ACTIVITY 4: Watch Your Tone!

Sometimes it’s not what you say, but how you say it. Some words may mean similar things but have different connotations.

A connotation is an idea that’s associated with a word in addition to its normal meaning.

Check out these word pairs below. Write a sentence for each word, revealing each word’s connotation. Then explain how the words are different. (For example, you could say which words have a positive, negative, or neutral connotation.)

Example:

**slim**
**skinny**

Sentence 1: The slim, young cat squeezed between the fence posts.
Sentence 2: The skinny cat looked as if he hadn’t eaten in a week.
Difference: Skinny has more of a negative connotation than slim.

**inexpensive**
**cheap**

Sentence 1: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

Sentence 2: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
Difference: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

Sentence 1: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

Sentence 2: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

Difference: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

-curious-
osy-

Sentence 1: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

Sentence 2: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

Difference: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

-rest-
-relax-

Sentence 1: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

Sentence 2: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

Difference: __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
Read each sentence and circle the word with the connotation that best fits the tone. Think about how each word can change the statement’s meaning.

Martha the Marvelous manatee floats sideways in the water in the most unique/weird and beautiful way.

Miguel smiled/smirked when he beat Adam in the video game. Before he lost, Adam was confident/conceited that he would win.

My neighbor is so thrifty/stingy that she asks my mom to save her the coupons in our newspaper each Sunday.

Lucy the dog was happy/elated when Sam came home with a new chew toy.

The truck was filled/crammed with so much stuff that my old shoes fell off the back.

Eloise was happy/elated when she found out her dad got her a new calculator.

What do you call a fish without eyes? FSH!
What’s the coolest part of your job? Making discoveries—and this comes in many flavors. It may be the first time I connected the mysterious, “boing” sound in the ocean to a minke whale, or when I made the connection that spotted dolphins were quiet when killer whales were nearby. These discoveries refresh my love for science and understanding the world around us.

What’s one of the most exciting discoveries you’ve made? In the Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean (ETP), I studied dolphin populations affected by the tuna purse-seine fisheries. Not only did we study these amazing dolphins out in the middle of the ocean, but we also studied the greater ocean ecosystem, including the temperature and currents, plankton, flying fish, seabirds, and sea turtles. I might listen for dolphins most of the day, then take a break to tag some sea turtles, and then end my night catching plankton in nets. Understanding the entire ecosystem helped me better understand the species I was studying and brought variety to our long days at sea.

What’s something you wish you’d known about animal behavior when you were a kid? I wish I understood how complex animal behavior is and how most behaviors have a long, complicated evolutionary history. There is usually a reason behind the behaviors we see, whether we are talking about whales, our pet dogs, or people! I try to keep this in mind when I’m frustrated that my dog is barking or some person is making a choice I would not make. The dog is not just barking to drive me crazy—but to alert me to an unwelcome intruder (and that squirrel will now think twice before invading our territory!).