

# Lesson 4

## ANALYZE WORD CHOICE AND FIGURATIVE AND CONNOTATIVE MEANINGS 6R4

### WORDS TO KNOW

figurative language

connotation

connotative meaning

tone

mood

## INTRODUCTION

### Real-World Connection

#### ARTS AND CULTURE

Nora is writing a short story that takes place at a music concert. She wants the reader to have a really vivid picture of what the concert is like. To create the world of the story in the reader's imagination, Nora knows she must use descriptive language. Here are some lines from her first draft. *When Emily and Oscar got to the concert, it was already pretty crowded. They had to stand all the way at the back. Before long, the lights in the concert hall went down and the band came out. Everyone in the audience got excited. They all started clapping. The music was so loud Emily could not hear what Oscar was saying.*

Nora thinks her description does not create a clear enough picture yet. She shares her story with a friend and asks, "How can I really make readers feel like they are at the concert right next to the characters?" We will practice the skills in **Guided Instruction** and **Independent Practice**, and then at the end of the lesson come back to Nora and her short story.



#### TIPS AND HINTS

Read a short story. Underline examples of descriptive or figurative language. Notice how the author uses figurative language to describe characters, places, and events.

## What I Am Going to Learn

- How to recognize and understand figurative language
- How to determine the connotation of words
- How to analyze the way an author's word choice impacts meaning, tone, and mood

## What I May Already Know

- I know that words and phrases can have underlying meanings.
- I know how to understand the meaning of similes and metaphors.
- I know that writers must use descriptive language to engage readers.

## Vocabulary in Action

**Figurative language** is language that has an underlying meaning beyond the dictionary definitions of the words. Figurative language helps to create pictures in the reader's mind. The chart below lists some common types of figurative language.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Personification	giving human qualities to an animal, object, or idea	The <u>sky</u> looked <u>angry</u> .
Simile	a comparison between two unlike things, using the words <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	She is <u>as</u> slow <u>as</u> a turtle.
Metaphor	a comparison between two things that have something in common without using the words <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	<u>Life is a roller coaster</u> .
Hyperbole	exaggeration to make a point	I'm so hungry, <u>I could eat a horse!</u>
Alliteration	the repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of words	<u>L</u> azy <u>L</u> arry <u>l</u> ies in bed all <u>d</u> ay <u>l</u> ong.

A **connotation** is the idea or feeling a word brings to mind.

The **connotative meaning** of a word is the feeling connected to the word. A word can have a positive or negative connotation. Here are some examples.

- The word *star* means that a person is famous. The word *star* is connected to positive feelings. That is because stars are bright and beautiful in the night sky.
- The word *brag* is used to explain that someone is talking with exaggeration or excessive pride. It has a negative connotation because people do not like to hear someone brag.

### TURN AND TALK

Discuss the connotations of these word pairs: *slim/skinny*, *bossy/forceful*, *cheap/thrifty*. Which word in each pair has a more positive connotation? Which word has a negative connotation?

The **tone** is the attitude the author has toward the story, characters, and audience.

The **mood** is the feeling the author creates in the reader. The tone sets the mood of a story.

## GUIDED INSTRUCTION

To get ideas for her own writing, Nora reads a short story by a classmate. In this story, the author uses figurative language to describe the main character's experience at his first piano recital. As you read, do the following.

- Draw a box around an example of hyperbole.
- Circle an example of a metaphor.
- Double underline an example of a simile.
- Put brackets around an example of personification.
- Highlight an example of alliteration.

## Stage Fright

Frank could hear the rumble of the audience from backstage as it filed through the auditorium doors and settled into the rows of dark red seats. “There are a million people out there!” his teacher beamed proudly as she peeked through the velvet curtain. It was Frank’s first piano recital. He was a bundle of nerves. Frank knew the song he was about to play very well. However, he had never performed it in front of such a large audience before. As the curtain opened like an elevator door, he wished the stage would swallow him whole.

Frank spotted his parents and brother in the front row. They smiled and applauded as he strode across the stage. With each step, Frank grew a little more comfortable in the spotlight. He enjoyed the attention more than he thought he would, and center stage called his name.

As Frank took his place at the piano, he breathed a little easier. Perched atop the cushioned piano bench, Frank forgot about his fears as his fingers flew across the keys.

### THINK ABOUT IT

Think about the feelings connected to the words you read.



1. Complete the chart to show examples of figurative language in “Stage Fright.” Next to the example, explain what the author is trying to say or accomplish through this figurative language.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE	EXAMPLE	WHAT THE AUTHOR IS TRYING TO SAY
Hyperbole		
Metaphor		
Simile		
Personification		
Alliteration		

2. In paragraph 1, what is the connotation of “beamed”?

- A

nervousness
- B

pleasure
- C

surprise
- D

weariness

### TIPS AND HINTS

What words or images do you think of when you read the word *beamed*? Does it convey positive or negative feelings? Look at other words around it for clues.

3. Underline one detail in the story that best supports the connotation of “beamed.”

4. What does “center stage called his name” mean?

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### Learning Together

With a partner, write a short story about a runner who wins a race. In your story, use at least three examples of figurative language.

Circle the sign that shows how you are doing with the skill.



I am stuck.



I almost have it.



I understand the skill.



### How Am I Doing?

What questions do you have?

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Use a metaphor or simile to describe something or someone in the room where you are now.

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How do you use figurative language and connotative meanings in your everyday conversations?

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# INDEPENDENT PRACTICE 1

## **D**irections

Read the story. Then answer questions 1 through 6.

## Inspiration at the Museum

*Genre: Short Story*

- 1 Blake did not know what to do. Her big art project was due soon and she had no idea what she was going to paint. She was up a creek without a paddle, feeling totally helpless. If she failed this class, she would not reach her goal of attending art camp over the summer. She tried to summon all her creativity, but it seemed like someone had pulled the plug on her imagination and all of her ideas were swirling down the drain. Her art teacher gave her a good piece of advice: look for inspiration and eventually the idea for the project will find you.
- 2 Blake resolved to visit one of her favorite places in the world, the art museum downtown. She entered the large marble building afraid that hours later she would walk out the same doors empty-handed. She knew she had to conquer her fear and keep an open mind. Blake wandered the long, white halls of the museum for hours. She stopped to look at different exhibits along the way. She especially liked Claude Monet's impressionist images of water, flowers, and landscapes, but not even those gorgeous paintings gave her the idea she sought.
- 3 After a few hours, Blake's legs grew tired, so she found a bench in a quiet hallway of the museum to sit down and think about her problem. Surrounded by so much amazing art, she despaired she would never come up with something good enough to impress her teacher. Blake put her head in her hands and began to cry. Tears leaked out between her fingers.
- 4 She was about to give up hope when she spotted an exhibit across the hall from her bench. The sign by the door read "Jackson Pollock." That name sounded familiar to Blake, and she suddenly remembered she had studied Pollock in one of her art classes. As she wandered around the room, she saw how his paintings had evolved from simple sketches to elaborate, beautiful abstract art. The plaques next to the paintings explained that even Pollock sometimes struggled with finding inspiration, but he fought through his doubts and became a professional, world-famous painter.
- 5 Suddenly, Blake knew what she was going to do for her final art project. The idea struck her like a bolt of lightning. She would create an abstract painting in the style of Jackson Pollock and dedicate it to his memory. Her art teacher would love the idea. Blake left the museum with a bounce in her step. She had recovered her imagination, and it was all thanks to her teacher's advice and

### ◀ THINK ABOUT IT

As you read, look for figurative language and determine its meaning. Jot down the meanings in the margin.

### ◀ THINK ABOUT IT

What does the figurative language in paragraph 5 mean? What mood does this choice of words convey to the reader?

Jackson Pollock's paintings! She finished her final project just in time and presented it to her art teacher with great pride. Not only did she pass the class, but she received a great grade and was able to spend an exciting summer at art camp.

1 What is the connotation of the figurative phrase “up a creek without a paddle” as it is used in paragraph 1?

- A stranded
- B weak
- C hopeless
- D lost

#### ◀ TIPS AND HINTS

Reread paragraph 1. Replace “up a creek without a paddle” with each answer choice to figure out which one makes the most sense.

2 Read this phrase from paragraph 1.

... **had pulled the plug on her imagination** ...

Which phrase **best** represents the meaning of this phrase?

- A had put an end to her creativity
- B had stolen her new ideas
- C had made fun of her imagination
- D had told everyone about her new ideas

3 How does the language in paragraph 1 contribute to the tone of the story?

- A It highlights the sorrowful tone.
- B It introduces a worried tone.
- C It introduces a threatening tone.
- D It creates an angry tone.

- 4 What is the meaning of “empty-handed” in paragraph 2?
- A having no experience
  - B with nowhere else to go
  - C without painting supplies
  - D having gained nothing
- 5 Which detail from paragraph 2 **best** describes the emotions expressed in the phrase “empty-handed”?
- A “one of her favorite places in the world”
  - B “afraid that hours later she would walk out the same doors”
  - C “She stopped to look at different exhibits”
  - D “She especially liked Claude Monet’s impressionist images of water”
- 6 What is the connotation of “professional” in paragraph 4?  
Use **two** details from the passage to support your response.

#### TIPS AND HINTS

Remember that a word’s connotation is how it makes you feel when you read it.

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# INDEPENDENT PRACTICE 2

**Directions**  
Read the poem. Then answer questions 1 through 6.

## An Odd Journey

*Genre: Poem*

What follows is a tale of bravery and woe.  
The tale of a crew of sailors who had nowhere to go  
when their ship had the misfortune of sailing off course  
because a storm ripped through the ocean and threw them with force

5 into an island far from home where no civilization could be seen.  
Only a Cyclops lived there, but the fatigued sailors did not read  
the signs by the water that said "Caution!" and "Beware!"  
"Don't come on this island for a Cyclops lives there!"

Delighted to see land, the sailors jumped overboard  
10 and ran for the shelter of the trees from the storm.  
A few of the sailors clad themselves with daggers and knives  
in case they met monsters and needed to survive,

But they were met by a maiden with porcelain skin  
who said, "You are safe! Don't be afraid to come within!"  
15 They followed her through the trees to the mouth of a cave  
where she said they could rest and from the storm they were saved.

Just as they were laying down to sleep  
they heard a growl that made them shudder and turned to see  
that a Cyclops had emerged from inside the cave and wanted to eat.  
20 "Run!" cried the sailors, "before the Cyclops slaughters us all!"

And they fled from their new acquaintance like frightened seagulls.  
When they reached the ocean, they saw the storm had fled  
so they scrambled onto their ship and rowed away fast.  
So here ends the tale of wondrous woe,

25 for the sailors escaped just in time from their one-eyed foe!

**1**

Read the quotation from line 4.

**... a storm ripped through the ocean and threw them with force ...**

What does the personification mean in this quotation?

- A** The ocean was torn.
- B** The storm has not affected the sailors.
- C** The storm is powerful.
- D** The ship is on course.

**2**

What does the poet mean when describing the maiden as having “porcelain skin” in line 13?

- A** The maiden looks fragile.
- B** The maiden looks flawless.
- C** The maiden looks odd.
- D** The maiden looks ill.

**3**

Which statement **best** explains why the poet chose the words “porcelain skin” to describe the maiden?

- A** It helps explain the maiden’s appearance in the eyes of the sailors.
- B** It helps explain why the maiden wants to help the sailors.
- C** It helps explain the maiden’s attitude in the poem.
- D** It helps explain why the Cyclops keeps the maiden prisoner.

**4** Which word has a similar meaning but stronger connotation than the word “afraid” in line 14?

- A** upset
- B** startled
- C** fearful
- D** terrified

**5** What tone is established by the language in lines 17 through 20?

- A** frightening
- B** humorous
- C** mysterious
- D** uninterested

**6** How does the poet’s phrase “the storm had fled” in line 22 draw a comparison between the sailors and the storm? Use **two** details from the poem to support your response.

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## 6R4

SAMPLE