

Tone

Consider:

It's his first exposure to Third World passion. He thought only Americans had informed political opinion – other people staged coups out of spite and misery. It's an unwelcome revelation to him that a reasonably educated and rational man like Ro would die for things that he, Brent, has never heard of and would rather laugh about. Ro was tortured in jail. Franny has taken off her earphones. Electrodes, canes, freezing tanks. He leaves nothing out. Something's gotten into Ro.

Dad looks sick. The meaning of Thanksgiving should not be so explicit.

— Bharati Mukherjee, "Orbiting"

Discuss:

1. What is the narrator's attitude toward Brent (Dad)? Cite your evidence.
2. How does the syntax in this passage help create the tone?

Apply:

Rewrite the last five sentences in the first paragraph, making the five short sentences into two longer sentences. Read your rewritten sentences to a partner and discuss how the longer sentences affect the tone of the passage.