Literal and figurative language

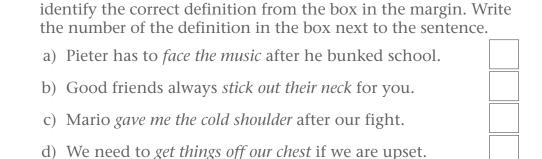
Literal language refers to the *actual* or *factual meaning* of what you say or write.

Example: Jolene runs very fast.

Figurative language is made up of words or expressions that have an *implied* meaning. Idioms and figures of speech like similes, metaphors and personification all use figurative language to create pictures in the mind of listeners or readers.

Example: Jolene runs like the wind. This means Jolene runs very fast.

- 1. To ignore a person or treat them with neglect
- 2. To secretly gossip about someone
- 3. To accept the unpleasant consequences
- 4. To say what is upsetting you
- 5. To take a chance or risk on another's behalf



written in italics. Use the context of the sentence to help you

1. In the sentences below, the figurative expression has been

2. Refer to the list of expressions below. Draw a line between the expression and the correct context. The first one has been done for you.

e) Tania always speaks behind people's backs.

Expression	Context
a) Back to square one	To have no understanding
b) Full of beans	To work hard
c) Cold feet	 To start again
d) Burn the midnight oil	To lose courage
e) It's Greek to me	To be enthusiastic and energetic

- 3. Identify which meaning is literal (L) and which is figurative (F) in the following sentences.
 - a) The plane is ready to take off. ____ Please take off your coats and sit down. __ b) I was cut off when I was on the phone. ____ Jack cut off a

big piece of meat. ____

- c) *Pick up* your pen. ____ I hope to *pick up* some study tips. ____
- d) Amanda says I should *look out* the window. ____ Look out! That dog's going to bite you! ____
- e) The can is full of beans. ____ The youngsters are full of beans. ____



There are no rules to learn about figurative expressions. You need to understand what they mean and learn them off by heart.



Denotation and connotation

Denotation refers to the literal, dictionary explanation of a word.

Examples: dumb: to be unable to speak

dictionary: a reference book about words

Connotation refers to the associations and emotions that words or phrases have for us.

Example: She was so angry she saw red. — In this sentence, the word *red* is associated with anger.

If you call Anda hot and cool, the meaning has nothing to do with temperature (the direct meaning). The connotation here suggests that Anda is attractive and popular.



Some words have **positive connotations** and other words have **negative connotations**.

Examples: Persistent has a positive connotation that suggests someone keeps trying. Stubborn has a negative connotation that suggests someone doesn't know when to stop.

- 1. We can often work out the denotation or connotation of a word from the sentence that it is used in. Indicate whether the underlined words are denotations (D) or connotations (C).
 - a) That <u>red</u> flower is so pretty. _____
 - b) I am green with envy at your new watch.
 - c) Our maths exam was a <u>nightmare</u>. _____
 - d) Petrus is the <u>backbone</u> of his team.
 - e) I like the shade of <u>yellow</u> you painted the room.
- 2. The following words are all related to the sense of smell and have different connotations. Write P next to the words that have positive connotations and N next to the words that have negative connotations.

stink	മ്പലി	aroma	fragrance
stench		odour	scent



Note

Denotation comes from the word denote, which means to show meaning.