Words with Attitude

Sort words by the feelings they suggest.

12.4.R.2 "Students will use context clues, connotation, and denotation to determine or clarify the meaning of words or distinguish among multiple-meaning words."

NAME _____ DATE _____

POSITIVE CONNOTATION

A word has a positive connotation when it suggests approval. Two words can describe the same basic trait but make you feel differently about it.

The **slender** sapling stood beside the creek.

NEGATIVE CONNOTATION

A word has a negative connotation when it suggests disapproval. Consider both what the word describes and how it makes that trait sound.

The **scrawny** sapling stood beside the creek.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle POSITIVE or NEGATIVE for each bold word; for Part 2, choose two items and explain how the word and its context guided each choice.

1.	By repairing worn laptops for the shelter, Maya proved **resourceful**.	POSITIVE NEGATIVE
2.	Rather than buy new supplies, the club's **thrifty** treasurer reused folders.	POSITIVE NEGATIVE
3.	Even after the vote, the **stubborn** chair refused to consider new evidence.	POSITIVE NEGATIVE
4.	The **inquisitive** intern asked questions that uncovered a flaw in the report.	POSITIVE NEGATIVE
5.	The **pushy** vendor interrupted customers until they listened.	POSITIVE NEGATIVE
6.	The **stingy** landlord withheld funds for essential repairs.	POSITIVE NEGATIVE
7.	The **persistent** volunteers kept searching until they located the missing records.	POSITIVE NEGATIVE
8.	During the hearing, the **assertive** witness stated her position clearly without interrupting anyone.	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

For Part 3, write two sentences about the same trait, one using a word with a POSITIVE connotation and one using a word with a NEGATIVE connotation; underline each word.

POSITIVE _____

NEGATIVE _____

CHALLENGE

Replace only the underlined word in one of your Part 3 sentences with a word that keeps the same basic meaning but reverses its connotation, then explain the change in tone in one sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Words with Attitude

GRADE 12 · 12.4.R.2

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	By repairing worn laptops for the shelter, Maya proved **resourceful**.	**POSITIVE**	Resourceful praises Maya's ability to solve a problem with what she has.
2	Rather than buy new supplies, the club's **thrifty** treasurer reused folders.	**POSITIVE**	Thrifty presents careful spending as a virtue.
3	Even after the vote, the **stubborn** chair refused to consider new evidence.	**NEGATIVE**	Stubborn criticizes the chair's refusal to reconsider.
4	The **inquisitive** intern asked questions that uncovered a flaw in the report.	**POSITIVE**	Inquisitive praises curiosity that leads to a useful discovery.
5	The **pushy** vendor interrupted customers until they listened.	**NEGATIVE**	Pushy criticizes the vendor's forceful behavior.
6	The **stingy** landlord withheld funds for essential repairs.	**NEGATIVE**	Stingy suggests selfish unwillingness to spend.
7	The **persistent** volunteers kept searching until they located the missing records.	**POSITIVE**	Persistent praises the volunteers for not giving up.
8	During the hearing, the **assertive** witness stated her position clearly without interrupting anyone.	**POSITIVE**	Assertive presents the witness's confident speech favorably.

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**: The researcher was methodical, checking each measurement twice.
- **NEGATIVE**: The researcher was fussy, checking each measurement twice.

Challenge: The researcher was fussy, checking each measurement twice. The new word makes the careful checking sound irritating rather than admirable.

For Part 2, explanations should name a clue in the sentence and explain the bold word's approving or disapproving tone. For Part 3 and the challenge, accept other word pairs when they describe the same basic trait but suggest opposite attitudes.