Same Story, Different Words

How word choice shapes a reader's judgment

9-10.L.5.c "Analyze connotative meanings of words with similar denotations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the four words Amara uses to describe Lena, and circle Ben's four words for the same actions. Number each matching pair to compare how the words shape your view of Lena.

Two Drafts for One Story

1. After a storm sent rain through the school library ceiling, the student council planned a weekend cleanup. Lena volunteered to coordinate supplies, recruit helpers, and speak at the next meeting. She asked the librarian which books were damaged, called three stores about donated boxes, and returned twice to ask the principal for permission to use the gym. When the council discussed its small budget, Lena proposed washing the old plastic bins instead of buying new ones. Two student reporters watched the same preparations and wrote accounts for the school paper. Neither reporter invented an event.

2. In her draft, reporter Amara called Lena *curious* as Lena checked the librarian's list and asked which shelves had gotten wet. Amara wrote that Lena was *persistent* when she returned to the principal's office after lunch and again the next morning. She described Lena as *thrifty* for saving the council's money by scrubbing the old bins. At the meeting, Lena laid out a schedule for volunteers and said the gym would be ready by Saturday. Amara called her *confident*. The draft ended with the number of students who signed up: eighteen.

3. Reporter Ben attended the same meeting and read the same notes, but his draft sounded different. He called Lena *nosy* when she asked the librarian about the damaged shelves. Ben wrote that she was *pushy* for visiting the principal's office more than once. He described her as *stingy* when she suggested reusing the bins. As Lena presented the volunteer schedule without pausing for questions, Ben called her *arrogant*. His draft also reported that eighteen students signed up. The paper's editor placed both drafts on her desk, wondering which account to print.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Amara calls Lena *curious*, while Ben calls her *nosy*. How might each word affect a reader's judgment of Lena's questions to the librarian?

2. Both reporters describe Lena's visits to the principal. What different impressions do *persistent* and *pushy* create?

3. How do *thrifty* and *stingy* lead readers to view Lena's plan to reuse the bins differently?

4. Amara calls Lena *confident*, and Ben calls her *arrogant*. What does each word suggest about the way Lena presented the volunteer schedule?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a school situation that does not involve Lena or the library. In 3 to 4 sentences, describe one person's action using two words with similar denotations but different connotations, then explain how each word changes a reader's judgment.

ANSWER KEY # Same Story, Different Words

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-10.L.5.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the four words Amara uses to describe Lena, and circle Ben's four words for the same actions. Number each matching pair to compare how the words shape your view of Lena. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Amara calls Lena *curious*, while Ben calls her *nosy*. How might each word affect a reader's judgment of Lena's questions to the librarian?	**Curious presents Lena's questions as a useful effort to learn about the damage. Nosy suggests she is prying into matters that may not concern her.**
2	Both reporters describe Lena's visits to the principal. What different impressions do *persistent* and *pushy* create?	**Persistent suggests admirable determination to get permission. Pushy suggests Lena pressures the principal or ignores boundaries.**
3	How do *thrifty* and *stingy* lead readers to view Lena's plan to reuse the bins differently?	**Thrifty makes reusing the bins seem like wise use of a small budget. Stingy makes Lena seem unwilling to spend money even when new bins might help.**
4	Amara calls Lena *confident*, and Ben calls her *arrogant*. What does each word suggest about the way Lena presented the volunteer schedule?	**Confident suggests Lena presented the plan with assurance. Arrogant suggests she acted as though her plan needed no input from others.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During rehearsal, Malik stopped the band twice to fix the tempo. A supporter might call him meticulous, suggesting that he cares about getting every beat right. A frustrated musician might call him fussy, suggesting that his attention to detail slows everyone down.

Accept interpretations that distinguish each pair's positive and negative associations and connect them to the shared action. For the original scenario, look for two words that describe the same action and an explanation of the different judgments they invite.