

The 'tone' or 'attitude' questions are quite commonly found in both the GMAT and GRE. These kinds of questions explicitly ask us to identify the context and the flow in which the author has set the particular passage. We need to gauge the author's flow of thinking, sentences and the point he is trying to drive home. Now under situations where you are stretched for time, you can apply a quick 2-step technique to mark a correct answer for 'tone' questions.

**Step 1:** Classify choices into strong or weak tones and eliminate those options that fall into it.

**Step 2:** Select either equivocal or qualified criticism depending upon the context of the passage.

Let us look at an example to understand this concept more clearly.

*Those examples of poetic justice that occur in medieval and Elizabethan literature, and that seem so satisfying, have encouraged a whole school of twentieth-century scholars to "find" further examples. In fact, these scholars have merely forced victimized character into a moral framework by which the injustices inflicted on them are, somehow or other, justified. Such scholars deny that the sufferers in a tragedy are innocent; they blame the victims themselves for their tragic fates. Any misdoing is enough to subject a character to critical whips. Thus, there are long essays about the misdemeanors of Webster's Duchess of Malfi, who defied her brothers, and the behavior of Shakespeare's Desdemona, who disobeyed her father.*

**Question**

What is the author's '**tone or attitude**' in this passage?

1. Enthusiastic advocacy
2. Dispassionate impartiality
3. Detached ambivalence
4. Qualified support
5. Skeptical

**Step 1:**

Let us analyze the answer choices without reading the passage.

1. Enthusiastic advocacy means strong support. Note that the tone of the author is never extreme on the GRE or GMAT, we can easily eliminate this option.
2. In this option there are two words, dispassionate, which means uninvolved, and impartiality, which means, being neutral. The choice suggests that the author is being neutral in an uninvolved way. This doesn't make sense. We can eliminate this choice.
3. Now here detached means disconnected and ambivalence means uncertainty. So this option means disconnected uncertainty, which, again, makes no sense.
4. This option is neither too strong nor too weak. So let us hold this and check the last option.
5. We need to read the passage for this.

Only choices D and E remain after this step.

**Step 2:**

On reading the passage cursorily we get that 'skeptical' cannot be a correct choice. The author does not express any doubt, or skepticism, about anything he is saying.

Hence the correct answer is D.

In summary

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