

Denotation/Connotation Exercise

This exercise from Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense helps students understand the concept of connotation and denotation of words.

1. Which word in each group has the most "romantic" connotations? a) horse, nag, steed; b) king, ruler, tyrant, autocrat; c) China, Cathay; d) crow, sparrow, nightingale, catbird; e) kiss, osculate, buss; f) Pittsburgh, Birmingham, Samarkand, Podunk; g) spy, secret agent.
2. Which word in each group has the most favorable connotation? a) skinny, thin, slender; b) old-fashioned, out-of-date, obsolete; c) dwarfish, elfin, pigmy; d) small, little, petite; e) doting, loving, amorous; f) prosperous, rich, moneyed, opulent; g) revelation, exposure; h) cur, bitch, dog; i) scribble, write, indite; j) brainy, intelligent, smart; k) famous, notorious
3. Which word in each group is most emotionally connotative? a) offspring, children, progeny; b) brother, sibling.
4. Which of the following should you be least offended at being accused of? a) having acted foolishly, b) having acted like a fool.

Sports Team Names Connotation Activities

Activity One:

These are potential names for new professional athletic teams:

Poodles	Toads	Gazelles	Hippos
Buzzards	Snails	Meteors	Ferrets
Glaciers	Maggots	Sloth	Mosquitoes
Sleepers	Zeniths	Mares	Spikes

- Choose one list and you and your partner must discuss each name. Use a dictionary and write down the **definition/denotation** of each name.
- Then discuss and record the **connotation (emotion/reaction)** associated with each word.
- Answer these questions, **for each of the names in the ONE LIST you chose**, in complete sentences and **support your answers** with explanation,
 - What type of sport do you think the name fits? Why?
 - Does the name sound like a successful team? Why?
 - Would you want to wear a jersey with this name? Why?

Turn this work in with Activities Two and Three.

Activity Two:

Brainstorm and record a list of **five** current team names from professional and/or amateur sports. Analyze each name and answer these questions in complete sentences,

- What's the **denotation** of the name? Does the name fit the sport? **Why?**
- What **connotations** does the name evoke? **Why?**
- What can the name say about the athletes and fans of the team? Why?

Turn in this work with Activities One and Three.

Activity Three:

POSTER: You and your partner have been given the job to name a new professional athletic team.

- Design a poster advertising your new team.
- Decide what type of sport the team plays and make sure it is obvious on the poster. Create a **Team name logo design**.
- Name the team accordingly (the name must connect to the sport and express the feeling that the team wants the world to define it by).
- **List the connotations and denotation of the team name on the poster.** Label these lists with **DENOTATION** and **CONNOTATION**.
- **Create another name for this team that has the same denotation, but the OPPOSITE CONNOTATION of the name you chose.**

Following your class presentation, turn in all three activities together with the poster on top.