

Diction Practice

Read the following passage from Chapter 7 of *All Quiet On the Western Front*. Circle the specific words that you believe contribute to the hostile, destructive tone of the passage.

Chapter 7, page 237

Burning houses stand out like torches against the night. Shells lumber across and crash down. Munition columns tear along the street. On one side the supply dump has been ripped open. In spite of all the flying fragments the drivers of the munition columns pour in like a swarm of bees and pounce on the bread. We let them have their own way. If we said anything it would only mean a good hiding for us. So we go differently about it. We explain that we are the guard and so know our way about, we get hold of the tinned stuff and exchange it for things we are short of. What does it matter anyhow—in a while it will all be blown to pieces. For ourselves we take some chocolate from the depot and eat it in slabs. Kat says it is good for loose bowels.

As you list the words on the lines below, group them into two or three categories (you assign the categories).

Now write a sentence explaining how the *method* (deliberate diction) impacts the *meaning* or tone of the passage.

We are going to play with diction a little bit. On the lines below, write your name and tone adjective and your partner's name and their tone adjective.

(your name and adjective)

(partner's name and adjective)

Now you are going to rewrite the passage, aiming to achieve your tone, by changing the diction of the passage in Mad Lib fashion. They may not make complete sense, but we should be able to guess at the tone pretty accurately!!!

_____ (ADJ.) houses stand out like _____ (NOUN) against the night. _____ (NOUN) _____ (VERB) across and _____ (VERB) down. _____ (ADJ) _____ (NOUN) _____ (VERB) along the street. On one side the _____ (ADJ.) _____ (NOUN) has been ripped open. In spite of all the _____ (ADJ) _____ (NOUN) the _____ (PLUARAL NOUN) of the _____ (NOUN) _____ (VERB) in like a _____ (NOUN) of _____ (NOUN) and _____ (VERB) on the bread. _____ (PROPER NOUN) let them have their own way. If _____ (PRONOUN) said anything it would only mean a good _____ (NOUN) for us. So we go differently about it. We explain that we are the _____ (PROFESSION/JOB TITLE) and so know our way about, we get hold of the _____ (ADJ) _____ (NOUN) and exchange it for _____ (PLURAL NOUN) we are short of. What does it matter anyhow—in a while it will all be _____ (VERB) to (NOUN). For _____ (NOUN) we take some _____ (NOUN) from the (NOUN) and _____ (VERB) it in _____ (NOUN). _____ (PROPER NOUN) says it is good for _____ (ADJ) _____ (NOUN).

Now, identify, highlight, and label the deliberate diction used in the following passage and write a sentence that identifies how the diction affects the meaning and tone of the passage.

Chapter 4, page 61

Then it begins in earnest. We crawl away as well as we can in our haste. The next lands fair amongst us. Two fellows cry out. Green rockets shoot up on the sky-line. Barrage. The mud flies high, fragments whiz past. The crack of the guns is heard long after the roar of the explosions.