

PART 3 : VOICE LESSON PACKET

* Make sure you use complete sentences! **Diction**

Consider:

Once I am sure there's nothing going on
I step inside, letting the door **thud** shut.

— Philip Larkin, "Church Going"

Discuss:

1. What feelings are evoked by the word *thud*?

2. How would the meaning change if the speaker let the door *slam* shut?

Apply:

Fill in the following chart. In the first column, record five different verbs which express the closing of a door; in the second column, record the feelings these verbs evoke.

Verbs expressing the closing of a door	Feeling evoked by the verb
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Detail

Consider:

If my mother was in a singing mood, it wasn't so bad. She would sing about hard times, bad times, and somebody-done-gone-and-left-me times. But her voice was so sweet and her singing-eyes so melty I found myself longing for those hard times, yearning to be grown without "a thin di-I-ime to my name." I looked forward to the delicious time when "my man" would leave me, when I would "hate to see that evening sun go down . . ." 'cause then I would know "my man has left this town." Misery colored by the greens and blues in my mother's voice took all of the grief out of the words and left me with a conviction that pain was not only endurable, it was sweet.

— Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

Discuss:

1. Why are parts of the passage in quotes? What do the quoted details add to the passage?
2. Which details in the passage contribute to the conclusion that pain is sweet? Fill in the chart below to show how Morrison sets up this oxymoron.

"Sweet" Details

"Pain" Details

"Sweet" Details	"Pain" Details

Apply:

Think of a paradoxical feeling such as sweet pain, healthful illness, or frightening comfort; then make a chart listing two details for each side of the paradox. Use the chart above as a model. ~~Share your chart with a partner.~~

Imagery

Consider:

I also enjoy canoeing, and I suppose you will smile when I say that I especially like it on moonlight nights. I cannot, it is true, see the moon climb up the sky behind the pines and steal softly across the heavens, making a shining path for us to follow; but I know she is there, and as I lie back among the pillows and put my hand in the water, I fancy that I feel the shimmer of her garments as she passes. Sometimes a daring little fish slips between my fingers, and often a pond-lily presses shyly against my hand. Frequently, as we emerge from the shelter of a cove or inlet, I am suddenly conscious of the spaciousness of the air about me. A luminous warmth seems to enfold me.

— Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life*

Discuss:

1. Since Helen Keller was blind and deaf, tactile imagery becomes a focus in her writing. Underline the tactile images in this passage.
2. Which images in the passage are more specific: visual or tactile? Support your answers with reference to the passage.

Apply:

Close your eyes and touch some familiar objects at your desk. Then open your eyes and describe ~~to a partner~~ how those objects felt. Be sure to use specific, tactile images, not visual images or figurative language.

Syntax

Consider:

The graces of writing and conversation are of different kinds, and though he who excels in one might have been with opportunities and application equally successful in the other, yet as many please by extemporary talk, though utterly unacquainted with the more accurate method and more laboured beauties which composition requires; so it is very possible that men, wholly accustomed to works of study, may be without that readiness of conception and affluence of language, always necessary to colloquial entertainment.

— Samuel Johnson, “An Author’s Writing and Conversation Contrasted”

Discuss:

1. The main idea of this sentence is stated in the first ten words. What purpose does the rest of the sentence serve?
2. What is the purpose of the semicolon? How does the use of a semicolon reinforce the meaning of this sentence?

Apply:

Rewrite this sentence in modern English, retaining its meaning and basic structure. Your sentence may be shorter than Johnson’s! ~~Share your sentence with a partner.~~

Tone

Consider:

The dry brown coughing beneath their feet,
(Only a while, for the handyman is on his way)
These people walk their golden gardens.
We say ourselves fortunate to be driving by today.

That we may look at them, in their gardens where
The summer ripeness rots. But not raggedly.
Even the leaves fall down in lovelier patterns here.
And the refuse, the refuse is a neat brilliancy.

— Gwendolyn Brooks, “Beverly Hills, Chicago”

Discuss:

1. Who is the *we* (line 4) of the poem? Who are *these people* (line 3)? What is the poem’s attitude toward *these people*?
2. Examine lines 6-8. Even *rot* and *refuse is neat* and *brilliant*, and *leaves fall down in lovelier patterns here*. What image does the diction create? How does that image contribute to the tone?

Apply:

Write two or three sentences which reveal a tone of disdain in describing a clique at school. Use imagery or concrete detail to create the tone. Do not directly state your disdain; the images and detail should carry the tone. ~~Work with a partner. Share your sentences with the class.~~