

Word Tone Sort

Notice whether a word sounds approving or critical.

8L5.c "Distinguish among the connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute)."

NAME _____

DATE _____

APPROVING TONE

An approving word makes a person or action sound worthy of respect or praise.

The **devoted** teammate stayed after practice to help clean up.

CRITICAL TONE

A critical word makes a person or action sound unreasonable, annoying, or harmful.

The **clingy** teammate would not let a friend talk with anyone else.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle the tone category for each bold word; for Part 2, choose two items and explain which word clues helped you identify each tone.

1. The **determined** runner trained through several rainy weeks.

APPROVING

CRITICAL

2. The **steadfast** friend kept a promise when it became difficult.

APPROVING

CRITICAL

3. The **stubborn** shopper would not exchange shoes that pinched.

APPROVING

CRITICAL

4. The **resolute** council member defended equal access to the library.

APPROVING

CRITICAL

5. The **firm** principal applied the same fair rule to every student.

APPROVING

CRITICAL

6. The **bullheaded** captain ignored the team's safer plan.

APPROVING

CRITICAL

7. The **willful** camper broke the rule against lighting fires.

APPROVING

CRITICAL

8. The **persistent** scientist repeated the trial to check the results.

APPROVING

CRITICAL

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

Part 3: Write one sentence with a new approving word and one sentence with a new critical word that describe similar kinds of determination.

APPROVING _____

CRITICAL _____

CHALLENGE

Write two sentences about a musician who practices often, using an approving word in the first sentence and a critical word in the second sentence. Underline both words.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The determined runner trained through several rainy weeks.	APPROVING	Determined suggests admirable effort toward a goal.
2	The steadfast friend kept a promise when it became difficult.	APPROVING	Steadfast suggests loyal, dependable commitment.
3	The stubborn shopper would not exchange shoes that pinched.	CRITICAL	Stubborn suggests an unreasonable refusal to change.
4	The resolute council member defended equal access to the library.	APPROVING	Resolute suggests strong, purposeful commitment.
5	The firm principal applied the same fair rule to every student.	APPROVING	Firm suggests fair, controlled strength.
6	The bullheaded captain ignored the team's safer plan.	CRITICAL	Bullheaded suggests foolish refusal to listen.
7	The willful camper broke the rule against lighting fires.	CRITICAL	Willful here suggests deliberately doing what one should not do.
8	The persistent scientist repeated the trial to check the results.	APPROVING	Persistent suggests careful effort without giving up.

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)

- **APPROVING:** The **tenacious** climber kept training after each setback.
- **CRITICAL:** The **inflexible** manager rejected every useful suggestion.

Challenge: The dedicated musician practiced daily to improve. The obsessive musician practiced so long that he skipped meals and ignored friends.

Part 1 answers are 1 APPROVING, 2 APPROVING, 3 CRITICAL, 4 APPROVING, 5 APPROVING, 6 CRITICAL, 7 CRITICAL, 8 APPROVING. For Part 2, accept explanations that connect approving words to praise or respect and critical words to unreasonable or harmful behavior.