G’night” to the rest of my family, tucked in their beds inside the tall houses all along my street, there in the city where the three rivers meet.

## Close Read

1. What images in lines 1–14 help to establish the joyful mood of the summer scene?
2. Reread the boxed text. Notice that Rhodes packs many thoughts into one long sentence, using a series of *and*'s. Identify another sentence that reflects this style.
3. Words like *G’night* in line 21 help to create a conversational style. Find two other informal words or phrases.
4. How would you describe Rhodes’s tone, or attitude, toward the block parties?
  - a. humorous and sarcastic
  - b. warm and reflective
  - c. sad and regretful

# The All-American Slurp

Short Story by Lensey Namioka

Are people more **ALIKE**  
or different?



**ILLINOIS OBJECTIVES**

**READING STANDARDS**

1.6.16 Summarize a story

1.6.23 Explain how the author's word choice creates imagery, mood, and tone

**KEY IDEA** Have you ever been somewhere and found that the language, food, or customs were different than what you were used to? You may have felt out of place. Or perhaps you discovered that you actually had a lot in common with the people you met. In "The All-American Slurp," a Chinese-American girl learns that people can share **similarities** even when they appear very different at first.

**SURVEY** Complete this survey. Then form a group with two or three people you don't know well. Share your surveys to see how much you do (or don't) have in common.

Survey:

## Choose Your Favorites

Choose your favorite from each grouping. Then find out how your classmates answered.

### Music

- Rock 'n' Roll
- Country
- Classical

### Food

- Desserts
- Spicy Foods
- Salty Snacks

### Holidays

- Thanksgiving
- Halloween
- Valentine's Day
- Fourth of July

### Movies

- Dramas
- Comedies
- Musicals
- Sci-Fi

### Seasons

- Winter
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall

## LITERARY ANALYSIS: TONE

Stories can express a writer's **tone**, or attitude toward a subject. The tone might be described in a single word, such as *sarcastic*, *silly*, or *sentimental*.

This story is about the challenges people face when adjusting to life in a new country. Lensey Namioka establishes a humorous tone toward this subject through

- characters' thoughts, words, and actions
- the narrator's descriptions
- the order of events

As you read "The All-American Slurp," look for these elements as the family faces a series of awkward situations.

## READING STRATEGY: SUMMARIZE

One way to check your understanding of a story is to **summarize** it. A good summary provides a brief retelling of the main ideas. It uses your own words but does not include your opinions about the subject. As you read "The All-American Slurp," record the key events of the story in a log like the one shown.

### Key Events

- Lin family emigrates from China to the United States.
- 

## VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Lensey Namioka uses the listed words to help tell a story about people's differences. To see how many you know, complete each sentence with a word from the list.

<b>WORD</b>	consumption	etiquette	mortified
<b>LIST</b>	cope	lavishly	revolting

1. Follow proper \_\_\_\_\_ when you meet someone new.
2. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ when I can't remember someone's name.
3. Their sofa was \_\_\_\_\_ decorated with fancy pillows.
4. That weird stew was absolutely \_\_\_\_\_!
5. The waiter had to \_\_\_\_\_ with the loud guests.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ of too many spicy foods makes me feel ill.

## Author Online

### Outsiders' Stories

Lensey Namioka says that her stories tell about people who feel like "outsiders." This is true whether the story is set in present-day Seattle or 16th-century Japan. To write these stories, she draws upon her own experiences.



Lensey Namioka  
born 1929

**Growing Up on the Outside** Namioka grew up in China. When war broke out in 1937, her family moved to western China, where the food was very spicy and the dialect (regional form of a language) was hard to understand. This made her feel like an outsider in her own country. Before the war ended, her family moved to the United States. The strange customs, food, and language of her new country made her feel even more like an outsider.

**Living in Two Worlds** At first, Namioka's father charged everyone in the family a fine for each English word used at home. He did so because he did not want his family to forget the Chinese language. Namioka's mother ended the fines when she refused to pay. "Besides," says Namioka, "there were words that just had no Chinese translation. How do you say 'cheeseburger' in Chinese, for instance?"



### MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more on Lensey Namioka, visit the Literature Center at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).