Same Place, Different Shade

Track how word choice shapes attitude and meaning.

9.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 words that describe the building, room, or written marks in different ways. Circle the nearby details that show why each word has a different feeling or attitude.

Harbor House Reopens

1 On Saturday, volunteers opened the doors of Harbor House, a brick building beside the river. The structure served as a boarding home for dockworkers in 1912 and later held a clinic after the flood of 1937. At the ribbon cutting, tour guide Elena called Harbor House a historic site. She pointed to photographs, ship records, and a brass bell used to summon residents to meals. Outside, a teenager waiting for the tour glanced at a broken gutter and said, "That old place needs a roof." Both speakers looked at the same building, but they noticed different details.

2 Inside, the former dining room displayed a long table, eight chairs, and a stove. Elena invited visitors to imagine workers sharing soup there on winter evenings. "It must have been cozy," said Mr. Tran, whose grandparents had lived near the docks. He ran his hand along the table's smooth edge. Jay, a ninth-grade volunteer, tried to carry a box between the chairs and bumped his elbow. "This room is cramped," he said. Elena measured the room later for a display plan. The table and chairs would remain, although she moved two chairs against the wall before the next tour.

3 Near the entrance, a glass case held a wooden nameplate recovered from a second-floor door. Its carved letters read, "L. Moreno, nurse." The museum label called those words an inscription and listed the tools used to cut the letters. On the back of the same plate, someone had scratched "Skip was here" with a nail. A museum catalog listed that message as graffiti. A maintenance report from 1954 mentioned the scratch after the building closed. Jay suggested adding both marks to the display. Elena agreed, but she placed the scratched message beneath a smaller caption. Visitors paused at the case, reading the two messages left by people who had occupied the house.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Elena calls Harbor House "historic," while the teenager calls it "old." What does "historic" suggest that "old" does not? Use one detail from the passage.

2. Compare "cozy" and "cramped" as descriptions of the dining room. How does each word shape the reader's view of the room?

3. Why might the museum use "inscription" for the carved nameplate but "graffiti" for the scratched message? Explain the different connotations of the two words.

4. The final sentence says people had "occupied" Harbor House instead of saying they had "lived" there. What does "occupied" suggest about the kinds of people connected to the building?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences about a real or invented place from two viewpoints. Use and underline two similar-denotation words with different connotations, then explain the difference between the words in your third sentence.

ANSWER KEY # Same Place, Different Shade

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words that describe the building, room, or written marks in different ways. Circle the nearby details that show why each word has a different feeling or attitude. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Elena calls Harbor House "historic," while the teenager calls it "old." What does "historic" suggest that "old" does not? Use one detail from the passage.	**"Historic" suggests that the building has important connections to the past, supported by the photographs, ship records, and bell. "Old" focuses more on its age and need for repair, shown by the broken gutter and roof comment.**
2	Compare "cozy" and "cramped" as descriptions of the dining room. How does each word shape the reader's view of the room?	**"Cozy" makes the room seem warm, welcoming, and suited to shared meals. "Cramped" makes it seem too tight for comfortable movement, as shown when Jay bumps his elbow.**
3	Why might the museum use "inscription" for the carved nameplate but "graffiti" for the scratched message? Explain the different connotations of the two words.	**"Inscription" sounds formal, deliberate, and worthy of documentation. "Graffiti" sounds more informal and unofficial, fitting the message scratched with a nail and placed under a smaller caption.**
4	The final sentence says people had "occupied" Harbor House instead of saying they had "lived" there. What does "occupied" suggest about the kinds of people connected to the building?	**"Occupied" is broader and more neutral than "lived." It can include residents, workers, nurses, and other people who used the building, not only people who made it their home.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the new tenant, the apartment was compact because everything was close at hand. To her brother, it was cramped, and he kept bumping into the kitchen counter. Compact sounds efficient, while cramped suggests too little room.

Accept paired words with similar basic meanings when the student clearly explains a meaningful difference in attitude, association, or emotional effect. The place and viewpoints may be real or invented.