

Connotation vs. Denotation

Denotation is the actual definition of a word. You've been looking up the denotation of words for MANY years now!! But connotation is different. You may have noticed that some words generate emotions for you. In that case, you are reacting to a word's connotative meaning.

Connotation is the emotion that a word generates in addition to the actual meaning.

Example

	Denotation	Connotation
House:	A building in which someone lives	neutral
Home:	A place of warmth, comfort and affection	positive
Shanty:	A small, crudely built shack.	negative

They say I'm *wise*. I prefer to think of it as *scholarly*.





Positive, Negative or Neutral?

Directions: For each word, write the word under the column which best describes its connotation.

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Negative</i>

WORD BANK

gaze	stare	astute	smart
youthful	immature	chef	cook
cheap	inexpensive	woman	chick
slender	skinny	criminal	thug
aggressive	pushy	smile	smirk
brilliant	nerd	cop	officer
sad	glum	plain	natural
laugh	giggle	refreshing	chilly

Directions: Insert the word with the most *negative* connotation to complete each sentence.

1. It was hard to ignore the baby's _____ screams. (Loud/Piercing)
2. Jackie wore a/an _____ dress to the party. (Ancient/Vintage)
3. Dexter was an _____ dog. (Obese/Overweight)

Directions: Choose a word from the previous word bank. Look up the part of speech and denotative definition of the word. Then, determine the connotation of the word. Next, write a sentence using the word. Finally, determine a synonym for the word with a DIFFERENT connotation.

Example

Word: fragrance

Part of Speech & Denotation: (n) a smell sensed by the olfactory nerve

Connotation: (circle one) positive negative neutral

Sentence using the word: The candlemaker chose a pleasing, spicy fragrance for her old friend's candle.

Synonym: odor

Connotation: (circle one): positive negative neutral

Word: _____

Part of Speech & Denotation: () _____

Connotation: (circle one) positive negative neutral

Sentence using the word: _____

Synonym: _____

Connotation: (circle one): positive negative neutral

Date: _____

Connotation/Denotation Practice

The connotative meaning of a word can have tremendous impact on a statement that someone makes. If you choose a word with a negative connotation, the statement you make may have a different impact on someone than you intended.

Connotation is the emotion that a word generates in addition to the actual meaning.

Consider how the author of each sentence below feels.

Sentence #1: Amanda's *miserly* ways will allow her to live comfortably for the rest of her life.

Sentence #2: Amanda's *frugal* way will allow her to live comfortably for the rest of her life.

It is apparent that the author of sentence #1 DOES NOT have a good opinion of Amanda. That is because the word *miserly* has a negative connotation.

Directions: Read each sentence . Identify the best fitting word for the sentence based on the connotation of each word. Use the hints to guide you!

1. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. Everyone in the office respects Casey because of her kind but _____ attitude. (HINT: She is respected, so people like her. A positive word would be appropriate here)

- A. Assertive B. Bossy C. Demanding

2. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. "Well," said Curtis with an embarrassed smile, "I'm looking for _____ car." (HINT: A positive word would be appropriate here)

- A. a cut rate B. a cheaper C. a more economical

3. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. "Here's a scholarship that you might qualify for," said Mike's advisor. "It's for people who are _____ ." (HINT: A positive word would be appropriate here)

- A. underprivileged B. Poor C. Poverty-stricken

4. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. William annoys his friends because he's so _____ when it comes to money. (HINT: They're annoyed so you need a negative word!)

- A. Economical B. Thrifty C. Stingy

5. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. We're worried about Trish; she's lost so much weight that she looks _____. (HINT: they're worried so you need a negative word!)

- A. Trim B. Boney C. Slender

6. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. "I'm afraid," said Luke's guidance counselor carefully, "that you might find advanced calculus a little too _____." (HINT: We don't want to hurt Luke's feelings)

- A. Challenging B. Confusing C. Difficult

7. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. "And this particular neighborhood," said the realtor to the young married couple, "will suit families who are _____." (HINT: It is rude to refer to someone's wealth)

- A. Rich B. Loaded C. Well to do

8. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. Daniel's doctor said, "I recommend a low-fat, low-carbohydrate diet because you are becoming _____." (HINT: The doctor wouldn't insult a patient)

- A. Fat B. Large C. Overweight

9. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. What makes Jewel so difficult to understand is that she is rather _____. (HINT: We want the least insulting word)

- A. Withdrawn B. Shy C. Closeted

10. Choose the most appropriate word that can be inserted in the blank. We were all so sorry to hear that you had gotten _____ from the plant. (HINT: Be kind. It's hard to lose your job)

- A. Canned B. Let go C. Fired

11. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. We like Heath as the shift supervisor because he has a _____ attitude. (HINT: We want the most complimenting word here)

- A. Laid back B. Careless C. Lackadaisical

12. Choose the most appropriate word(s) that can be inserted in the blank. "We understand," said the customer service representative, "that our new policy might be _____." (HINT: The customer service representative doesn't want to make themselves look bad so they choose the most positive word)

- A. Inconvenient B. A pain in the neck C. Infuriating

Pick 3 words from the questions above that were unfamiliar to you. Write the DENOTATIVE definition of those words:

_____:

_____:

_____:

1. mansion, shack, abode, dwelling, domicile, residence, house, home, dump
2. spinster, old maid, unmarried woman, maiden lady, career woman
3. snooty, arrogant, conceited, cocky, vain, self-satisfied, egotistical, proud, high-and mighty, overbearing, high-hat, supercilious
4. titter, giggle, chuckle, laugh, guffaw, roar, snicker, snigger, cackle
5. corpulent, plump, obese, heavysset, fleshy, fat, paunchy, burly, overweight, roly-poly, bulky, portly, weighty, pudgy
6. saving, tight, miserly, frugal, economical, careful, thrifty, penny-pinching, budget-minded, penurious
7. shrewd, calculating, clever, sly, adroit, knowing, astute, cunning, skillful, smooth,
8. glum, sullen, withdrawn, reticent, silent, taciturn
9. laconic, terse, economical, concise, pointed, compressed, brief, boiled down
10. steal, purloin, embezzle, filch, pilfer, burglarize, rob, holdup, snatch, grab, help oneself to, appropriate.