Tone Takes Sides

Sort words by the feeling or judgment they suggest.

8.L.V.3.c "Distinguish between the connotations of words that share a similar denotation (e.g., confident, assertive, egotistic, pompous, smug). (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

POSITIVE CONNOTATION

These words suggest a favorable feeling or judgment about a person. They often sound like praise.

Thrifty suggests careful spending, so it has a positive connotation.

NEGATIVE CONNOTATION

These words suggest an unfavorable feeling or judgment about a person. They often sound like criticism.

Wasteful suggests careless spending, so it has a negative connotation.

1 SORT

8 items

For each word, circle POSITIVE or NEGATIVE, then choose two words and explain which feeling or judgment gave each word its connotation.

1. confident — POSITIVE NEGATIVE

2. pompous — POSITIVE NEGATIVE

3. smug — POSITIVE NEGATIVE

4. assertive — POSITIVE NEGATIVE

5. determined — POSITIVE NEGATIVE

6. curious — POSITIVE NEGATIVE

7. egotistic — POSITIVE NEGATIVE

8. nosy — POSITIVE NEGATIVE

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new word with a positive connotation and one new word with a negative connotation. Each word should describe a person and should not come from Part 1.

POSITIVE _____

NEGATIVE _____

CHALLENGE

Write two sentences about the same action. Use a positive-connotation word in one sentence and a negative-connotation word in the other, and underline both connotation words.

ANSWER KEY

Tone Takes Sides

GRADE 8 · 8.L.V.3.c

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	confident	**POSITIVE**	It suggests healthy self-assurance.
2	pompous	**NEGATIVE**	It suggests an irritatingly self-important attitude.
3	smug	**NEGATIVE**	It suggests being too pleased with oneself.
4	assertive	**POSITIVE**	It suggests speaking up clearly and respectfully.
5	determined	**POSITIVE**	It suggests focused effort toward a goal.
6	curious	**POSITIVE**	It suggests an interested desire to learn.
7	egotistic	**NEGATIVE**	It suggests excessive concern with oneself.
8	nosy	**NEGATIVE**	It suggests unwanted interest in other people's private matters.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **POSITIVE**: generous
- **NEGATIVE**: selfish

Challenge: Jules was _resourceful_ when he used a paper clip to open the supply cabinet. Jules was _sneaky_ when he used a paper clip to open the supply cabinet.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. For Part 2, accept explanations that identify the favorable or unfavorable judgment suggested by each chosen word. In context, connotation can shift, but these answers reflect each word's usual association.