

Lesson
8

Story Vocabulary: Figurative and Connotative Meanings

- RL.7.4** Determine the meaning of words or phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama. **(See grade 7 Language standards 4–6 for additional expectations.) CA**
- L.7.3** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
a. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.
- L.7.6** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.



Understand the Standards



We write almost every day of our lives, both on and off the job. We write letters and e-mails to our friends. We write a variety of texts on the job: memos, reports, articles, papers, advertisements, scripts, and books.

The basic purpose of all writing is to communicate. If you use the wrong words, there can be serious consequences. Inappropriate, ill-chosen words can make you look careless and sloppy on the job; they can lead to miscommunication or even termination. In your personal life, you can hurt or offend without meaning to. This is why it's important to say exactly what you mean!

- **Figurative language** has a meaning beyond the literal sense of the words. It includes similes and metaphors, personification and hyperbole, and colorful figures of speech.
- **Connotation** refers to the mental and emotional associations a word conveys. English is rich in synonyms that have similar dictionary definitions but different connotations. For example, *happiness*, *joy*, and *delight* all have different connotations.

Words to Know

figurative language
connotation



Guided Instruction

Read the passage below. Then complete the activities.



from This Side of Paradise by F. Scott Fitzgerald

On his first night as a Princeton freshman, Amory watches a parade of returning upperclassmen march by.

Now, far down the shadowy line of University Place a white-clad phalanx broke the gloom, and marching figures, white-shirted, white-trousered, swung rhythmically up the street, with linked arms and heads thrown back. . . .

Amory closed his eyes as the ghostly procession drew near. The song soared so high that all dropped out except the tenors, who bore the melody triumphantly past the danger-point and replinquished it to the fantastic chorus. Then Amory opened his eyes, half afraid that sight would spoil the rich illusion of harmony.

He sighed eagerly. There at the head of the white platoon marched Allenby, the football captain, slim and defiant, as if aware that this year the hopes of the college rested on him, that his hundred-and-sixty pounds were expected to dodge to victory through the heavy blue and crimson lines.

. . . The minutes passed and Amory sat there very quietly. He regretted the rule that would forbid freshmen to be outdoors after curfew, for he wanted to ramble through the shadowy scented lanes, where Witherspoon¹ brooded like a dark mother over Whig and Clio, her Attic children, where the black Gothic snake of Little curled down to Cuyler and Patton, these in turn flinging the mystery out over the placid slope rolling to the lake.

¹*Witherspoon, Whig, Clio, Little, Cuyler, and Patton Halls*: buildings on the Princeton campus



Find two synonyms for each underlined word in the passage. Use a dictionary or thesaurus to help you. Explain why you think the author chose the original word instead of the synonyms.

shadowy (paragraph 1) _____

slim (paragraph 3) _____

Guided Questions

How does the word *shadowy* make you feel?

What is another word that you know for *slim*? What is the difference in connotation between the two words?

ramble (paragraph 4) _____



On Your Own

Complete these activities based on the passage.

- 1 Choose an example of figurative language from the passage. Write a short paragraph analyzing the effects Fitzgerald achieves with his use of figurative language.

- 2 The words “fantastic” and “illusion” in paragraph 2 suggest that Amory
- A is unable to recognize any of the boys in the parade.
 - B can’t hear the words of the song very well.
 - C can’t quite believe that the parade is really happening.
 - D is frightened and alarmed at the sound of the music.
- 3 Fitzgerald uses the words “phalanx,” “marching,” and “platoon” to compare the upperclassmen to
- A brothers.
 - B friends.
 - C students.
 - D soldiers.

- 4 How does Fitzgerald convey the sense that Allenby and his friends appear like ghosts to Amory?

- 5 Describe the effect of the word “soared” in paragraph 2.

Elevate

- 6 Read the sentence in paragraph 3 that describes Allenby. Substitute synonyms of your own for some of the words used by Fitzgerald. Use a dictionary or thesaurus to help you. Compare the two versions and explain why you think Fitzgerald chose the original words. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

- 7 Choose at least three words from this lesson, either ones you learned from Fitzgerald’s writing or ones you learned in completing the synonym activities. Write a short paragraph on a separate sheet of paper, using the three words correctly in context, to describe your first day in a new place. Underline the words you chose.