Words With Weight

Sort precise terms from words that shape a reader's reaction.

9-10.RI.4 "Distinguish among figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

TECHNICAL MEANING

A technical word has a precise meaning in a field such as science, statistics, or engineering. It names something specific.

A musician added **vibrato** to the final note.

CONNOTATIVE MEANING

A connotative word adds a feeling or judgment beyond its basic meaning. It can shape how readers react.

The critic called the portrait **tacky**.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle TECHNICAL or EVOCATIVE for the bold word or phrase in each item; for Part 2, choose two numbered items and explain which words helped you decide.

1.	Sensors measured **turbidity** in the reservoir.	TECHNICAL EVOCATIVE
2.	Residents called the delays **infuriating**.	TECHNICAL EVOCATIVE
3.	The columnist called the budget a **shameful** waste.	TECHNICAL EVOCATIVE
4.	The lab detected **pathogens** in the water.	TECHNICAL EVOCATIVE
5.	The report lists the area's **median** income.	TECHNICAL EVOCATIVE
6.	An editorial called the plan **heartless**.	TECHNICAL EVOCATIVE
7.	The engineer calculated the bridge's **load capacity**.	TECHNICAL EVOCATIVE
8.	A biologist identified the insect's **larva**.	TECHNICAL EVOCATIVE

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 sentence with a technical term and one with a connotative word. Bold the word or phrase that fits each category.

TECHNICAL _____

EVOCATIVE _____

CHALLENGE

Write two sentences about the same event, one using a technical term and one using a connotative word. Then write one sentence explaining how those choices change the tone.

ANSWER KEY # Words With Weight

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Sensors measured **turbidity** in the reservoir.	**TECHNICAL**	Turbidity is a precise measure of how cloudy water is.
2	Residents called the delays **infuriating**.	**EVOCATIVE**	Infuriating conveys anger about the delays.
3	The columnist called the budget a **shameful** waste.	**EVOCATIVE**	Shameful expresses a negative judgment.
4	The lab detected **pathogens** in the water.	**TECHNICAL**	Pathogens is a scientific term for agents that cause disease.
5	The report lists the area's **median** income.	**TECHNICAL**	Median is a statistical term for the middle value in an ordered set.
6	An editorial called the plan **heartless**.	**EVOCATIVE**	Heartless suggests a harsh judgment about the plan.
7	The engineer calculated the bridge's **load capacity**.	**TECHNICAL**	Load capacity is an engineering term for the maximum weight a structure can support.
8	A biologist identified the insect's **larva**.	**TECHNICAL**	Larva names a specific stage of an insect's development.

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)

- **TECHNICAL**: The doctor examined the patient's **retina**.
- **EVOCATIVE**: The neighbor called the rule **petty**.

Challenge: The storm produced 12 centimeters of **precipitation**. The storm brought a **punishing** amount of rain. The first sentence sounds measured, while the second makes the storm sound threatening.

Accept Part 2 explanations that connect a technical choice to a precise field-specific meaning or an evocative choice to a feeling or judgment. For Part 3, accept original examples that make the distinction clear.