

Word Study



All words have a denotation, or meaning. Sometimes, words also have a connotation, which is an idea or feeling the word creates for someone on top of its meaning.

denotation

the meaning of a word

connotation

an idea or feeling a word brings to mind, in addition to its meaning

Rather than identifying the specific idea or feeling of a word, which can be different for each person, it is helpful to think of connotation in terms of whether a word seems to be more positive or more negative. Often, that depends on context, or how the word is used. Sometimes the exact same word can have the opposite connotation in different sentences.

Let's explore connotation with the word "big" in *Big* by Vashti Harrison. Complete each chart by reading the quote from the book. Then, put a plus sign (+) next to connotation if *big* seems more positive and a minus sign (-) if it seems more negative.

"Once there was a girl with a **big** laugh and a **big** heart and very **big** dreams."

denotation

large in size

connotation

"Don't you think you're too **big** for that?"

denotation

large in size

connotation

"Aren't you too **big** to be crying?"

denotation

large in size

connotation

KEEP STUDYING! When you are reading, keep an eye out for words that feel especially positive or negative. Think about whether that feeling is truly part of the definition, or meaning, of the word OR if it is the connotation.