

Lesson
17

Informational Vocabulary: Technical Terms

- RI.6.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. (See grade 6 Language standards 4–6 for additional expectations.) CA
- SL.6.6** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.



Understand the Standards

You often form opinions or base decisions on what you read. When you are reading, remember that writers think carefully about the words they use. Sometimes they consider not only the dictionary definition of the words they choose but also their emotional impact on the reader or what the reader will associate with the word.

Words to Know

denotative meaning
connotative meaning
technical meaning
figurative meaning

- The **denotative meaning** of a word is the literal meaning you find in the dictionary.
- The **connotative meaning** of a word refers to the associations and emotions that a word stirs up in the minds of people who hear and read it. It can convey a feeling that is more positive or negative than its denotative meaning.

Example: Think about an ad for a room to rent and the effect each of these adjectives might have.

Positive Connotation	Denotation	Negative Connotation
cozy	small	cramped

- The **technical meaning** of a word refers to its meaning when used in a particular subject or application of mathematics, science, or technology, such as the word *virus* when speaking of a computer.
- The **figurative meaning** of a word refers to figures of speech, such as saying a video has gone viral on the Internet.



Guided Instruction

Read the passage aloud. As you read, decide with a partner whether the denotative, connotative, technical, or figurative meanings of words are being used.

Keep Your Nose to the Grindstone

It is important to stay on task when you are working on a research report. Suppose you are stalling on writing a report about the bedbug. If you are lucky, a bookworm friend will bug you about it, and you'll get started, just to get her off your back. You start conducting research on the bug. The bedbug is a tiny insect with sucking mouthparts, you learn, and it sucks the blood of people or animals it bites.

Suppose you are just getting into gear when an acquaintance calls and talks your ear off. You had better dump her. Be careful if a buddy calls, because the time can just fly by if you are enjoying the conversation. You need to keep laboring at the task, even if it is drudgery.

Don't wait until the last minute. What if one of the drives on your computer develops a bug? If you have allowed plenty of time, you can finish after the computer is patched up.



Guided Questions

Think about the connotation of the underlined words. Replace them with words or phrases that have only a denotative meaning.

Discuss and complete the following activities based on the passage.

- List at least six examples of figurative meaning in this passage.

Elevate

- In the next-to-last sentence, identify the words with technical meanings. Give an example of how the words might be used in an everyday way that is not technical.



On Your Own

Read the passage aloud quietly. Look for ways in which words are used in figurative and technical ways. Pay attention to the way the underlined words make you feel.



Weather

It is important to pay attention to the weather reports before you head for school. The weather forecasters have barometers, and they scrutinize them constantly. If they tell you a low is moving in, be sure to bring a warm jacket and rain gear. That often means a storm is advancing in your direction. If a cold front is passing through, the rain will be heavier than if a warm front passes. Some people hate getting wet, especially when the wind is blowing and the air is cold. If it is raining cats and dogs, you can get drenched as you slog home in the downpour. If you are caught in a storm, try to catch a bus if you can. If you see one cruising by, bellow to get the driver's attention. Perhaps the driver will wait for you to catch up after the bus pulls up at the curb. When you get home, take your wet clothes off and change into dry ones. Then try to thaw out by a warm stove, heater, or fire.



Complete the following activities. Refer to "Weather" to complete items 1–7.

- 1 List an example of figurative meaning in this passage.

- 2 Think about the connotation of the underlined words. Replace them with words or phrases that have only a denotative meaning.

- 3 Identify and define two words with technical meanings. Give an example of how the words might be used in an everyday way that is not technical.

- 4 In the following sentence, which word could best replace the word *blowing* to suggest a very strong wind?

Some people hate getting wet, especially when the wind is blowing and the air is cold.

- A breezing
 - B whispering
 - C raging
 - D puffing
- 5 In the following sentence, which word could best replace the word *cold* to suggest that the temperature is very low?

Some people hate getting wet, especially when the wind is blowing and the air is cold.

- A cooling
 - B freezing
 - C chilly
 - D lukewarm
- 6 Think about the meaning of *warm* in these two sentences: “If a cold front is passing through, the rain will be heavier than if a warm front passes.” “Then try to thaw out by a warm stove, heater, or fire.” In which sentence would it be okay to replace *warm* with a word that has a stronger or more pleasing connotation? Explain.



- 7 On a separate piece of paper, explain how the use of connotative meanings and figurative language affects the meaning and tone of the passages in *Guided Instruction* and *On Your Own*.