

Mood

Mood Definition

In literature, mood is a literary element that evokes certain feelings or vibes in readers through words and descriptions.

Usually, mood is referred to as the [atmosphere](#) of a literary piece, as it creates an emotional [setting](#) that surrounds the readers. Mood is developed in a literary piece through various methods, including setting, [theme](#), tone, and [diction](#). Let us see how writers use the afore-mentioned elements in their literary works to create a particular mood.

Creating Mood through Setting

Setting is the physical location in a piece of literature that provides background in which the events of the [narrative](#) take place. A particular setting not only provides support to the contents of the story, but also sets the mood of the readers. Let us analyze a few examples of mood developed using a setting:

Example #1: *Pickwick Papers* (By Charles Dickens)

Charles Dickens creates a calm and peaceful mood in his novel *Pickwick Papers*:

“The river, reflecting the clear blue of the sky, glistened and sparkled as it flowed noiselessly on.”

The depiction of idyllic scenery imparts a serene and non-violent mood to the readers.

Example #2: *Wuthering Heights* (By Emily Bronte)

Emily Bronte, in *Wuthering Heights*, creates two contrasting moods through two contrasting settings. The events of the narrative takes place in two neighboring houses: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. A depressing mood is created whenever Wuthering Heights is described. For example, in chapter 12 the narrator says:

“There was no moon, and everything beneath lay in misty darkness: not a light gleamed from any house, far or near all had been extinguished long ago: and those at Wuthering Heights were never visible...”

On the contrary, the description of Thrushcross Grange creates a calm and peaceful mood:

“Gimmerton chapel bells were still ringing; and the full, mellow flow of the beck in the valley came soothingly on the ear. It was a sweet substitute for the yet absent murmur of the summer foliage, which drowned that music about the Grange when the trees were in leaf.”

The [contrast](#) presented in the settings also helps in the development of the different characters. The people from Wuthering Heights are unsophisticated, while those from Thrushcross Grange are refined.

Creating Mood through Tone

The manner in which a writer approaches this theme and subject is called the tone. The readers always rely on the writer’s [point of view](#) of the events taking place in a story. They observe the story through his eyes. They feel the way the writer feels about the events taking place and the description provided. Therefore, the [attitude](#) of the writer evokes feelings and emotions in the readers.

Example #3: *The Road Not Taken* (By Robert Frost)

For instance, see how Robert Frost, in his poem *The Road Not Taken*, creates a gloomy feeling through his tone:

“I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

Frost informs us about his past with a “sigh” that gives the above lines an unhappy tone and thus evokes an unhappy mood. An unhappy mood is created because the poet convinces us that he regrets a choice he made in the past.

Creating Mood through Diction

Diction is the choice of words a writer uses. Diction or choice of words conveys deep feelings, and depicts the events, places, and characters in a literary work in specific colors, having an effect on the way the readers feel about them.

Example #4: *Gulliver's Travel* (By Jonathon Swift)

The following lines from Jonathon Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is one of the great mood examples created using diction:

“And being no stranger to the art of war, I have him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines, bombardments, sea-fights...”

In order to create feelings of disgust in readers, for the destructive consequences of war, the writer chooses words that are unmelodious, harsh, and jarring. The diction in the above passage corresponds with the subject matter.

Function of Mood

Mood helps in creating an atmosphere in a literary work by means of setting, theme, diction, and tone. It evokes various emotional responses in readers, and thus ensures their emotional attachment to the literary piece

they read. Once the readers are emotionally stirred, they fully comprehend the message that the writer tries to convey to them.