



## ELA 9-12: Words Matter

### 4 STUDENT SAMPLES

#### WORDS MATTER: “SHOOTING AN ELEPHANT” OVERVIEW

The student work samples are taken from the explanatory LDC module embedded within the larger Words Matter unit; both the larger unit and module are documented here. The LDC module, on its own, starts at the “Task and Rubric Analysis: Part 4 of the Unit: Breaking Down the Prompt.” Teachers may choose to teach the entire unit or teach the LDC module on its own depending on their students’ needs.

The unit centers on diction and tone: how words carry multiple layers of meaning, and how authors purposefully choose words to convey deeper meanings. The ELA content is represented by these essential questions: 1) How is it that words can mean so much more than their dictionary definitions, and 2) How can word choice (a single word and/or a pattern of word choices) impact meaning? This LDC module is designed to support the reading and writing process for the unit’s final performance task, in which students write a literary analysis essay explaining how George Orwell’s diction in his essay “Shooting an Elephant” develops tone and meaning.

The pre-module portion of the unit, represented here as a series of mini-tasks in the “Preparing for the Task” segment of the instructional ladder, utilizes supplemental texts that provide opportunities for students to practice this kind of analysis as a whole class and in small groups: Pat Mora’s “Same Song” and Robert Hayden’s “Those Winter Sundays.”

The pre-module portion of the unit also features pre- and formative assessment activities, engagement activities designed to get students thinking about and playing with the core ideas and concepts of connotation and the power of word choice, and lessons around the concepts of diction and tone.

#### Framing of the “Shooting an Elephant” Summative Essay:

All student samples are from 2015 fall semester sophomore English classrooms from across the states of Kentucky & Colorado. Student work represented here includes various ability levels.

Note: One Pre-Module Formative Paragraph is in response to Sandra Cisneros’s “Eleven,” but updated unit materials do not mention this as a potential text for students to respond to.

Our focus standard for this assessment is RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). The scoring/rubric annotations refer to various aspects on the LDC Informational/Explanatory Rubric, and the annotations regarding student comprehension of grade-level text refer to the R.9-10.10 standard.

The skills students hone in this unit transfer to work they will do in English class for the rest of the year: using textual evidence, paying attention to specific diction, using close reading strategies, and justifying students’ thinking.

### STUDENT WORK ANNOTATION KEY

<b>CCSS ALIGNMENT</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING</b>	<b>SUPPORT MATERIALS</b>	<b>COMPREHENSION &amp; APPLICATION</b>	<b>LANGUAGE CHALLENGES</b>
Proficiency with the targeted CCSS.	Understanding and reasoning ability	Supporting materials (including scoring guidelines/rubrics)	Student comprehension of grade-level text (R.10)	Challenges with respect to language demands



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 10/12/15 Block: 3

Words Matter Unit: Pre-Module Formative (Student Sample Set #1)

How does an author purposefully use diction to convey tone? After reading the two poems, "Those Winter Sundays" and "Same Song", choose ONE of these selections and write a Short Constructed Response in which you explain the speaker's attitude toward an aspect of life. Be sure to support your explanation with evidence from the text.

Use the space below for your Short Constructed Response.

The speaker's attitude toward an aspect of life in "Same Song" is the harsh reality people/teenagers face in real life. The one word that most strongly impacts the author's message/tone is "frustration". This one word mainly ~~used~~ is in a negative way. In the story, it shows the girl's disappointment at herself when she looks in the mirror. Besides the girl, the boy also is disappointed at the way he looks in the mirror. This frustration <sup>also</sup> further depresses an already sad and melancholic poem. The word frustration also tells us that there is a standard in the world that they are trying to live up to but they fell short. <sup>SP</sup> The word frustration therefore, is the one word in poem that best describes the author's message.

good analysis

who are you referring to?

This is a big idea explain it more.

you organize your A well. You do a great job with staging focused and explaining yourself. Be careful to use textual evidence for support along w/ paraphrasing the action.

CCSS ALIGNMENT (Entire page)

The student thoroughly explains the speaker's attitude toward an aspect of life. However, the student never specifically addresses tone.

Standard referenced:

RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

"Do what your heart tells you."

"But what if my heart is telling me one thing and it's not what the people want?"

"Then you are going to have to trust it."

*at hook!*

Problems such as this arise in almost every fantasy or hero story. It is at this point that the hero truly realizes who they are and overcomes adversity. However, heroes are not the only people that can have this occur to them. A man in India during the centuries of the British empire had to make a decision that would change his fate forever. <sup>*rule?*</sup> This man is George Orwell from the story "Shooting an Elephant". <sup>*integrate this in more smoothly*</sup> Orwell is in conflict with himself over the act he may or may not commit. This conflict is clearly seen through Orwell's use of diction to convey a moralistic tone towards the the act of shooting the elephant. Orwell's use of a moralistic tone helps set up the complex attitude towards the act of shooting the elephant, and in turn show the constant conflict we face between our morals the power of peer pressure. <sup>*Good!*</sup>

1

*strong thesis!*

Throughout the story, we can see that the tone is moralistic through Orwell's use of diction and keywords/phrases. For example, Orwell states, "I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing" (1). This shows that his morals don't approve of the British empire taking rule over India. Furthermore, he says he has a sense of guilt at how badly the prisoners are being treated. <sup>*natives*</sup> The way he writes that phrase shows that his

2

**COMPREHENSION & APPLICATION (Entire page)**  
The student demonstrates comprehension of the narrator's complex emotions regarding his situation.

**SUPPORT MATERIALS (Entire page)**  
From the "Focus" section of the rubric, it is clear that the student reaches a Level 3: "Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. Addresses additional demands sufficiently." This essay is right on the verge of moving up to Level 4, but since the student stops just short of making an explicit connection between the narrator's emotions regarding the natives and his feelings about shooting the elephant, the student needs one more draft to reach the Advanced level.

**1. UNDERSTANDING**  
Even though the student may be inaccurate in the student's use of the word "moralistic" to describe the narrator's tone, the student does demonstrate deep understanding of the narrator's conflicted perspective on his circumstances.

**2. CCSS ALIGNMENT**  
The student does not provide explicit connection between specific word choice and the narrator's tone, but simply paraphrases the overall content of the quotation instead.  
**Standard referenced:**  
**RL.9-10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

ELA 9-12: Words Matter

STUDENT 1 SAMPLE

consciousness is telling him that the prisoners shouldn't be treated like this. However, in the heat of the moment <sup>ww</sup> his hatred for the empire disappears and all he can do is hate the Burmese for being so resistant. To support this, Orwell says, "I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts"(2) This is an example of how his mind falters <sup>we about x2</sup> about feeling bad about the prisoners all because they angered him.

Orwell's use of diction or key phrases sets up a moralistic tone for this story.

*nice transition*

The moralistic tone sets up a complex attitude towards the act of shooting the elephant. Orwell's attitude <sup>one</sup> is of remorse towards shooting the elephant. This attitude sets Orwell's morals versus peer pressure. For example, Orwell knew that shooting the elephant was wrong and even compared it to destroying a "huge and costly machine"(3) However, he was also under extreme peer pressure to kill the elephant. Orwell shot the elephant simply to avoid looking like a fool. After Orwell shoots it, his morals return and he is filled with remorse. He then tries to justify his reasoning for shooting the elephant. For example, Orwell states "I was very glad the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant"(6) Orwell's remorse about shooting the elephant forces him to have to relive his problem so he doesn't go crazy. This is the complex attitude towards the act of shooting the elephant.

*transformation  
yes*

*is this there clarify this*

Therefore, the moralistic tone and complex attitude shows us that the purpose of the story is to tell us how powerful peer pressure is, and how it can even overrule a person's morals. Why did peer pressure overrule Orwell's morals in the story? Orwell stated "I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool"(6) In other words, Orwell is saying that he shot the elephant so he wouldn't be

Words Matter Unit: Pre-Module Formative (Student Sample Set #1)

How does an author purposefully use diction to convey tone? After reading from our collection of fiction ("Those Winter Sundays", "Same Song", or "Eleven"), choose ONE of these selections and write a Short Constructed Response in which you explain the speaker or narrator's attitude toward an aspect of life. Be sure to support your explanation with evidence of specific diction that demonstrates the speaker's attitude/tone.

Use the space below for your Short Constructed Response.

in eleven, Rachel demonstrate a  
 tone of disappointed as she turns eleven  
 but turning eleven doesn't feel any different  
 just that you are eleven. Here is example 1 "And  
 when you wake up on your eleven birthday you expect  
 to feel eleven, but you don't" example 2 "yo open  
 your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only  
 it's okay". And example 3 "Because the way  
 you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the  
 rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden  
 dolls that feel one inside the other, each year inside the  
 next one. that's how being eleven years old is".  
 I use this quote's because they show how  
 disappointed the little girl was turning  
 eleven & don't feel any different about  
 it.

**CCSS ALIGNMENT  
 (Entire page)**

In answering the prompt, the student correctly identifies the narrator's tone, but does not connect that attitude to specific diction from the passage. The student hints at "an aspect of life" (not feeling any older on your birthday), but does not elaborate.

**Standard referenced:**

**RL.9-10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

George Orwell was an English novelist, essayist, and critic most famous for his novels *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). In the story "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell is set in Burma in 1936, the story was about a white man with a rifle that was getting pressure by the natives to shoot an elephant, but he didn't want to kill the elephant.

1

The diction in George Orwell's essay "Shooting and Elephant" communicates a complex mix of hateful and shameful tones about the natives to show that he feels hated by all the natives.

2

George Orwell's diction shows a hateful tone toward the natives that shows his anger toward them because they were pressuring him to shoot the elephant even though he didn't want to shoot it. A Diction that communicates this tone of hater is "in the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults shouted after me when I was at a safe distances, got badly on my nerves." By using the word "hateful" communicates the emotion of an angry tone because he is saying that when he meets a man they always have to shouted insults to him. Using the word hateful makes it seem like he's being shown that he is hate by all the natives because he didn't want to shoot the elephant. Another quote that communicates this tone of hater is "when a Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happen more than one." By using word "hater" communicates the emotion of an angry tone because is saying like the Burman's hated him that they being tripped him up all the time.

3

4

George Orwell's diction shows a shameful tone toward the natives that shows disappointed because he kill the elephant and he didn't want to kill him. A Diction that

**SUPPORT MATERIALS (Entire page)**

From the "Focus" section of the rubric, it is clear that the student reaches Level 2: "Addresses prompt appropriately, but with a weak or uneven focus."

**1. COMPREHENSION & APPLICATION**

The student provides a summary of the basic plot, but does not demonstrate a grasp on the complexity of the story's context (i.e. colonialism, the narrator's conflicted perspective, etc.).

**2. UNDERSTANDING**

The student's attempt at including "conclusions or implications" that could be drawn is simply repeating the previous content of the same sentence, rather than connecting the narrator's tone to broader interpretations.

**3. LANGUAGE CHALLENGES**

Does the student fully understand the meaning of the word "diction" or is this misuse indicative of the student's limited English proficiency?

**4. CCSS ALIGNMENT**

Even though showing an emerging understanding of the connection between diction and tone, the student is below proficiency in RL.9-10.4, as the student confuses tone of the narrator with the attitude of natives toward him.

**Standard referenced:**

**RL.9-10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

to shoot an elephant for killing a Burman."By using the word "shameful" communicates the emotion/attitude of the tone because is talking about how he feels by shooting the elephant. Using the word shameful makes it seem like he was getting pressured by the natives to shoot the elephant and he did kill it that was his only alternative. Another quote that communicates this tone of shameful is "and afterwards I often wondered whether anyone understand that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool." By using the word "dam shame" communicates the emotion/attitude of the tone because is talking about how he feels and he is just avoid looking a fool by killing the elephant.

In conclusion in the story shooting an elephant by George Orwell's in burman written in 1936.he is trying to say that his been hated by the natives because he didn't want to shoot the elephant. He is avoiding feeling embarrassed by shooting the elephant he didn't wanted to kill it but he was getting pressure by the natives that his only alternative was to shoot the elephant.

## Pre assessment

- a 1. What word most closely describes the feeling or atmosphere created for the audience in the poem?
- a. Motivated
  - b. Depressed
  - c. Insulted
  - d. Lighthearted
- c 2. What word has the closest meaning to the underlined word in line 8?
- a. Insanity
  - b. Foolishness
  - c. Excitement
  - d. Obsession
- a 3. What two words best describe the tone of the poem?
- a. Condescending and passionate
  - b. Fearful and happy
  - c. Somber and serious
  - d. Threatening and optimistic
- b 4. Why does the author use the word "harnessed" to describe the flowers in line 3?
- a. To show that the flowers are tied with rope
  - b. To show that the flowers are trapped
  - c. To show that the flowers are tough
  - d. To show that the flowers are happy
- d a / 5. Which term or phrase best expresses the meaning of the word "seed" as used in line 11?
- a. Body
  - b. Common sense
  - c. Scent
  - d. Spiritual being

*Formative Assessment*

**Holistic Writing Rubric for Pre-Module Formative Assessment**

**Score 4:** The response is effective in its explanation of tone

- Thoroughly explains the speaker's attitude/tone toward an aspect of life
- Strong evidence of diction that demonstrates speaker's attitude/tone
- The response maintains a clear and effective organizational structure

**Score 3:** The response attempts to explain the speaker's attitude toward life

- Writer identifies a speaker's attitude toward an aspect of life
- Utilizes relevant evidence of diction to support speaker's tone
- The response maintains a sufficient organizational structure (2.5)

**Score 2:** The response provides an incomplete or simplistic explanation

- Attempts to identify the speaker's attitude toward life, but may not necessarily be accurate
- Evidence is uneven or not evident
- There is no clear or coherent organizational structure

**Score 1:** The response is irrelevant or blank

1

In the poem "Same Song" by Pat Mora, the author purposefully uses diction to describe tone as well as effectively portrays the speaker's attitude towards an aspect of life. By doing this, Mora elicits strong emotions from the reader that accurately conveys both purpose and tone.

The tone of "Same Song" is very melancholy and depressing. Throughout the poem, the author does a great job using diction to ~~describe~~ describe the tone. An example of this is in line eleven and twelve when the narrator says, "frown at her face, her eyes, her skin, not fair" (Mora 11, 12). By using "frowns" and "not fair," Mora shows that the daughter is unhappy with who she is. Another example of well-chosen word choice is "peers" in line ten, "stumbles" in line three and fourteen, and "Cold dark" in line sixteen. ~~That~~ These words all strongly display the tone of the piece by creating powerful emotions of sadness.

**1. CCSS ALIGNMENT**

The student demonstrates proficiency in how words are used connotatively to portray tone. The student is able to select specific evidence of diction to demonstrate this understanding. However, the student needs to identify the speaker's attitude toward life.

**Standard referenced:**

**RL.9-10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Finally, the author uses diction ~~to~~ to describe tone by saying, "peers into the mirror, mirror ~~out~~ on the wall" (Mora 10). This shows how the daughter is almost afraid to look at her reflection in the mirror. Clearly, the author uses diction to portray the tone of the poem.

In the poem, the narrator of the poem is the parent of the daughter and son. The narrator effectively portrays his or her attitude toward insecurities. The parent solemnly watches as both of his or her children work to make themselves perfect. An example of this is when the narrator says, "At night this ~~day~~ daughter stumbles off to bed at nine, eyes half-shut while my son jogs a mile in the cold dark" (Mora 13-16). This shows ~~she~~ <sup>he or she</sup> realizes that both ~~her~~ his or her children are insecure, and even if the children do not realize it.

~~In conclusion,~~ the author of the poem "Same Song" uses diction to show the tone of the poem. The narrator also displays his or her attitude towards an aspect of life.

ELA 9-12: Words Matter

STUDENT 3 SAMPLE

P. 5/8

*Summative LDC*  
**Informational/Explanatory Rubric for Grades 6–12 Teaching Tasks**

Scoring Elements	Not Yet		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Focus	Attempts to address prompt but lacks focus or is off task. D: Attempts to address additional demands but lacks focus or is off task.		Addresses prompt appropriately but with a weak or uneven focus. D: Addresses additional demands superficially.		Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. D: Addresses additional demands sufficiently. (3)		Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately and maintains a strongly developed focus. D: Addresses additional demands with thoroughness and makes a connection to controlling idea.
Controlling Idea	Attempts to establish a controlling idea but lacks a clear purpose.		Establishes a controlling idea with a general purpose.		Establishes a controlling idea with a clear purpose maintained throughout the response. (3)		Establishes a strong controlling idea with a clear purpose maintained throughout the response.
Reading/ Research	Attempts to present information in response to the prompt but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the prompt with accuracy and sufficient detail. (3)		Accurately presents information relevant to all parts of the prompt with effective selection of sources and details from reading materials.
Development	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, including retelling but lacks sufficient development or relevancy.		Presents appropriate details to support the focus and controlling idea.		Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support the focus and controlling idea. (3)		Presents thorough and detailed information to strongly support the focus and controlling idea.
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas but lacks control of structure.		Uses an appropriate organizational structure to address the specific requirements of the prompt, with some lapses in coherence or awkward use of the organizational structure.		Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address the specific requirements of the prompt. (3)		Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt.
Conventions	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using an appropriate format with only minor errors. (3.5)		Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using an appropriate format.
Content Understanding	Attempts to include disciplinary content in explanations but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.		Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.		Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding. (3)		Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.

3

### “Shooting an Elephant”

In the emotional story “Shooting an Elephant” by George Orwell, the author describes his predicaments regarding the natives, the British, authority figures, and the grotesque act of shooting an elephant. By using diction, Orwell paints a precise picture of the narrator’s feelings and attitudes toward the subject. “Shooting an Elephant” is a beautiful play on words and tone as the narrator describes the gruesome event that occurs. Orwell brilliantly uses diction to convey a hateful and ironic tone as well as projecting the narrator’s complex attitudes toward his surroundings and the conflicts he faces, which allows the reader to come to the conclusion that the narrator is insecure of who he is as a person.

To begin with, the narrator portrays a very hateful tone against the Burmese, the British, and himself. For example, when describing the Burmese, Orwell uses words such as *hated*, *guts*, *baited*, *wretched*, *hideous*, and *jeer*. He regards the Burmese as “sneering yellow faces of young men that met [him] everywhere” (Orwell 1). Additionally, Orwell also uses diction to describe his growing hatred for the British. He does this by stating that “I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British” (Orwell 1). Even though the narrator is an oppressor himself, he is disgusted with the British and the cruel acts of tyranny they are responsible for. The narrator also explains that “[He] was stuck between [his] hatred of the empire [he] served and [his] rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my [his] job impossible”

(Orwell 1). Finally, Orwell uses diction to display a great hatred for himself throughout the story. **1**

The best example of this is when the narrator says, “I was hated by large numbers of people — the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me” (Orwell 1).

It is clear to see that Orwell uses diction to support a hateful tone towards the Burmese, the British, and himself.

Alongside a hateful tone, “Shooting an Elephant” also has an ironic tone in multiple ways. To begin with, the tone is ironic because of the way the narrator portrays his situation.

Orwell uses the words *actor*, *absurd puppet*, *hollow*, *posing dummy*, *magical*, and *theatre curtain* **2**

to describe the irony that the narrator believes the situation is all an act in a play, and the people are simply actors. For example, the narrator explains, “Here was I — the white man with his gun, standing in front of the native crowd — seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I

was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind... He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib” (Orwell 4).

The narrator then explains that one “wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it” (Orwell 4).

Lastly, the tone is ironic in the fact that the narrator originally states that “I had no intention of shooting the elephant,” when he eventually shoots the elephant and states his action is justified (Orwell 3). He demonstrates the justification by saying, “Besides, legally I had done the right

thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it” (Orwell

6). This statement is an example of verbal irony because the narrator originally describes the elephant as peaceful creature which is no more dangerous than a cow. By using diction, Orwell also projects an ironic tone.

#### 1. UNDERSTANDING

By citing specific diction that conveys the narrator’s attitude, the student clearly recognizes the negative emotions that Orwell feels toward both the British and the Burmese, as well as the conflict created within himself. However, selecting the word “hateful” to describe these emotions might be a stretch and is not justified by the student’s evidence/commentary.

#### 2. CCSS ALIGNMENT

The student makes the explicit connection between the author’s diction and the narrator’s tone. Many of the words provided as evidence by the student have figurative implications in understanding the situation (i.e. “actor,” “puppet,” “theater,” etc.).

**RL.9–10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

After reading this beautiful, heart-wrenching tale, the reader comes to the conclusion that the narrator is insecure of who he is as a person. Orwell uses diction such as *fool*, *hooted*, *jostling*, *laugh*, and *struggle* to show the constant insecurities and pressures the narrator feels as he commits an unjust deed. <sup>an</sup> attempt to not look like a fool. One example of this is when the narrator is conflicted in what to do and says, "The crowd would laugh at me. And [sic] my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at" (Orwell 4). Another strong example of the narrator's insecurities is when he concludes by stating, "I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool" (Orwell 6). These quotes strongly show how the narrator is pressured to do a horrific deed solely based on his insecurities of looking a fool if he does not shoot the elephant.

In the extraordinary story "Shooting an Elephant," George Orwell uses compelling diction to demonstrate a hateful and ironic tone. The narrator is deeply torn about the act of shooting an elephant, the cruelty of imperialism, and the fact that he is one of the oppressors himself. Insecurities haunt the narrator and cause denial and irony when it comes to the aftermath of killing the beautiful and innocent elephant. Was shooting the elephant worth the momentary fame? Clearly, the powerful diction in addition to a hateful and ironic tone causes one to come to the conclusion that the narrator is deeply troubled and insecure.

Word Count: 870

**SUPPORT MATERIALS****(Entire page)**

From the "Reading and Research" section of the rubric, it is clear that the student reaches a level 3: "Presents information from reading materials relevant to the prompt with accuracy and sufficient detail." Extended commentary on why the quotations prove the point would take this to a Level 4.

**"Words Matter" Unit: Pre-Module Formative Assessment**

How does an author purposefully use diction to convey tone? After reading from our collection of fiction ("Those Winter Sundays," "Same Song," or "Eleven"), choose ONE of these selections and write a Short Constructed Response in which you explain the speaker or narrator's attitude toward an aspect of life. Be sure to support your explanation with evidence of specific diction that demonstrates the speaker's attitude/tone.

Use the space below for your Short Constructed Response.

2

The tone to me for the parents is possibly depressed because their kids are starting to grow up. "Peers into the mirror, mirror on the wall, frowns at her face, her eyes, her skin, not fair." This quote shows they're sad because they added at the end the author adds that it's not fair that her daughter is frowning at her reflection in the mirror.

1

**1. CCSS ALIGNMENT**

The student is able to state how the author uses diction to convey tone, but does not offer an explanation. We can't be sure this student understands the connection because of the limited explanation.

**Standard referenced:**

**RL.9-10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

"Shooting an Elephant" Essay

The author was hated by everyone in Moulmein till he shot the elephant and basically became a hero even though he was still hated by some people. In the story the author writes about a sub-divisional police officer who was hated by everyone until one day an elephant escaped and killed people of the village and destroyed houses until the officer shot him and he died half an hour later even though he hesitated shooting him at first. In "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell, the author uses diction to reveal a disgusted tone to draw attention toward shooting the elephant.

In the entire story, the author uses different words to describe the pain the elephant's feeling after he shot him. An example of one of these words is agony. The connotation (emotional feeling) of agony is negative and not positive and for this story it uses the word to describe the pain the elephant is in. The denotation (dictionary definition) is great pain in body or mind. "You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs." (page 167). Agony can describe the disgusted tone he has because the elephant is slowly dying from the bullets fired.

1

Another example of words the author uses is dreadful. The author uses this word as a connotation describing the elephant's gasping as dreadful. The denotation of this word is fearful, which could describe what the elephant's feeling as he's slowly dying. I felt that I had got to put

2

**1. SUPPORT MATERIALS**

From the "Content Understanding" section of the rubric, it is clear that the student reaches a level 2: "Attempts to include disciplinary content in explanations, but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate." The student briefly notes the disciplinary content (defines connotation and denotation) relevant to the prompt but shows an uneven understanding and is unsuccessful in applying it to the text.

**2. CCSS ALIGNMENT**

The student understands the meaning of connotation and denotation and tries to apply them to chosen words yet is not able to explain the figurative meanings.

**Standard referenced:**

**RL.9–10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

an end to that dreadful noise."(page 167). Dreadful can describe the author's disgusted tone because he's basically saying that the noise the elephant is making is awful and loud.

A last example of words he uses is painfully. The connotation is describing the elephant's pain as his side raised and lowered slowly. The actual definition is hurting, which makes a lot of sense because of the elephant lying on the ground. "He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling."(page 167). Painfully describes the disgusted tone because the elephant is in pain and the author kind of regrets it but he made the crowd of villagers happy because no one else was killed.

In "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell, the author uses diction to reveal a disgusted tone to draw attention toward shooting the elephant. The words I chose helped me understand the tone just a little better because they all describe how the elephant felt after the shots were fired and before he died. The author's words are very dark and describe the disgusted tone really well.

**1. UNDERSTANDING**

The student is so focused on the elephant that the student is not able to understand the complexity of the narrative.

**1**