Denotation and Connotation
Denotation: The dictionary definition; a word’s literal meaning only. Not emotions or feelings are associated with the word.

Ex: The teacher walked into the classroom.

This example does not have any hidden meaning. A teacher simply walked into a classroom.
Now, you try!

Write a sentence that only uses words with denotation.
**Connotation** - A word’s emotional meaning; suggestions and associations that are connected to a word.

Words can be positive, negative, or neutral. Words can also connote specific feelings or emotions.

*Ex: The eerie fog hovered in front of the abandoned house.*

What words in the sentence above do you believe create connotation? What connotation is created?
The *eerie* fog *hovered* in front of the *abandoned* house.

The words *eerie*, *hovered*, and *abandoned* all create connotation in the sentence above.

- *Eerie* creates a negative and creepy feeling
- *Hovered* creates a negative feeling. It also makes you think that the fog lingering somewhere it is not wanted.
- *Abandoned* creates a negative feeling. It also connotes or suggests the idea of being unwanted or left behind, which is negative.
• Fog can also create connotation.

• Like any word, fog has a denotative meaning, which is a cloudlike layer of small water droplets.

• But, fog is often associated with a spooky feeling because it can look ghost like and it can also cover or hide things.
The smiling educator strolled into the peaceful classroom.

What words create connotation in the sentences above? What kind of connotation is created?
The cranky schoolmarm stormed into the noisy, chaotic circus.

What words create connotation in the sentences above? What kind of connotation is created?

Schoolmarm: (n) a female school teacher, especially of the old-time country school type, known to be strict and prim.
The smiling educator strolled into the peaceful classroom.

The cranky schoolmarm stormed into the noisy, chaotic circus.

All words connote a kind, happy teacher and environment.

All words connote a strict, crabby teacher and a stressful environment.
1. Re-write the original sentence using words with connotation.

2. Then, trade with a partner and see if you can both identify the words with connotation.

3. Discuss the connotation you were trying to achieve and whether or not your partner correctly identified it.

Original Sentence:
The teacher walked into the classroom

Time left?
Write another sentence with your partner and trade with another group repeating the steps on the left.
Let’s Practice!

Write a sentence about a topic of your choice that shows connotation. Then, on the backside of your paper, write the words you used to create connotation. Then, list the connotation you wanted to create.

Ideas:
- A storm
- A substitute teacher
- A new student
- The school cafeteria
- The school library

- A baseball game
- A carnival
- A birthday present from Aunt Maude
- A hockey game
Discuss with a Partner

Trade your sentence with a partner and see if you can both identify the words with connotation.

Discuss the connotation you were trying to achieve and whether or not your partner correctly identified it. Make any necessary adjustments so the connotation is clear.
For example:
• My mom is economical when she goes grocery shopping.

-OR-
• My mom is cheap when she goes grocery shopping.

What is the difference between the connotation of these two sentences?
The *denotative* meaning of economical and cheap both mean to “save money.”

**BUT,** the **connotative** meaning of economical is positive. It connotes being **careful with one’s money.**

The **connotative** meaning of cheap is **negative.** It connotes being **stingy or miserly** similar to Ebenezer Scrooge.
* Connotation can help to create mood and tone in a text!

- Choosing positive or negative words can help an author convey the tone in his or her message.

- Connotative words can help to create the proper mood in a story. A happy, depressing, lonely, spooky, eerie, or creepy mood can be conveyed with the correct word choice.
Applying what you Learned

• Create a list of synonyms for rain.
• Then, categorize them by positive, negative, and neutral denotation.
• Write a sentence about a welcome spring rain using words with positive connotation.
• Then, write a sentence about a dangerous summer storm using words with negative connotation.
Apply what you learned

• Create a list of synonyms for snow.
• Then, categorize them by positive, negative, and neutral denotation.
• Write a sentence about a snow day using positive words from the perspective of a student getting the day off.
• Then, write a sentence about a treacherous winter storm using words with negative connotation.
If you are a dreamer, come in,
If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar,
A hope-er, a pray-er, a magic bean buyer...
If you're a pretender, come sit by my fire
For we have some flax-golden tales to spin.
Come in!
Come In!
Writing Task

- You are going to write a description of two houses based on images of the home.
  - Use words with connotation to match the mood of the picture.
  - Be descriptive and include details about the surrounding area.
Share your description with a partner.

- Identify the words that have connotation.
- What feelings or emotions do the words connote?
- Does the connotation correspond, or match, the mood in the picture?
- Can you think of different words that would create a stronger connotation?
Now, you are going to write a new description of the second house.

But, this time you will write the description as a real estate agent who is trying to sell the house. Use positive words to showcase features of the house that could possibly be seen as a deterrent to buyers.
Let's Recap!

• What is denotation?
• What is connotation?
• Why is it important to know about denotation and connotation?