

Name _____

Narrative Reading—Mini Lesson—Tone

Fill in the blanks:

Writers choose _____ words to convey their
_____. Readers _____ the tone or
_____ based on an author's word
_____. Readers infer the tone of a scene by
watching how the characters _____, not only what they do, but
_____ they do it. _____ have a tone in mind
and then chose the _____ to write to convey this tone to
the _____. They don't _____ the tone;
they _____ it!

Rylant, Cynthia. "Shells"
from
Every Living Thing by Cynthia Rylant.
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"You *hate* living here."

Michael looked at the woman speaking to him.

"No, Aunt Esther. I don't." He said it dully, sliding his milk glass back and forth on the table.

"I don't hate it here."

Esther removed the last pan from the dishwasher and hung it above the oven.

"You hate it here," she said, "and you hate me."

"I don't!" Michael yelled. "It's not you!"

The woman turned to face him in the kitchen.

"Don't yell at me!" she yelled. "I'll not have it in my home. I can't make you happy, Michael.

You just refuse to be happy here. And you punish me every day for it."

"Punish you?" Michael gawked at her. "I don't punish you! I don't care about you! I don't care what you eat or how you dress or where you go or what you think. Can't you just leave me alone?"

He slammed down the glass, scraped his chair back from the table and ran out the door.

"Michael!" yelled Esther.

They had been living together, the two of them, for six months. Michael's parents had died and only Esther could take him in—or, only she had offered to. Michael's other relatives could not imagine dealing with a fourteen-year-old boy. They wanted peaceful lives.

1) What is the tone of the opening scene of this short

story? _____

2) What words did Cynthia Rylant use to make it sound that way? (highlight the words) _____

3) Is the tone established more in nouns or verbs?

List some nouns: _____

List some verbs: _____

4) How does the punctuation affect the tone?

List some examples _____

5) Think about various tones Cynthia Rylant might have used in writing this scene. Pick a different tone to change the scene by changing some of the words. Rewrite the scene:

6) Switch papers with someone and see if they can guess the tone you had in mind. _____