

### **Exercise: Effect of Tone**

*Understanding a general audience and reader.*

[Goal – To help students realize that they are creating an impression on their readers with their word choice; they should therefore write convincingly for a general audience rather than journal for their own edification or explain their life situations to a sympathetic instructor. Students are often surprised to realize that readers are drawing mental pictures of them as authorities, not just evaluating the strength of their arguments. This workshop works well in between drafts of papers 1 or 2 as it helps students realize basic principles and get to know each other.]

1. Split into groups of three or four. Work with your group members to write a profile of the kind of writer you trust. What is this person like? What does he or she look like? (Draw a picture.) What does she or he sound like? When your group is finished, put your description and any pictures on the board.

[This takes about fifteen minutes; follow up with a discussion of what these descriptions and pictures have in common and how they contrast.]

2. Work with your group members to draw a mental picture of the writer of these phrases, taken from previous student papers:

“To be honest,...” / “Let’s be honest,”

“I don’t know why I’m telling you this, but,...”

“Don’t get me wrong; I love ...”

“Think about it!”

“Trust me!”

“What I’m trying to say here is...”

“As I’ve already tried to prove,”

“Let’s move on...”

“When I first got this assignment, I was really confused. I don’t know; maybe I’m just weird.”

[Follow with discussion and redirect students to their drafts to analyze their own tone and word choice in the time remaining.]