

Lesson 17

Denotation and Connotation

CCSS

L.7.5.c: Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *refined*, *respectful*, *polite*, *diplomatic*, *condescending*).



Introduction

Words can have two kinds of meaning. A word's **denotation** is its basic meaning, or dictionary definition. A word's **connotations** are the feelings associated with it.

- A word or phrase can have **positive**, **negative**, or **neutral** connotations.

Positive Connotation	Neutral Connotation	Negative Connotation
Ian requested a glass of water.	Ian asked for a glass of water.	Ian demanded a glass of water.

- A word's or phrase's connotation partly depends on its context.

Positive	Negative
The ice-cold water was refreshing on the hot day.	The ice-cold water made Ian shiver.

When writing, choose words that will produce in your readers the feelings you want them to have.



Guided Practice

Read the sentences. Write **P** if the underlined word has a positive connotation. Write **N** if the word has a negative connotation.

Hint

Ask yourself: How does this word make me feel? If the word makes you feel good, it has a positive connotation. If it makes you feel bad, it has a negative connotation.

1 Ian and Atsuko were contenders in the storywriting contest. _____

Ian and Atsuko were rivals in the storywriting contest. _____

2 Atsuko was known for her mysterious plots. _____

Atsuko was known for her bewildering plots. _____

3 Ian's characters were ridiculous. _____

Ian's characters were amusing. _____

4 Ian displayed his large vocabulary. _____

Ian flaunted his large vocabulary. _____

5 Atsuko's main character behaved rashly. _____

Atsuko's main character behaved boldly. _____

6 Everyone snickered at Atsuko's surprise ending. _____

Everyone chuckled at Atsuko's surprise ending. _____



For numbers 1–3, choose the word that has the same denotation as the underlined word and also has the most negative connotation.

1 After school, a bunch of students gathered by the riverfront.

- A** mob
- B** crowd
- C** group
- D** collection

2 Atsuko, strolling home, was surprised to see her classmates huddled together.

- A** amazed
- B** astonished
- C** shocked
- D** astounded

3 Atsuko kept a watchful eye on her classmates as she approached them.

- A** close
- B** attentive
- C** suspicious
- D** keen

Answer Form

- 1 (A) (B) (C) (D)
- 2 (A) (B) (C) (D)
- 3 (A) (B) (C) (D)
- 4 (A) (B) (C) (D)
- 5 (A) (B) (C) (D)

Number Correct / 5

For numbers 4 and 5, choose the word that has the same denotation as the underlined word and also has the most positive connotation.

4 Ian was in their midst, so they were certainly planning something.

- A** concocting
- B** devising
- C** scheming
- D** plotting

5 Suddenly they turned toward her and announced, “You won first prize.”

- A** stated
- B** said
- C** uttered
- D** exclaimed