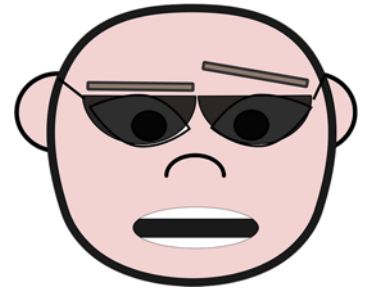


Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Syntax Hints



**Directions:** Read each passage closely. Use the **syntax**—how the sentence is built, including punctuation, parallelism, and inserted phrases—to determine the meaning of the bolded word.

1. The author's tone was **acerbic**—sharp, biting, and intentionally provocative—challenging readers to examine their own beliefs rather than passively absorb the content.

**How does the sentence structure help define “acerbic”?**

- A. The em dash sets off a list of descriptive synonyms.
- B. “Rather than passively absorb” signals a contrast.
- C. The use of “intentionally” suggests it was on purpose.
- D. All of the above

**What does “acerbic” most likely mean?**

- A. Gentle and warm
- B. Confusing and vague
- C. Harsh or critical
- D. Uplifting and hopeful

2. Though initially **placid**, the lake—still as glass under the morning sun—transformed into a churning mass of waves by afternoon, whipped by unexpected winds.

**What part of the sentence reveals the meaning of “placid”?**

- A. The contrast introduced by “though”
- B. The description “still as glass”
- C. The phrase “transformed into a churning mass”
- D. All of the above

**What does “placid” most likely mean?** Use clues from the structure to support your answer in 1-2 sentences.

3. After the lengthy and **tedious** lecture—complete with endless slides, monotone delivery, and irrelevant anecdotes—the students left more confused than when they had entered.

**Which sentence elements support the meaning of “tedious”?**

Choose all that apply:

- ☐ “lengthy”
- ☐ “complete with endless slides”
- ☐ “monotone delivery”
- ☐ “students left more confused”
- ☐ “the lecture was helpful”

**What does “tedious” most likely mean?**

- A. Exciting and inspiring
- B. Long and boring
- C. Short and efficient
- D. Helpful and engaging