Words Shape Stories

Trace how near-synonyms guide a reader's judgment.

12.L.V.3.c "Analyze the nuances in connotative meaning of words that share a similar denotation. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four pairs of words that refer to the same basic person, plan, building, or change. Number each pair 1 through 4, then circle the word in each pair with the more positive connotation.

The Calder Mill Debate

(1) On the edge of Harbor City, the Calder Mill stood beside the river, its brick walls scarred by rain and salt. For decades, residents passed it as a ruin, while historian Elena Voss called it a relic in her walking tour. Both names followed the shuttered factory through conversation, and listeners reacted differently to them. When the city announced plans to convert the site, reporters did not simply describe construction. Their choices of names began to shape the argument before a single wall had changed at all.

(2) At the first public meeting, project manager Daniel Cho praised the plan as ambitious. He said the conversion would bring studios, a grocery, and apartments within walking distance of downtown. Rosa Bell, who had rented nearby for thirty years, called the same plan reckless. She worried that higher rents would push longtime tenants away. Cho referred to the financiers as developers; Bell called them speculators. Neither speaker disputed that the mill needed repair. Their disagreement emerged in the language each chose, as if the proposal itself looked different from opposite sides of the room.

(3) By spring, crews had removed broken windows and reinforced the roof, but the debate continued. A local paper described the opening as the mill's rebirth. Bell's tenant group called it a makeover. On opening day, children painted banners in the courtyard, while former mill workers studied photographs in a small exhibit. The building had become a shared site, but not a shared story for readers who had never seen its machines run. The words attached to it could honor its past, question its future, or make either response seem natural.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Compare ambitious and reckless as descriptions of the conversion plan. What attitude does each word communicate?

2. What concern does speculators suggest that developers does not suggest?

3. Which word presents the mill's change as deeper and more meaningful, rebirth or makeover? Explain the difference in connotation.

4. Why can the mill be a shared site but not a shared story? Use ambitious and reckless in your explanation.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a person responding to a challenge. Write exactly three sentences: use a favorable word meaning self-assured in sentence 1, a critical word meaning self-assured in sentence 2, and explain the difference in connotation in sentence 3.

ANSWER KEY

Words Shape Stories

GRADE 12 · 12.L.V.3.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four pairs of words that refer to the same basic person, plan, building, or change. Number each pair 1 through 4, then circle the word in each pair with the more positive connotation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Compare ambitious and reckless as descriptions of the conversion plan. What attitude does each word communicate?	**Ambitious suggests the plan is bold, promising, and worth pursuing. Reckless suggests it is dangerously careless and may harm tenants.**
2	What concern does speculators suggest that developers does not suggest?	**Speculators suggests that the financiers may focus on profit or quick gains rather than the neighborhood's long-term needs.**
3	Which word presents the mill's change as deeper and more meaningful, rebirth or makeover? Explain the difference in connotation.	**Rebirth presents a deeper renewal, as if the mill is gaining new life. Makeover suggests a more limited, surface-level change.**
4	Why can the mill be a shared site but not a shared story? Use ambitious and reckless in your explanation.	**People can use the same restored building while interpreting its change differently. Ambitious emphasizes possible benefits, while reckless emphasizes risks such as displacement and rising rents.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After the debate, Jordan appeared confident when answering reporters' questions. A rival described Jordan as arrogant in the same moment. Confident suggests steady self-trust, while arrogant suggests excessive pride and disregard for others.

Accept explanations that accurately distinguish the positive, negative, or neutral associations of the paired terms and connect those associations to a viewpoint in the passage. For Part 3, accept any three-sentence response using two similar-denotation words with a clear, accurate explanation of their different connotations.