

# Voice



Your voice is your personal “stamp” on a piece of writing. You might use tools like vocabulary, tone, and imagery to create a particular effect for your reader.

## You might need to develop your piece’s voice if...

- The tone of the piece still feels generic, or inauthentic to you as a writer.
- You need support writing for a particular genre, or you haven't written in this particular form before.
- You don't think a reader would be able to tell the piece was yours by reading it.

## Guiding Questions:

- How do you understand your perspective in relation to others?
- How do you hope your reader will think or feel after reading this passage?
- How would you describe the tone of this piece of writing? What words or phrases create that tone?
- How can we tell from the language that this piece was written by you?



## Overview

Understanding your intended audience can help you project a voice that fits with the genre and purpose of the piece. Consider how you choose to engage your audience using your piece's language.



## Strategy 1: Audience Analysis

### How to Use Audience Analysis

- Identify for yourself you are writing for and why, and what genre expectations this audience might have.
- Read over your piece, aloud or silently.
- Reflect, independently or with a friend or colleague, whether or not your piece matches the genre expectations you identified. Where does it align and where does it depart with such expectations? Does this match your intention for the piece?
- You can also use a digital tool like [Sapling](#) or Quillbot to review the tone of your piece if you feel unsure.



## Strategy 2: Read-Aloud

### Overview

Reading a piece aloud can help you hear your own voice within a piece of writing, and it can often be helpful to have a friend or colleague read your work back to you. Both the writer and the reader can then describe and discuss the piece's voice in their own words.

### How to Use Read-Aloud

- Read your whole piece, or a specific excerpt of it, to a trusted friend, teacher, or colleague. Ask them to help you reflect on the tone of the piece, and offer them a digital or printed copy of your draft to follow along.
- Make sure to name your intended tone and audience to your listener so they know what to listen for.
- You might focus together on how word choice, detail, imagery, figurative language, or sentence structures shape the tone of the piece.
- Discuss with your colleague where your tone does and doesn't align with your intention. You may also choose to use a paraphrasing tool such as [Quillbot](#) to help you experiment with the tone of different word choices and sentences.
- You may spend some time paraphrasing particular places in the piece for greater clarity.

# Overview

Analyzing your word choice helps ensure you are writing in your desired tone. By intentionally choosing verbs, adjectives, and other phrases, you most accurately express your ideas to your reader in a way that honors your voice. The figurative language you use should also be original so the reader knows the piece was written by you.

## Strategy 3: Word Choice



# How to Use Word Choice

- Choose a short passage that is dialogue-heavy, emotional, or which you think could benefit from some tone refinement.
- In a group setting, assign different chunks of the text to different readers. If you are working alone, you can record yourself performing each chunk.
- Perform the text aloud, taking on your assigned roles, and pay close attention to how it sounds when you read dramatically. Make sure you read expressively, considering the piece's emotional tone.
- As you listen to the performance, annotate your draft digitally or by hand. What did you notice about the cadence, tone, and emotional impact? Where did you hear your voice as a writer coming through? You might highlight key words or sentences to keep developing.

## Overview

Reader's Theater is a collaborative activity where writers read a piece aloud as if performing it. Hearing your writing performed by other voices can highlight what your writerly voice sounds like, and how even subtle word and style choices can impact the overall tone of your piece.



## Strategy 4: Reader's Theater

### How to Use Reader's Theater

- Choose a short passage that is dialogue-heavy, emotional, or which you think could benefit from some tone refinement.
- In a group setting, assign different chunks of the text to different readers. If you are working alone, you can record yourself performing each chunk.
- Perform the text aloud, taking on your assigned roles, and pay close attention to how it sounds when you read dramatically. Make sure you read expressively, considering the piece's emotional tone.
- As you listen to the performance, annotate your draft digitally or by hand. What did you notice about the cadence, tone, and emotional impact? Where did you hear your voice as a writer coming through? You might highlight key words or sentences to keep developing.