Connotative vs Denotative Meanings

Step 1**:**Ask if anyone has ever heard words having two meanings or double meanings. Write the word "denotative" on the board.

Step 2:  Model: Give a student the dictionary and ask them to find the definition of the word ‘Gray.' (For a quicker response, mark the page.) Definition:  a shade between, or a mixture of, black and white.

Step 3**:**Explain that the student has just supplied the class with the denotative meaning, or definition, of the word as supplied by a dictionary of everyday language. It's easy to remember that denotative, definition, and dictionary all begin with the letter ‘D.' They all have to do with a word's meaning.

Step 4:  Now explain that a word also has another kind of meaning, and that meaning is called "Connotative." Explain that this a more subtle indirect meaning or the way it makes you feel.

Model: Give the class a connotative example of the word ‘gray.' "To me, gray means a cold, cloudy day."

Step 5**:**Now ask the class what kind of emotions does the color gray bring out?  Direct responses to the word ‘emotion.' Explain that a connotative meaning, or connotation, refers to the emotions or human reactions and feelings that come from a word**.**

Step 6: Give students one more example to discuss with partner. Suggestions: snake, weasel, rat, fox, blue. Then share with class.

Closing: Have students copy denotation and connotation in their notes along with the definition and some examples.