Tone Words and Definitions

Directions: Use the following tone words to identify Frederick Douglass's tone in his work.

allusive—containing or given to passing and casual references to something not fully expressed; symbolic

benevolent—characterized by or expressing goodwill or kindly feelings

burlesque—invoking ludicrous or mocking treatment of a solemn subject

candid—frank; outspoken; sincere; honest; open

compassionate—expressing deep sorrow or sympathy for someone struck by misfortune, accompanied by a desire to alleviate the suffering; sympathetic

complimentary—of the nature of, conveying, or expressing a compliment or praise

concerned—interested, involved; troubled or anxious

condescending—expressing an air of superiority; stooping to a lower level or beneath oneself as a favor

confident—sure of oneself and one's abilities

contemptuous—showing or expressing strong dislike; scornful

contentious—characterized by argument or controversy

cynical—distrusting the motives of others; pessimistic

detached—impartial or objective; disinterested

didactic—teaching or intending to teach a moral lesson; instructive

diffident—hesitant in acting or speaking through lack of self-confidence; distrustful

disdainful—expressing feelings that someone or something is unworthy of notice; scornful

dramatic—expressed with or as if with action; vivid

effusive—extravagantly or unduly demonstrative; overflowing

facetious—not meant to be taken seriously or literally; amusing; humorous

factual—relating to or containing facts; restricted to involving fact as opposed to theory or imagination; actual

flippant—frivolously disrespectful, shallow, or lacking in seriousness

impartial—not partial or biased; fair; just

incisive—clear and direct

indignant—expressing strong displeasure at something considered offensive or insulting; expressing righteous anger

inflammatory—tending to arouse anger, hostility, or passion

informative—giving information; instructive

insipid—without distinctive, interesting, or stimulating qualities; bland
insolent—rude, disrespectful; insulting

ironic—the meaning intended is contrary to that seemingly expressed; to say one thing and mean another

irreverent—showing lack of respect

learned—of or showing knowledge or learning; well-informed

moralistic—expressing ideas on the principles of proper conduct or on the distinction between right and wrong

objective—not influenced by personal feelings or prejudice; unbiased

lugubrious—mournful, dismal, or gloomy, especially in an exaggerated manner

patronizing—behaving in a condescending manner

pedantic—displaying affection for learning; overemphasizing minute details

petty—having or showing narrow ideas or interests; narrow-minded

pretentious—characterized by the assumption of importance; making an exaggerated outward show

restrained—devoid of excess or extravagance; repressed

sardonic—characterized by scornful derision or bitter irony; mocking; cynical

satiric—characterized by the use of irony, sarcasm, or ridicule

scornful—full of contempt or disdain; despising

sentimental—expressive or appealing to the tender emotions

somber—extremely serious; solemn; grave

sympathetic—expresses compassion or sympathy; sharing the same feelings as another

taunting—reproaching in a scornful manner; mocking; making fun of

turgid—inflated; overblown

urgent—expressed with insistence

vibrant—pulsating with vigor and energy; lively

whimsical—displaying characteristics of playful expression; fanciful
**Tone and Mood**

**Directions:** The first chapter of Frederick Douglass's work establishes a certain tone for the remaining chapters and creates a certain mood in the reader. Douglass conveys tone and creates a mood through the details he chooses to relate about his early years in slavery and the words he uses to describe such facts. Read the following quotations and summaries of the main ideas in chapter 1. If necessary, locate each quotation in the text. Then evaluate the tone Douglass uses and the mood he creates. You may label each as having more than one tone and mood.

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<tr>
<th>Quotation/Summary</th>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Mood</th>
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<td>1. Most slaves &quot;know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters . . . to keep their slaves thus ignorant.&quot;</td>
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<td>2. To ask his master about his birthday was deemed &quot;improper, and impertinent, and evidence of a restless spirit.&quot;</td>
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<td>3. Mothers are separated from their babies by twelve months, probably to &quot;hinder the development of the child's affection toward its mother, and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child. This is the inevitable result.&quot;</td>
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<td>4. Slaves are seldom given permission to be in the field later than sunrise—a permission that gives the master &quot;the proud name of being a kind master.&quot;</td>
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<td>5. &quot;Death soon ended what little [communication] we could have had while she lived, and with it her hardships and suffering.&quot;</td>
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6. "Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of her death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger."

7. "... [T]he fact remains, in its glaring odiousness," that slave children are slaves even if their fathers are white masters, "and this is done too obviously to administer to their own lusts, and make a gratification of their wicked desires profitable as well as pleasurable; for by this cunning arrangement..." the slaveholder is both master and father to the slave.

8. A mulatto slave whose master is his father is often treated worse or more harshly and must be sold to be saved from such treatment.

9. Slaves' appearances are changing because of mixed black-white relations between slave women and their white masters. The result of light-skinned slaves contradicts the notion that it is race that makes them justifiably slaves.

10. "It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it. . . . I was so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight, that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over. I expected it would be my turn next."