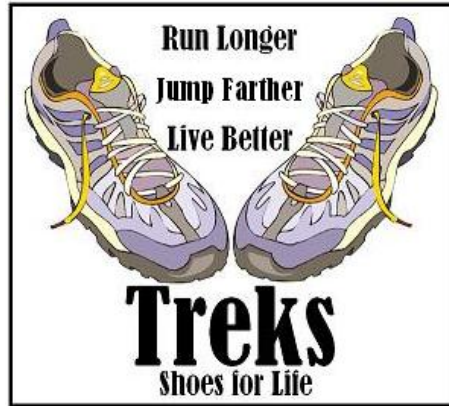


Connotation and Denotation

Question 1 .



By using the phrase "shoes for life," the connotation of this shoe ad is that

- ☐ A. Treks will give you a better life.
- ☐ B. other shoes will last longer.
- ☐ C. Treks will wear out fast.
- ☐ D. other shoes lead to a better life.

Question 2 .

Race to the Punch Line

by J. Robbins

"Why is it so hard to be funny?" moaned Zooey as she doodled on her notebook. Her writing partner, Perrault, barely looked up from his laptop.

"I know what you mean," Perrault replied. "The comedians on *Weekend Evening Live* make it look easy." Zooey leafed through the skit she and Perrault had been working on for two days. Both students were ragged around the edges but determined to finish their project before the deadline.

"No one in our high school will laugh at this," she sighed. "These jokes are lame, and I don't want to risk getting an F in drama class. I need good grades to win a scholarship to the Second City Training Center."

"What is that again?" asked Perrault absentmindedly as he continued pecking at the keyboard.

"It's a comedy improvisational school," Zooey told him. "A lot of famous comedians went to Second City, including Tina Fey, Mike Myers, and Stephen Colbert."

"Tina Fey?" exclaimed Perrault. "Wow, maybe I should put in an application so I can meet her. She is as adorable as she is clever. In fact, she is one of my inspirations for becoming a comedy writer." Zooey rolled her eyes at him.

"She has graduated and moved on, doofus," she laughed. "However, neither you nor I will be going anywhere until we finish writing this script."

"Done!" called Perrault triumphantly. "This skit will have everyone rolling in the aisles."

"I sure hope so," Zooey replied as she began to read over his shoulder.

"Well, look at the two eggheads hard at work," said Warwick, a fellow drama student, as he walked past with his girlfriend. "You two may get good grades, but your last skit fell as flat as a pancake. People always enjoy my skits because they are enhanced by my natural comedic talent. I don't have to worry about passing the final, but you guys are toast."

"You're so funny, Warwick," Veruschka giggled at her boyfriend's boasting.

"Our new script will get an A, and you'll be eating your words," exclaimed Zooey resentfully. Zooey and Perrault watched with narrowed eyes as Warwick strolled arrogantly out of the library with Veruschka at his side.

"Why can't he ever be civil?" Perrault groaned. "I hope he's not right about our grade."

"Have a little faith in yourself, P," said Zooey with a grin. "With this script, our spots in the Second City Training Center are guaranteed. Everyone in school will want to watch 'Garvick' and 'Meruschka' make fools of themselves onstage. This parody of Warwick and Veruschka is brilliant."

"Thanks," Perrault replied, his face burning with embarrassment and delight. "Let's get started!"

Read the following sentence from the passage.

"Zooey and Perrault watched with narrowed eyes as Warwick strolled arrogantly out of the library with Veruschka at his side."

What is the connotative meaning of the phrase "with narrowed eyes" as it is used in this sentence?

- ☐ A. They are glaring at Warwick and Veruschka.
- ☐ B. Their glasses make it difficult for them to see.
- ☐ C. Their eyes are naturally smaller than other people's.
- ☐ D. They are both experiencing severe eye pain.

Question 3 .

adapted from **On Benjamin Franklin**
by William Wirt

In this essay, the narrator recalls an encounter with Benjamin Franklin.

Never have I known such a fireside companion. Great as he was, both as a statesman and a philosopher, he never shone in a light more winning than when he was seen in a domestic circle. It was once my good fortune to pass two or three weeks with him, at the house of a private gentleman, in the back part of Pennsylvania; and we were confined to the house during the whole of that time, by the unintermitting constancy and depth of the snows.

But confinement could never be felt where Franklin was an inmate. His cheerfulness and his colloquial powers spread around him a perpetual spring. When I speak, however, of his colloquial powers, I do not mean to awaken any notion analogous to that which James Boswell has given us when he so frequently mentions the colloquial powers of Dr. Samuel Johnson.

The conversation of the latter continually reminds one of "the pomp and circumstance of glorious war." It was, indeed, a perpetual contest for victory, or an arbitrary and despotic exaction of homage to his superior talents. It was strong, acute, prompt, splendid, and vociferous; as loud, stormy, and sublime, as those winds which he represents as shaking the Hebrides, and rocking the old castles that frowned upon the dark rolling sea beneath.

But one gets tired of storms, however sublime they may be, and longs for the more orderly current of nature. Of Franklin, no one ever became tired. There was no ambition of eloquence, no effort to shine, in anything which came from him. There was nothing which made any demand either upon your allegiance or your admiration.

His manner was as unaffected as infancy. It was nature's self. He talked like an old patriarch; and his plainness and simplicity put you at once at your ease, and gave you the full and free possession and use of all your faculties.

The author uses the word *colloquial* three times in paragraph 2. Which definition is the literal, or denotative meaning, of *colloquial* as it is used in paragraph 2?

- ☐ A. literary
- ☐ B. conversational
- ☐ C. distinctive
- ☐ D. bantering

Question 4 .

To Ella Nora Andrews, calm, unruffled, in her crisp blue linen school suit, serenely humming a gay little tune, gathering her school things together—came the sound of the telephone.

"That you, Ella? Have you heard the news? Jim Sheldon is coming here the last of the week. And get ready now for the climax—he's bringing his bride. Wha' say? Yes, his *wife*—" And on and on went the rasping, wheezing voice of Fate, while, through the window, Ella watched the red and yellow and orange zinnias in the back yard fade and run together into a smudge of prismatic coloring.

Ella hung up the receiver and leaned against the window. There was a pounding in her throat, and she couldn't seem to concentrate her thoughts. From the chaotic jumble of her mind the leering truth picked itself out: It had happened at last—Jim was married.

adapted from "A Long-Distance Call From Jim" by Bess Streeter Aldrich

Read the following sentence from the passage.

"From the chaotic jumble of her mind the **leering** truth picked itself out: It had happened at last—Jim was married."

What does the word **leering** suggest?

- ☐ A. The truth is obvious and mocking her.
- ☐ B. The truth is nothing more than gossip.
- ☐ C. She can hear the truth cheering in her mind.
- ☐ D. Her mind is playing confusing tricks.

Question 5 .

from The Picture of Dorian Gray
by Oscar Wilde

"The story is simply this," said the painter after some time, "two months ago I went to a crush at Lady Brandon's since you know we poor artists have to show ourselves in society from time to time, just to remind the public that we are not savages. With an evening coat and a white tie, as you told me once, anybody, even a stockbroker, can gain a reputation for being civilized. Well, after I had been in the room about ten minutes, talking to huge over-dressed dowagers and tedious Academicians, I suddenly became conscious that someone was observing me. I turned halfway round, and witnessed Dorian Gray for the first time, and when our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious sensation of terror came over me as I knew that I had come face to face with someone whose mere personality was so mesmerizing that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself. I did not want any external influence in my life. You know yourself, Harry, how independent I am by nature, and I have always been my own master; had at least always been so, till I met Dorian Gray. Then—— but I don't know how to explain it to you but something seemed to tell me that I was on the verge of a terrible crisis in my life, and I had a strange feeling that Fate had in store for me exquisite joys and exquisite sorrows. I grew petrified, and turned to quit the room. It was not conscience that made me do so; it was a sort of cowardice. I take no credit to myself for trying to escape."

"Conscience and cowardice are really the same things, Basil. Conscience is the trade-name of the firm, that is all."

"I don't believe that, Harry, and I don't believe you do either. However, whatever was my motive—and it may have been pride, for I used to be very proud—I certainly struggled to the door. There, of course, I stumbled against Lady Brandon. 'You are not going to run away so soon, Mr. Hallward?' she screamed out. You know her curiously shrill voice?"

"Yes; she is a peacock in everything but beauty," said Lord Henry, shredding the daisy to bits with his long, nervous fingers.

"I could not get rid of her, and she brought me up to Royalties, and people with Stars and Garters, and elderly ladies with gigantic tiaras and parrot noses. She spoke of me as her dearest friend. I had only met her once before, but she took it into her head to lionize me. I believe some picture of mine had made a great accomplishment at the time, at least had been chattered about in the penny newspapers, which is the nineteenth-century standard of immortality. Suddenly I found myself face to face with the young man whose personality had so strangely stirred me. We were quite close, almost touching, our eyes met again, and it was reckless of me, but I asked Lady Brandon to introduce me to him. Perhaps it was not so reckless, after all and was simply inevitable. We would have conversed with each other without any introduction, I was certain of that. Dorian told me so afterwards as he, too, felt that we were destined to know each other."

Directions: Select all the correct answers.

Which **two** words have a similar denotation to the word lionize as it is used in the **fifth** paragraph of the passage?

- ☐ insult
- ☐ revere
- ☐ anger
- ☐ betray
- ☐ glorify

Question 6 .

I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveler upon opium—the bitter lapse into everyday life—the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher?

from "The Fall of the House of Usher" by Edgar Allan Poe

Read the following phrase from the passage.

"There was iciness, a **sinking**, a sickening of the heart . . ."

What does the word **sinking** suggest?

- ☐ A. A loss for words
- ☐ B. A feeling of elation
- ☐ C. A forward movement
- ☐ D. A feeling of fear

Question 7 .

Race to the Punch Line

by J. Robbins

"Why is it so hard to be funny?" moaned Zooey as she doodled on her notebook. Her writing partner, Perrault, barely looked up from his laptop.

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In the second paragraph, the author uses the phrase "ragged around the edges" to imply that the characters look

- ☐ A. angry.
- ☐ B. weary.
- ☐ C. filthy.
- ☐ D. poor.

Question 8 .



The denotative meaning of the phrase "each bite better than the last" is that

- ☐ A. the last bite will be the best.
- ☐ B. the first bite will be the best.
- ☐ C. other tofu dogs do not taste as good.
- ☐ D. other tofu dogs taste best first.

Question 9 .

adapted from **On Benjamin Franklin**
by William Wirt

In this essay, the narrator recalls an encounter with Benjamin Franklin.

Never have I known such a fireside companion. Great as he was, both as a statesman and a philosopher, he never shone in a light more winning than when he was seen in a domestic circle. It was once my good fortune to pass two or three weeks with him, at the house of a private gentleman, in the back part of Pennsylvania; and we were confined to the house during the whole of that time, by the unintermitting constancy and depth of the snows.

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In paragraph 5, which context clue helps the reader know the nonliteral, or connotative, meaning of the phrase "He talked like an old patriarch"?

- ☐ A. He granted full use of the mind.
- ☐ B. He put people at ease with his simplicity.
- ☐ C. He was like nature itself.
- ☐ D. His manner was like an infant or young child.

Question 10 .

adpated from Moby Dick
by Herman Melville

In this excerpt from the first chapter of the novel, the narrator observes people in Manhattan, New York, as he prepares to go back to the sea.

There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes, belted round by wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs—commerce surrounds it with her surf. Right and left, the streets take you waterward. Its extreme downtown is the battery, where that noble mole is washed by waves, and cooled by breezes, which a few hours previous were out of sight of land. Look at the crowds of water-gazers there.

Walk about the city on a dreamy Sabbath afternoon. Go from Corlears Hook to Coenties Slip, and from thence, by Whitehall, northward. What do you see?—Posted like silent sentinels all around the town, stand thousands upon thousands of mortal men fixed in ocean reveries. Some leaning against the spiles; some seated upon the pier-heads; some looking over the bulwarks of ships from China; some high aloft in the rigging, as if striving to get a still better seaward peep. But these are all landsmen; of week days pent up in lath and plaster—tied to counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks. How then is this? Are the green fields gone? What do they here?

But look! Here come more crowds, pacing straight for the water, and seemingly bound for a dive. Strange! Nothing will content them but the extremest limit of the land; loitering under the shady lee of yonder warehouses will not suffice. No. They must get just as nigh the water as they possibly can without falling. And there they stand—miles of them—leagues. Inlanders all, they come from lanes and alleys, streets, avenues—north, east, south, and west. Yet here they all unite. Tell me, does the magnetic virtue of the needles of the compasses of all those ships attract them thither?

Once more. Say you are in the country; in some high land of lakes. Take almost any path you please, and ten to one it carries you down in a dale, and leaves you there by a pool in the stream. There is magic in it. Let the most absent-minded of men be plunged in his deepest reveries—stand that man on his legs, set his feet a-going, and he will infallibly lead you to water, if water there be in all that region. Should you ever be athirst in the great American desert, try this experiment, if your caravan happen to be supplied with a metaphysical professor. Yes, as everyone knows, meditation and water are wedded forever.

What is the connotative meaning of the word *metaphysical* as it is used in paragraph 4?

- ☐ A. having to do with the supernatural
- ☐ B. having to do with the science of being
- ☐ C. having to do with speculation
- ☐ D. having to do with the physical

Answers

1. A
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. --
6. D
7. B
8. A
9. B
10. B

Explanations

1. By saying "shoes for life" along side "live better," the advertisers are relying on the connotation that if you want to have a better life, you will wear *these* shoes.
2. Connotations and implications of words and phrases often depend on the context in which they are found. In this passage, Warwick and Veruschka antagonize Zooey and Perrault. Zooey and Perrault watch their antagonists leave "with narrowed eyes," and this phrase suggests that they are glaring at Warwick and Veruschka.
3. In paragraph 2, *colloquial* literally means "conversational." The context helps the reader determine that the author refers to Franklin's conversational powers.
4. Words have both denotations (literal meanings) and connotations (suggestive meanings). To **leer** literally means "to look with a sideways glance", but it also suggests sly intentions—such as to gloat, tease, or stare obscenely.
5. Denotation is the explicit or direct meaning of a given word. Thus, the denotative meaning of the word "lionize" as used in the passage can either be "glorify" or revere."
6. Words have both denotations (literal meanings) and connotations (suggestive meanings). Sinking literally means "to fall, drop, or descend gradually." This is its denotation. Its connotation is the feeling it gives, in this case—a sense of foreboding.
7. Connotations and implications of words and phrases often depend on the context in which they are found. In this selection, both Zooey and Perrault have been working for two days to finish a script. The phrase "ragged around the edges" implies that they look tired after two days of hard work.
8. Although the connotative meaning is that this tofu dog will taste great, the literal or *denotative* meaning is simply that the last bite will be the best.
9. To say someone "talked like an old patriarch" is to describe that person in fond terms, comparing him to a father or an honored wise man. The passage indicates the Franklin's manner of speaking was not haughty, even though he was very intelligent. Franklin was not showy in the way he conversed with others. Therefore, the best answer is "He put people at ease with his simplicity."
10. To help determine a connotative meaning, consider what meaning is implied by the use of the word. The author uses the word to describe someone who is prone to thought more so than action, and the connotation of the word *metaphysical* is somewhat satirical in this context as the author tries to make a point about finding water. The best answer is "having to do with the science of being."