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 a) skinny, thin, slender; b) old-fashioned, out-of-date, obsolete; c) dwarfish, elfin, pigmy; d) small, little, petite; e) doting, loving, amorous; f) prosperous, rich, moneyed, opulent; g) revelation, exposure; h)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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poodles</th>
<th>Toads</th>
<th>Gazelles</th>
<th>Hippos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buzzards</td>
<td>Snails</td>
<td>Meteors</td>
<td>Ferrets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glaciers</td>
<td>Maggots</td>
<td>Sloth</td>
<td>Mosquitoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleepers</td>
<td>Zeniths</td>
<td>Mares</td>
<td>Spikes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 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.