Tone and Mood

Read this excerpt from a spooky story. The author chose many words to help set the spooky TONE of the story. These spooky words are underlined for you to see.

Danny tiptoed up the creaky stairs of the old haunted house. He peered into the mysterious shadows and his heart pounded in his chest. The walls were draped with cobwebs and the windows were shattered into jagged shards, reminding him of monster teeth. He crept through one dark chamber after the next, terrified that he might encounter a ghost.

See how the WORD CHOICE enhanced the spooky mood? What if the author was not as careful in choosing the right word? Read the next piece and look at the underlined words. Why is this less effective?

Danny scampered up the worn out stairs of the old haunted house. He gazed into the dim light and his heart pitter-pattered in his chest. The walls were decorated with cobwebs and the windows were broken into pointy triangles. He strolled through one room after the next, wondering if he might meet up with someone.
SET A MOOD – CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORD!

This author wants to set a happy, peaceful mood, but the bold-faced words aren’t happy or peaceful. Replace each bold-faced word with a better word that means almost the same thing.

Sam **trudged** through the meadow. Birds **squawked** and mosquitoes **buzzed** like chainsaws. Butterflies **zoomed** through the air. Sam **halted** to **snatch** a flower growing nearby. The breeze **whipped** against his face and Sam **marched** on. It was such a peaceful, lazy day in the meadow.

This author wants to set a scary mood, but the bold-faced words aren’t very scary. Replace each bold-faced word with a better word.

The old witch **walked** to the door of her cottage and **looked** out into the **woods**. She was **making** a brew in her **big old pot** and needed some more ingredients. The old witch **went** down the forest path **trying to find** some frog eyes, newt toes, fur balls, and a whole list of other **unusual items**. When she found what she needed, she stood over the pot **wiggling** her hands and **said** a spell. POOF! A **jumbo** monster **popped** out of the pot!