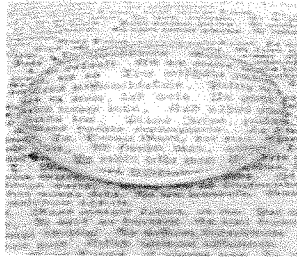


## SOAPSTone + Template: A Close Reading Strategy



When reading a text closely, ideally you will annotate. Annotation simply means *written observations, questions, summaries, and comments about what you are reading while you are reading*. When you can't annotate, use SOAPSTone + as a close reading strategy.

SOAPSTone + allows you to deconstruct a text. Here's what it means:

- **Speaker**: Remember that the speaker cannot simply be the author/writer. Whose voice do we hear in a text? In whose shoes is the speaker or writer walking? Is there an identifiable speaker? What other clues are there as to the speaker? Age? Gender? Social class? Emotional state? Occupation?  
**Remember, the genre of a text will help you think about the speaker.**
- **Occasion**: Remember that naming the occasion is not simply identifying the time/place. What is going on in social/cultural circles that might help a reader understand the occasion? Is the text a memory? Speech? Letter? Critique? Argument? About an event? Where? When? Of course, you need to think about setting, but remember that occasion is so much more.
- **Audience**: Who is the *intended* audience? Whose attention does the speaker seek to gain? In MLK's "I Have a Dream," he is not speaking only to African Americans but to a larger audience viewing the March on Washington, including those in government who can legislate change. Is it a general audience? Specific audience? How can the genre help us understand audience?
- **Purpose**: Think about the writing mode or genre and the purposes for each. Authors write to entertain, to inform, to persuade, to critique, to complain, to explain, to reflect, to describe, *sometimes to simply express a truth*. Often, writers have a dual purpose as in Amy Tan's "Fish Cheeks"—to entertain and to argue for accepting one's cultural heritage. It is not enough to identify the general purpose as in to satirize. Ask, "*To satirize what, whom? For what purpose.*"
- **Subject**: The subjects of texts are often abstract—the right to die, racism, poverty, conformity, etc. The subject is the issue at hand, not the character or specific situation. It isn't necessarily an object. It can be an idea, too.
- **Tone**: Tone is the attitude of the speaker towards his subject and audience. Who is the speaker? What is the subject? What is the speaker's attitude towards his subject? Use a list of "Tone Words" to help identify the Tone.
- **Stylistic/Rhetorical Devices**: Tone, diction (denotation/connotation), imagery, detail, syntax, organization, figurative language (simile, metaphor, litote, allusion, alliteration, synecdoche, metonymy, etc.) The writer's use of mode—narration, exposition, description, and persuasion. The writer's use of ethos, logos, pathos; the writer's use of evidence such as personal experience, example, definition, statistics, research; the writer's use of satire, sarcasm, irony, understatement, reversal, incongruity. This is not a complete list, but it is a beginning.