

Name _____

Period _____

Assessment Preparation: Connotation/Denotation

Denotation is the literal dictionary definition of a word. Many words can have the same denotation, or definition, but words also have a **connotation**: an emotional feeling about the word. For example: the words thin, skinny, trim, emaciated, slender, lanky and slim all have the same dictionary definition: of limited size; of slight consistency. However, would you rather be referred to as slender or thin, or emaciated and lanky? The words slender and slim have a positive connotation; the words emaciated and lanky have a negative connotation. In other words, we would probably want to be referred to as slender, slim, or even trim.

Our goal as writers is to explore the use of connotation to enhance our writing. For example, rather than stating, "Jan *walked* throughout the room, *talking* to her guests." We can improve the sentence with words with the same *denotative* meaning, but more accurate or illustrative *connotative* meaning, such as "Jan *sauntered* throughout the room, *gossiping* to her guests." Clearly, the second sentence gives the reader a more accurate and detailed description of Jan's actions.

*Directions: In each sentence below, the vocabulary word from Chapter 2 has been underlined. Below the sentence are four choices, each with the same denotation as the vocabulary word. Using the context of the sentence, choose the **best** word to match the connotation of the vocabulary word in its context. Write the correct letter on the line provided. (Be prepared to justify your answer.) An example has been done for you. Then, on the back of your paper or another sheet of paper, use the vocabulary word in a sentence of your own construction.*

 C EX. The boys found themselves clambering through the creepers in search of wood.

- a. walking b. moving **c. struggling** d. climbing

 1. The angry mob gesticulated wildly, trying to make their point.

- a. motioned b. flailed c. waved d. gestured

 2. The fledgling thief clamored among the rioters, intent on blending in.

- a. exclaimed b. yelled c. protested d. vociferated

 3. The children's ebullience about the circus gave the performers a boost.

- a. exuberance b. excitement c. enthusiasm d. passion

 4. When asked to keep the fire going, the choir gravely assented.

- a. acknowledged b. acquiesced c. nodded d. complied

 5. His voice lifted into the whine of virtuous recrimination, begging to be heard.

- a. accusation b. incrimination c. indictment d. retort

 6. He paused in the tumult, trying in vain to perceive an answer to his cries.

- a. uproar b. disorder c. racket d. confusion

 7. The young girl ran to her room as her mother subjected her to a non-stop tirade.

- a. fight b. denunciation c. sermon d. tongue-lashing