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characterization = how the character is portrayed

conflict = problems the characters face

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Diction, imagery, and tone are different. They require paying attention to the actual words in the text and what that ordering of words *implies* (as opposed to stating directly).

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The connotations are the emotional overtones that a word or phrase carries.

**denotation:** the minimal, strict definition of a word as found in a dictionary, disregarding any historical or emotional connotation

# Diction/Imagery Vocabulary

## Example:

house, home, hovel, mansion, domicile

All of these terms describe a place where people reside. However, some are more positive than others.

Which terms are mostly neutral-- which is to say they have little or no implied meaning beyond their denotation?

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In the case of *home*, the positive associations exist independent of the denotation. To *make one's house a home* is to personalize it so as to make it warm and inviting.

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Like *mansion*, part of the overtones of *hovel* derive from a slightly different denotation, but part of it is the implied linkage to ideas like *shabbiness* or *being in poor shape*.

# Diction/Imagery Vocabulary

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The student **surveyed** the range of grades, congratulating herself for having **snatched** the highest score on the test.

The words surveyed and snatched have the strongest connotation in this sentence. They stand out because they are substitutions for concepts that could have been phrased in a much more neutral way.

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The use of these words suggest something about the student's character. *Surveyed* implies a deeper attention than looked over or something similar, just as *snatched* implies a much more bold and decisive action than earned.

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This is clearly someone who is competitive, an inference we might have made even with the more neutral language choices; however, this message is reinforced by the diction choices.

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- ***The author uses diction to show...*** → 1) Do not organize your arguments around literary devices; 2) If you use the word *diction* at all\*, save it for the analysis of a quotation

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- ***For example, the author writes, “[insert long, sentence length quote].” Here the diction shows...*** → Diction means “words and phrases.” Your quotations, then, have to also be words and phrases, not full sentences.

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**The biggest mistake students make, however, is to not discuss connotation. If your analysis is not talking about what the word or phrase *connotes, implies, or is associated with*, you are doing it wrong.**

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Connotation depends largely on context.

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For example, in Puritan literature God is often described as wrathful and vengeful. In context of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, in that community of Calvinist believers, this was a good thing.

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We avoid problems like this, though, if we remember that our personal feelings or reactions are irrelevant. When we analyze such things, it should be in context of the **logic of the text**.

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- sight = visual imagery
- sound = auditory imagery
- taste = gustatory imagery
- touch = tactile (when evoking touch specifically) or kinesthetic (when evoking movements or the sense of bodily motion) imagery
- smell = olfactory imagery

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It is analyzed in exactly the same way as diction. Focus on the connotation of the image, not the literal description.

# **Diction/Imagery Vocabulary**

**Imagery Don'ts:**

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- ***One imagery is...*** → Image is the singular form of this word. I'm also not sure why you'd want to write in this kind of mechanical, step-by-step manner anyway.

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- ***One imagery is...*** → Image is the singular form of this word. I'm also not sure why you'd want to write in this kind of mechanical, step-by-step manner anyway.
- ***The author uses imagery to show...*** → Again, don't organize your arguments by device. However, unlike diction, there is no problem with referring to the device directly. The difference is that saying the author chooses his or her words carefully (*The author uses diction*) goes without saying, whereas authors are not continuously describing things

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- ***For example, the author writes, "[insert long, sentence length quote]." Here the image suggests...*** → An image is a description, and it very seldom that this encompass the entire sentence. Use only the word or phrase that actually evokes sense experience.

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**Like in diction, the biggest mistake students make, is to not discuss connotation. If your analysis is not talking about what the image connotes, implies, or is associated with, you are doing it wrong.**

# Analogy to Advertising

## The Slogan



Drink  
**Coca-Cola**  
Delicious and Refreshing

*The pause  
that refreshes*

The need to pause for refreshment comes to everyone...  
whether in the heat of a busy day or the cool of a calm  
evening. Ice-cold Coca-Cola is for such a moment...  
to add its refreshing life and sparkle to your relaxation.

THE DRINK EVERYBODY KNOWS...  
SO COOL...SO COOLING...  
WHEREVER YOU ARE

# Analogy to Advertising

## The Slogan

It's a *pause*, not a *stop*. You lead a busy life, but to take time to drink a Coke isn't goofing off. It's a well earned break. Take a moment for yourself; you deserve it.



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"Refreshes" similarly implies recharging. Your life is on hold when you "pause," but it's not time wasted. On the contrary, you become the best version of you again, able to more effectively face life's challenges.

# Analogy to Advertising

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## The Images

The woman is young and attractive, two ideas that have wide currency in our culture (compare to cultures that value age and wisdom). Youth culture is also how our society measures trendiness. Nobody cares what old, unattractive people are doing. The young are the ones to emulate.



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*The pause  
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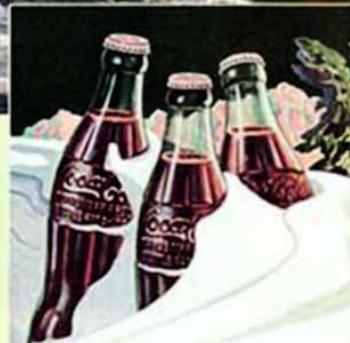
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Unless, of course, you're selling something like insurance-- where you want to suggest things like *responsibility*.

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The moody, beach background connotes romance and mystery. It has nothing to do with Coke, but it creates an association with the product. The advertisers want you to think *glamour* and *adventure* when you think about Coke.

# Diction/Imagery Vocabulary

## Other Definitions:

**concrete diction / concrete imagery:** language that describes qualities that can be perceived with the five senses as opposed to using abstract or generalized language, e.g., calling a fruit “pleasant” or “good” is abstract, while calling a fruit “cool” or “sweet” is concrete

**abstract diction / abstract imagery:** language that describes qualities that cannot be perceived with the five senses, e.g., calling something “pleasant” or “pleasing” is abstract, while calling something “yellow” or “sour” is concrete; the word “domesticity” is abstract, but the word “housework” is concrete

# Diction/Imagery Vocabulary

## Other Definitions:

**mood** or **atmosphere**: the emotional feelings inspired by a work, describing the dominant mood of a selection as it is created by diction, dialogue, setting, and description

# Diction/Imagery Vocabulary

## Other Definitions:

**synaesthesia** (sometimes spelled *synesthesia*; Gr: “perceiving together”): taking one type of sensory input (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) and comingling it with another separate sense in an impossible way; in the resulting figure of speech, we end up talking about how a color sounds, or how a smell looks, etc.; simple examples: “feeling blue”, “a sharp taste”

# Diction/Imagery Vocabulary

## Tone:

**tone:** a literary technique which encompasses the attitudes toward the subject and toward the audience implied in a literary work

This definition can be contrasted with **mood** or **atmosphere**, defined as the general sense or feeling which the reader is supposed to get from the text.

tone = the writer's feeling

mood = the reader's feeling

tone = at a specific point in the text

mood = a larger unit of the text

## How to Find Tone

Diction and imagery are not the only ways to create tone, but they are the most common. ONE CANNOT DO A TONE ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT CONNOTATION.

**It is a TWO STEP process where an image or word creates the connotation that creates the tone.**

**from “A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore**

He had a broad face, and a little round belly  
That shook when he laugh'd, like a bowl full of jelly:  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laugh'd when I saw him in spite of myself.



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**... rewritten using different diction and imagery**

He has a fat face, and a jutting spare tire  
That churns as he snorts, like wet clothes in the drier:  
He's a fat-ass old imp, a foul bucket of lard,  
And I sneered as he huffed and puffed out of the yard.

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“Broad” is largely neutral in tone.

“Fat” is much more negative. You are passing judgment when you call someone “fat.”

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“A little round belly” is cute (since most diminutive things are cute in our culture). It also softens the underlying denotation: a “round belly” means too much fat, not too little.

“A jutting spare tire” is critical. There is an implied imperative to lose the extra weight.

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***To shake* carries little connotation.**

***To churn* suggests the churning of one's stomach. This is not the only connotation of this verb, but particularly in context of unappealing imagery (“wet clothes in the drier” and “foul bucket of lard”), it is comparatively more negative than *to shake*.**

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**“Bowl full of jelly” is comical. It is also a comparison to delicious food.**

**“Wet clothes in the drier” is something unpleasant. It describes something that is in an undesirable state that must be changed to a more desirable one.**

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**“Bowl full of jelly” is comical. It is also a comparison to delicious food.**

**“Foul bucket of lard” is not comical. It is disgusting. Like jelly, it might also shake if warm or half-rendered, but in a vaguely stomach-churning way-- especially given the quantity (a “bucket” full of it).**

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***To laugh*** denotes amusement. As an image, it builds sympathy. One likes people who laugh.

***To snort*** and ***to huff and puff*** might also describe a laugh, but the language choices are much more negative. If it is mirth being described, Santa has an unpleasant, annoying laugh.

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**Both “chubby” and “plump” are euphemistic. Sure Santa probably needs to drop a few pounds, but both terms imply the extra weight is almost a good thing.**

**“Fat-ass” and “foul bucket of lard” are judgmental in a harsh, mocking sort of way.**

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**“Jolly” denotes happiness and has a positive connotation. An elf is largely benign in folklore. Elves may be mischievous, but they are not threatening.**

**“Fat-ass” only has negative connotations. Imps are sinister in folklore, associated with the devil or hell.**

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That shook when he laugh'd, like a bowl full of jelly:  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laugh'd when I saw him in spite of myself.



... rewritten using different diction and imagery

He has a fat face, and a jutting spare tire  
That churns as he snorts, like wet clothes in the drier:  
He's a fat-ass old imp, a foul bucket of lard,  
And I sneered as he huffed and puffed out of the yard.

In context, *to laugh* suggests having a chuckle at Santa's expense, but it is not mean spirited. Santa presents a comical spectacle.

*To sneer*, by contrast, has judgmental overtones. The narrator feels that he is better than Santa Claus.

**from “A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore**

He had a broad face, and a little round belly  
That shook when he laugh’d, like a bowl full of jelly:  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laugh’d when I saw him in spite of myself.

**... rewritten using different diction and imagery**

He has a fat face, and a jutting spare tire  
That churns as he snorts, like wet clothes in the drier:  
He’s a fat-ass old imp, a foul bucket of lard,  
And I sneered as he huffed and puffed out of the yard.

**Text One**

**Text Two**

**Santa Claus**

**Narrator**

**Author**



from “A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore

He had a broad face, and a little round belly  
That shook when he laugh’d, like a bowl full of jelly:  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
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And I sneered as he huffed and puffed out of the yard.



**Santa Claus**

**Text One**

jovial, amiable

**Text Two**

**Narrator**

**Author**

from “A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore

He had a broad face, and a little round belly  
That shook when he laugh’d, like a bowl full of jelly:  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laugh’d when I saw him in spite of myself.

... rewritten using different diction and imagery

He has a fat face, and a jutting spare tire  
That churns as he snorts, like wet clothes in the drier:  
He’s a fat-ass old imp, a foul bucket of lard,  
And I sneered as he huffed and puffed out of the yard.



**Santa Claus**

**Narrator**

**Author**

**Text One**

jovial, amiable

**Text Two**

disgusting, sinister

from “A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore

He had a broad face, and a little round belly  
That shook when he laugh’d, like a bowl full of jelly:  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laugh’d when I saw him in spite of myself.

... rewritten using different diction and imagery

He has a fat face, and a jutting spare tire  
That churns as he snorts, like wet clothes in the drier:  
He’s a fat-ass old imp, a foul bucket of lard,  
And I sneered as he huffed and puffed out of the yard.



**Santa Claus**

**Text One**

jovial, amiable

**Text Two**

disgusting, sinister

**Narrator**

amused, welcoming

**Author**

from “A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore

He had a broad face, and a little round belly  
That shook when he laugh’d, like a bowl full of jelly:  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laugh’d when I saw him in spite of myself.

... rewritten using different diction and imagery

He has a fat face, and a jutting spare tire  
That churns as he snorts, like wet clothes in the drier:  
He’s a fat-ass old imp, a foul bucket of lard,  
And I sneered as he huffed and puffed out of the yard.



**Santa Claus**

**Text One**

jovial, amiable

**Text Two**

disgusting, sinister

**Narrator**

amused, welcoming

judgmental, caustic

**Author**

from “A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore

He had a broad face, and a little round belly  
That shook when he laugh’d, like a bowl full of jelly:  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
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That churns as he snorts, like wet clothes in the drier:  
He’s a fat-ass old imp, a foul bucket of lard,  
And I sneered as he huffed and puffed out of the yard.



**Santa Claus**

**Text One**

jovial, amiable

**Text Two**

disgusting, sinister

**Narrator**

amused, welcoming

judgmental, caustic

**Author**

good-natured, wry

from “A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore

He had a broad face, and a little round belly  
That shook when he laugh’d, like a bowl full of jelly:  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laugh’d when I saw him in spite of myself.

... rewritten using different diction and imagery

He has a fat face, and a jutting spare tire  
That churns as he snorts, like wet clothes in the drier:  
He’s a fat-ass old imp, a foul bucket of lard,  
And I sneered as he huffed and puffed out of the yard.



	<b>Text One</b>	<b>Text Two</b>
<b>Santa Claus</b>	jovial, amiable	disgusting, sinister
<b>Narrator</b>	amused, welcoming	judgmental, caustic
<b>Author</b>	good-natured, wry	hateful, <i>maybe</i> ironic