

Name: _____

Date: _____

The definition of a word changes over time as it is used and forgotten and refound by speakers and writers, sometimes leading to confusion. A words have two separate kinds of defintion, **connotation** and **denotation**, which sometimes confuse speakers.

Denotation: the literal meaning of a word

Connotation: the idea or feeling that comes with a word, a secondary meaning

Sometimes people come to know a word by just the connotation, causing confusion when someone uses the word as it is literally meant. Complete the next three rows with examples of words who have different connotations and denotations.

Denotation	Word	Connotation
Feathered bird that produces eggs	Chicken	A coward
Having less light, being in darkness	Shady	Suspicious, corrupt, scheming
Sweet syrup made by bees	Honey	A kind or liked person

Rewrite the following sentences with verbs that have the same denotations but different connotations.

1. April walked into the room.

2. Prince was using the computer.

3. Tiya was sitting at her desk.

Connotation is a definition based on prior knowledge and experience, not just literal meaning, and a word's connotation could be different depending on the person using or hearing the word. The word snake has the denotation of being a scaly, legless animal, but could have the connotation of a sneaky person, or if you're a plumber, a tool to clean pipes.

Fill in the grid with words that have either a positive or negative connotation based on the denotation listed.

Positive Connotation	Denotation	Negative Connotation
Gaze	Look steadily	Stare
	Influence someone	
	Not on time	
	Without speed	
	A large group	
	A young age	
	Fairly priced	

Practice shifting your viewpoint so that you can describe the same object both favorably and unfavorably. You can do this by first using words with a positive connotation and then switching to words with negative connotations. Choose three of the descriptions below. Write a short description that is favorable and a short description that is unfavorable.

For example, you might describe a **banana** as sweetly ripe or mushy depending on your desired connotation.

Describe a wet street after the rain.

Describe a college or professional football game.

Characterize a challenging class.

Describe a hamburger from a fast-food restaurant.

Describe a group of three or four teenage boys walking down the street.

Describe a recent movie or television show.

Describe a new parking regulation.

Exercise 3

Read each of the following sentences. Decide from the context whether the speaker is showing approval or disapproval of the topic. Then circle the best word to put into the sentence.

1. "The sooner we move out of this (home, dump)," said Jack, "the happier I'll be."
2. This cell phone is (expensive, overpriced), but I don't mind paying extra because it has so many useful features.
3. You're lucky to have Wilma on your committee. She has lots of (original, crazy) ideas.
4. Boss Reed and his (cronies, employees) have controlled the politics in this city for more than twenty years. I certainly hope the other party wins this year!
5. It was a beautiful spring day, and the (stench, scent) of apple blossoms filled the whole yard.
6. I hope I don't have to share an office with Janice. Sandra told me how (curious, nosy) she can be.
7. "I think Fay is an excellent president," said the principal. "She really knows how to (manage, meddle)."
8. Will you please turn your stereo off? I can't concentrate with all that (music, noise).
9. I love going camping and getting in touch with nature. The woods are filled with so much (vermin, animal life).
10. What makes Jim such an excellent storyteller is his knack for (invention, lying).
11. Mr. Benton had better watch out for that new assistant of his. He's a (clever, crafty) one.
12. I have a lot of respect for Jenny's father. He's rather (reserved, antisocial) and dignified.
13. My brother can't stand his mother-in-law. She's practically a millionaire, but she's about as (thrifty, miserly) as a person can get.
14. This coffee is very (bitter, strong) – just the way I like it!
15. Can you please ask the new saleswoman not to be so (enthusiastic, pushy)? She is scaring away the customers.

The choice of connotation changes the tone of the sentence (it's part of word choice). For the previous fifteen sentences, go back and determine what tone the sentence uses. Tone should take the form of a one word emotion (most of the time).

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| 1. <u>Grumpy</u> | 5. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 13. _____ | 14. _____ | 15. _____ |