

CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION

Whether you're reading a book or just chatting with friends, your brain is constantly working to interpret the meaning of the words you're taking in. Generally, there are two different types of meaning to choose from: connotation and denotation.

con·no·ta·tion | /,kă-nə-'tā-shən/
(noun)

- something implied or suggested by a word or phrase

Connotation is the emotions and/or ideas associated with a particular word or phrase.

If a word evokes a good feeling or idea, that word has a positive connotation. If a word evokes a bad feeling or idea, that word has a negative connotation. If a word doesn't evoke any particular emotion or idea, then that word has a neutral connotation.

Positive Connotation

Jamie uses coupons because she is *economical*.

Negative Connotation

Jamie uses coupons because she is *cheap*.

The context of the surrounding text can help clarify a word's connotation.

de·no·ta·tion | /,dē-nō-'tā-shən/
(noun)

- the direct dictionary definition of a word or phrase

Denotation is simply the literal meaning or definition of a word or phrase.

Here's an example of the connotation and denotation of the word *timid*:

Connotation

The connotation of *timid* is negative because it suggests a lack of confidence or courage. In some contexts, a word such as *reserved* may express a similar idea with a more neutral connotation.

Denotation

The denotation, or definition, of *timid* is "lacking in courage or self-confidence."