

Tone Detectives

Hear the attitude behind feedback.

7L5.c "Distinguish among the connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending)."

NAME _____

DATE _____

THOUGHTFUL TONE

These words or phrases give feedback with care and respect. They can still express a different opinion.

A gentle correction helps someone improve.

HARSH TONE

These words or phrases make feedback sound sharp, hurtful, or disrespectful. They may make the listener feel embarrassed or attacked.

A mocking criticism can embarrass someone.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

Part 1: Circle THOUGHTFUL or HARSH for each phrase, then Part 2: choose two items and explain which word or words helped you decide.

1. The coach gave a tactful suggestion.

THOUGHTFUL

HARSH

2. The reviewer offered constructive criticism.

THOUGHTFUL

HARSH

3. His blunt answer upset the group.

THOUGHTFUL

HARSH

4. The counselor spoke diplomatically about the conflict.

THOUGHTFUL

HARSH

5. She made a snide comment about the project.

THOUGHTFUL

HARSH

6. The editor wrote a scathing review.

THOUGHTFUL

HARSH

7. He gave a candid but respectful opinion.

THOUGHTFUL

HARSH

8. She gave a brutally honest reply.

THOUGHTFUL

HARSH

2

PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3

MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Part 3: Write one new feedback phrase with a THOUGHTFUL tone and one new feedback phrase with a HARSH tone.

THOUGHTFUL _____

HARSH _____

CHALLENGE

Write two sentences that share the same opinion, one with a THOUGHTFUL tone and one with a HARSH tone.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The coach gave a tactful suggestion.	THOUGHTFUL	Tactful suggests careful, respectful wording.
2	The reviewer offered constructive criticism.	THOUGHTFUL	Constructive suggests feedback meant to help improve.
3	His blunt answer upset the group.	HARSH	Blunt suggests overly direct wording without much care.
4	The counselor spoke diplomatically about the conflict.	THOUGHTFUL	Diplomatically suggests respectful, careful communication.
5	She made a snide comment about the project.	HARSH	Snide suggests mocking or mean-spirited criticism.
6	The editor wrote a scathing review.	HARSH	Scathing suggests severely critical, cutting language.
7	He gave a candid but respectful opinion.	THOUGHTFUL	Respectful shows that the honest opinion was expressed with care.
8	She gave a brutally honest reply.	HARSH	Brutally suggests honesty delivered in a hurtful way.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **THOUGHTFUL:** The librarian gave a helpful suggestion about the book.
- **HARSH:** The shopper made a rude complaint about the service.

Challenge: The team captain said, "Your plan could work better if we add a timeline." The team captain snapped, "Your plan makes no sense."

Accept equivalent explanations that point to the connotation of a key word or phrase. In Part 3 and the challenge, check that the wording, not just the topic, creates the stated tone.