

Tone

Consider:

Microphone feedback kept blaring out the speaker's words, but I got the outline. Withdrawal of our troops from Vietnam. Recognition of Cuba. Immediate commutation of student loans. Until all these demands were met, the speaker said he considered himself in a state of unconditional war with the United States government.

I laughed out loud.

— Tobias Wolff, "Civilian"

Discuss:

1. What is the attitude of the narrator toward the political speaker in this passage? How do you know?
2. How does the use of a short, direct sentence at the end of the passage (*I laughed out loud*) contribute to the tone?

Apply:

Substitute a new sentence for *I laughed out loud*. Your new sentence should express support for the political speaker. Read the passage – with your new sentence – to a partner and explain how your sentence changes the tone of the passage.