Loaded Words and Phrases

POSITIVE CONNOTATIONS try to create a favorable impression in the reader’s mind.
NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS try to create an unfavorable impression.
NEUTRAL expressions try to give information objectively without an implied judgment.

examples:

POSITIVE CONNOTATION: Joe is firm in his principles. The reader admires Joe for not changing his ideas and opinions according to what is popular or advantageous.

NEGATIVE CONNOTATION: Joe is stubborn and close-minded. The reader dislikes Joe’s inflexible insistence that he is always correct.

Use words and expressions with positive and negative connotations when you try to persuade an audience or produce a certain effect in the reader!

Practice. Tell whether the word or phrase has POSITIVE or NEGATIVE connotations. Write POS or NEG on the line provided:

1. _______ Fred is unique.
   _______ Fred is weird.
2. _______ The president has been studying the problem thoroughly.
   _______ The president was put on the spot.
3. _______ Sheila is a snob.
   _______ Sheila is very dignified.
4. _______ Let’s be spontaneous.
   _______ We have no plan of action.
5. _______ The music is energetic.
   _______ The music is noisy.
6. _______ The mob gathered outside the theater.
   _______ The large crowd gathered outside the theater.
7. _______ The suspect claimed that he was at home at the time.
   _______ The suspect showed that he was at home at the time.
8. _______ Hank took responsibility for the mistake.
   _______ Hank admitted that he was guilty of the error.
9. _______ The general was indecisive.
   _______ The general was not rash.

B. Identify the POSitive, NEGative, or NEUTral expression in each triplet. Then write a sentence containing the type of expression that is missing.

   e.g., _______ The decorations were elaborate.
   _______ - The decorations were gaudy.
   _______ - (The decorations were tastefully done.)
1. ______ Joe wolfed his food.  
       ______ Joe had a hearty appetite. 
   
2. ______ The furniture was from the 1920’s.  
       ______ The furniture was an antique. 
   
3. ______ The teacher’s voice put an end to the students’ unruly behavior.  
       ______ The teacher screamed at the students. 
   
4. ______ Carol spends much of her time playing chess.  
       ______ Carol is obsessed with chess. 
   
5. ______ John predicts that he will win.  
       ______ John is confident of victory. 
   
6. ______ His clothes are inexpensive.  
       ______ His clothes are cheap. 
   
7. ______ Parents want to guide their children.  
       ______ Parents want to control their children. 
   
8. ______ Lisa borrowed the ideas.  
       ______ Lisa stole the ideas. 
   
9. ______ Joe squandered his money on trinkets.  
       ______ Joe spent his money on various items. 
   
10. ______ Jill surrendered to peer pressure.  
       ______ Jill followed the advice of her friends. 
   
11. ______ What is that aroma?  
       ______ What is that stench? 
   
12. ______ Dave is a beast.  
       ______ Dave is muscular.