Diction Practice

1. Read the following passage from Ray Bradbury’s short story “I See You Never.” Circle the specific words that you believe contribute to the tone of the passage.

She remembered a visit she had once made to some Mexican border towns – the hot days, the endless crickets leaping and falling and lying dead and brittle like small cigars in the shopwindows, and the canals taking river water out to the farms, the dirt roads, the scorched seascape. She remembered the silent towns, the warm beer, the hot, thick food each day. She remembered the slow, dragging horses and the parched jackrabbits on the road. She remembered the iron mountains and the dusty valleys and the ocean that spread hundreds of miles with no sound but waves --- no cars, no buildings, no nothing.

2. Explain why you chose those words.

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3. As you list the words on the lines below, group them into two or three categories that you designate. To determine the groups, think about how these words might be connected.

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4. Which two tone words from the chart best describe the TONE of this passage?

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5. Now write two sentences explaining how the method (deliberate diction) impacts the meaning (tone words from the previous question) in this passage.

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6. Now we are going to play with diction a little bit. Choose a partner and then before you turn this page over, each partner should choose a TONE (it can be any tone you would like). On the lines below, write your name and tone adjective and your partner’s name and tone adjective.

Your Name and Tone Adjective                                          Your Partner’s Name and Tone Adjective
She remembered the (1-adj) (2-plural noun), the 
(3-adj) (4-noun), the (5-adj) (6-adj) 
(7-noun) each day. She remembered the (8-adj) 
(9-verb+ing) (10-plural noun) and the 
(11-adj) (12-plural noun) on the road.

She remembered the (13-adj) (14-plural noun) and the 
(15-adj) (16-plural noun) and the (17-adj) 
(18-plural noun) that (19-verb past tense)
hundreds of miles with no (20-noun)---no (21-
plural noun), no (22-plural noun), no (23-noun).