Words Change Rooms

Track literal meanings and the feelings words add.

10.L.V.3.b "Analyze relationships between words to determine connotative and denotative meanings for words and/or phrases across a variety of contexts. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four words or phrases whose context adds a feeling or association beyond the basic definition. Number them, then write a brief note in the margin about the literal meaning and the feeling each one creates.

The Library After the Storm

1. At dawn, Maya unlocked the town library's side door and found the return bin overflowing. Overnight, a storm had knocked out power across several blocks, so people had spent the dark hours reading by flashlight. The bin held mysteries, cookbooks, and a battered atlas with its spine repaired by tape. Maya called the pile a mountain, although it rose only to her knees. Her coworker Leon called it a backlog and reached for a cart. Both looked at the same returned books, yet Maya laughed and Leon sighed.

2. By noon, the library served as a shelter for neighbors charging phones and checking local updates. A sign on the front desk said, "Please keep voices low." Adults spoke softly near a man who was trying to reach his family, and a child slept beneath a coat. Near the windows, a teenager whispered that the building felt empty. Chairs and tables were occupied, but the after-school crowd was absent, and the printer no longer made its steady hum. The room held people and furniture, yet its usual bustle seemed to have vanished with the power.

3. When power returned that afternoon, the lamps blinked awake one row at a time, and several people cheered. Leon reshelved the atlas and noticed that its taped spine had held through another busy morning. He called the book sturdy and set it carefully on the shelf. Maya called it scarred and ran a finger along the tape. They were describing the same atlas, but Leon smiled at its long use while Maya studied every crease. Outside, rain tapped the windows more gently, and the library began to sound like itself again.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Maya calls the returned books a "mountain," while Leon calls them a "backlog." What do both words refer to, and how do their connotations differ?

2. What does low mean in the sign's request to keep voices low? What idea does the word suggest in this setting?

3. Why can the teenager say the library feels empty even though chairs and tables are occupied? Explain the word's denotative meaning and its contextual connotation.

4. Compare sturdy and scarred as descriptions of the atlas. What shared feature do they describe, and what different attitudes do they convey?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about a familiar place during an unusual event. In each sentence, choose one word that adds a feeling beyond its basic meaning, then add parentheses after that word to state its denotation and its connotation in the sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Words Change Rooms

GRADE 10 · 10.L.V.3.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words or phrases whose context adds a feeling or association beyond the basic definition. Number them, then write a brief note in the margin about the literal meaning and the feeling each one creates. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Maya calls the returned books a "mountain," while Leon calls them a "backlog." What do both words refer to, and how do their connotations differ?	**Both refer to the pile of returned books. Mountain makes the pile seem large or amusing, while backlog makes it seem like delayed work or a problem to clear.**
2	What does low mean in the sign's request to keep voices low? What idea does the word suggest in this setting?	**Low means quiet or at a small volume. It suggests consideration for people who are tired, worried, sleeping, or trying to contact family.**
3	Why can the teenager say the library feels empty even though chairs and tables are occupied? Explain the word's denotative meaning and its contextual connotation.	**Empty literally means containing little or nothing. Here, it suggests that the library lacks its normal busy activity and feels lonely or unsettled.**
4	Compare sturdy and scarred as descriptions of the atlas. What shared feature do they describe, and what different attitudes do they convey?	**Both describe the atlas's worn, taped spine. Sturdy emphasizes endurance and strength, while scarred emphasizes visible damage and a history of use.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During the blackout, the cafeteria was silent (denotation: making little sound; connotation: tense and unfamiliar). When students returned, their voices flooded (denotation: covered or filled a space with water; connotation: a sudden, energetic rush) the room.

Accept equivalent descriptions of basic meanings and associations when they are supported by passage details. For Part 1, accept four defensible choices, such as mountain, backlog, low, empty, awake, sturdy, or scarred, with notes that distinguish literal meaning from contextual feeling.