

Tone

Consider:

I perceived, as I read, how the collective white man had been actually nothing but a piratical opportunist who used Faustian machinations to make his own Christianity his initial wedge in criminal conquests. First, always “religiously,” he branded “heathen” and “pagan” labels upon ancient non-white cultures and civilizations. The stage thus set, he then turned upon his non-white victims his weapons of war.

— Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

Discuss:

1. What is the author’s attitude toward *the collective white man*?
2. What is the tone of the passage? Circle and discuss the words that reveal the tone of this passage.

Apply:

Rewrite the first sentence of the Malcolm X passage to read like positive propaganda for “the collective white man.” Your sentence should have the same basic meaning as Malcolm X’s sentence, but the tone should be positive and noncritical. Share your sentence with a partner and discuss the power words have to reveal and shape attitudes.