

LITERARY SELECTION **The Lady, or the Tiger?**  
Short Story by Frank R. Stockton

EXPOSITORY SELECTION **The Monty Hall Debate**  
Newspaper Article by John Tierney

VISUAL **Cartoon**  
Cartoon by Peter Steiner

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML8-704

# How do you make **DECISIONS?**



**READING 6** Make inferences and draw conclusions about the elements of fiction. **RC-8(E)** Paraphrase texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order.

How we make decisions depends on the situation. A simple coin toss can help you decide who goes first when playing a video game. But you wouldn't want to flip a coin when making a more important choice, such as which sport to play or which high school to attend. In the story you are about to read, a decision has life-or-death consequences.

## **Triplet Connection**

The literary selection that follows will explore how people make decisions, the role of laws in society, and what is really fair. After you read "The Lady, or the Tiger?" you'll read an expository selection that explores similar topics and a visual that is partly inspired by the story.



## Meet the Author

### LITERARY ANALYSIS: TONE

Writers often express an attitude, or **tone**, toward the subject, setting, or characters they're writing about. A tone can often be described with one word, such as angry, proud, or playful. Just as knowing a friend's attitude can help you decide whether she's serious or joking, knowing a writer's tone can help you grasp his or her message. To help you determine Frank R. Stockton's tone, pay attention to the words and details he uses to describe

- the **characters**—Do his descriptions of them suggest whether he thinks they're smart or foolish, kind or cruel?
- the **setting**—Does he admire the society's customs?
- the **plot events**—Does his language show that he takes the events seriously, or not?

### READING STRATEGY: PARAPHRASE

One good way to understand and remember what you read is to **paraphrase** it, or restate the writer's language in your own words. To paraphrase, follow these steps:

- Reread the passage, looking for the main ideas.
- Define unfamiliar words using context clues or a dictionary.
- Restate important ideas and details in your own words. A good paraphrase should be about as long as the original text.

As you read, paraphrase difficult sections in your notebook.

Line Numbers	Paraphrase
1-4	<i>Long ago, there lived a rough, cruel king. He had been influenced by forward-thinking cultures, but he was still uncivilized.</i>

### VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The following words help reveal Stockton's opinion of his characters. In your Reader/Writer Notebook, write a sentence for each of the vocabulary words. Use a dictionary or the definitions in the following selection pages to help you.

<b>WORD LIST</b>	anguished	conventional	progressiveness
	aspire	devious	subordinate
	assert	impartial	waver

## Frank R. Stockton

1834–1902

### Full of Fairy Tales

Though today Frank R. Stockton's most popular story is "The Lady, or the Tiger?" many of his other works were widely read during his lifetime. Born near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Stockton began writing fairy tales as a child, later claiming that he did so because "my mind was full of them."

### Literary Sensation

While still in high school, Stockton won a short story contest sponsored by a magazine. Later on in life, Stockton wrote stories for both adults and children. "The Lady, or the Tiger?" caused a sensation among the American public. The ending was debated in high schools, and Stockton received hundreds of letters from people seeking the solution. Unfortunately, Stockton did not like the story as much as his readers did; he felt it did not represent his best work.

### BACKGROUND TO THE STORY

#### Historic Arena

Much of the action in "The Lady, or the Tiger?" takes place in an amphitheater. One of the most famous amphitheaters in history is the Colosseum, built during the Roman empire in the year A.D. 72. Capable of seating 50,000 people, this massive structure featured three levels of seating, wood floors, and an innovative canvas roof that brought in cool air from the outside. The Colosseum was the scene of gruesome "games" involving slaves, prisoners, or animals fighting gladiators (professionally trained swordsmen) to the death. Although lightning and earthquakes destroyed large parts of the Colosseum over the years, much of it still stands today.

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KEYWORD: HML8-705



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.



# The Lady, or the Tiger?

Frank R. Stockton

In the very olden time, there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the **progressiveness** of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid,<sup>1</sup> and untrammeled,<sup>2</sup> as became the half of him which was barbaric.<sup>3</sup> He was a man of exuberant fancy, and, withal, of an authority so irresistible that, at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts. He was greatly given to self-communing;<sup>4</sup> and, when he and himself agreed upon anything, the thing was done. When every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial; but whenever there was a little hitch, and  
10 some of his orbs got out of their orbits, he was blander and more genial still, for nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight, and crush down uneven places. **A**

Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had become semifixed was that of the public arena, in which, by exhibitions of manly and bestly valor, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured.

## progressiveness

(prə-grēs'iv-nīs) *n.* the state of advancing toward better conditions or new policies, ideas, or methods

## **A** TONE

Based on the words he uses to describe the king, how do you think Stockton feels about this character?

## Analyze Visuals ▶

What do the details in this painting help you **infer** about the kingdom and its people?

1. **florid** (flôr'īd): very ornate; flowery.

2. **untrammeled** (ŭn-trām'ēld): not limited or restricted.

3. **barbaric** (bār-bār'īk): marked by crudeness or lack of restraint in taste, style, or manner.

4. **self-communing**: the act of "talking" things over with oneself only.



**assert** (ə-sûrt') v. to act forcefully; to take charge

## VISUAL VOCABULARY



**amphitheater**  
(ăm'fə-thē'ə-tēr) *n.* an arena where contests and spectacles are held

### B PARAPHRASE

Reread lines 25–32. Paraphrase this passage. Was the amphitheater used in the same way in this kingdom as it was elsewhere? Explain.

**impartial** (ĩm-pär'shəl)  
*adj.* not partial or biased; unprejudiced

**subordinate**  
(sə-bôr'dn-ĩt) *adj.* secondary; belonging to a lower rank

But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy **asserted** itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhapsodies of dying gladiators, nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast **amphitheater**, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished, or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance.

When a subject was accused of a crime of sufficient importance to interest the king, public notice was given that on an appointed day the fate of the accused person would be decided in the king's arena—a structure which well deserved its name; for, although its form and plan were borrowed from afar, its purpose emanated solely from the brain of this man, who, every barleycorn a king,<sup>5</sup> knew no tradition to which he owed more allegiance than pleased his fancy, and who ingrafted on every adopted form of human thought and action the rich growth of his barbaric idealism. **B**

When all the people had assembled in the galleries and the king, surrounded by his court, sat high up on his throne of royal state on one side of the arena, he gave a signal, a door beneath him opened, and the accused subject stepped out into the amphitheater. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side. It was the duty and the privilege of the person on trial to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open either door he pleased; he was subject to no guidance or influence but that of the aforementioned **impartial** and incorruptible chance. If he opened the one, there came out of it a hungry tiger, the fiercest and most cruel that could be procured, which immediately sprang upon him and tore him to pieces, as a punishment for his guilt. The moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate.

But if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady, the most suitable to his years and station that his majesty could select among his fair subjects; and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward for his innocence. It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection: the king allowed no such **subordinate** arrangements to interfere with his great scheme of retribution and reward. The exercises, as in the other instance, took place immediately and in the arena. Another door opened beneath the king, and a priest, followed by a band of choristers

5. **every barleycorn a king**: a playful exaggeration of the expression “every ounce a king,” meaning “thoroughly kingly.” (Grains of barley were formerly used as units of measurement.)

and dancing maidens blowing joyous airs on golden horns and treading an epithalamic measure,<sup>6</sup> advanced to where the pair stood, side by side; and  
 60 the wedding was promptly and cheerily solemnized.<sup>7</sup> Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home.

This was the king's semi-barbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady: he opened either he pleased, without having the slightest idea whether, in the next instant, he was to be devoured or married. On some occasions the tiger came out of one door and on some out of the other. The decisions of this tribunal<sup>8</sup> were not only fair, they were positively  
 70 determinate: the accused person was instantly punished if he found himself guilty; and, if innocent, he was rewarded on the spot, whether he liked it or not. There was no escape from the judgments of the king's arena. **C**

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6. **treading an epithalamic** (ěp'ə-thə-lā'mĭk) **measure:** dancing to wedding music.  
 7. **solemnized** (səł'əm-nĭzd'): celebrated or observed with dignity.  
 8. **tribunal** (trĭ-byōō'nəl): something that has the power to determine guilt or innocence.

### Language Coach

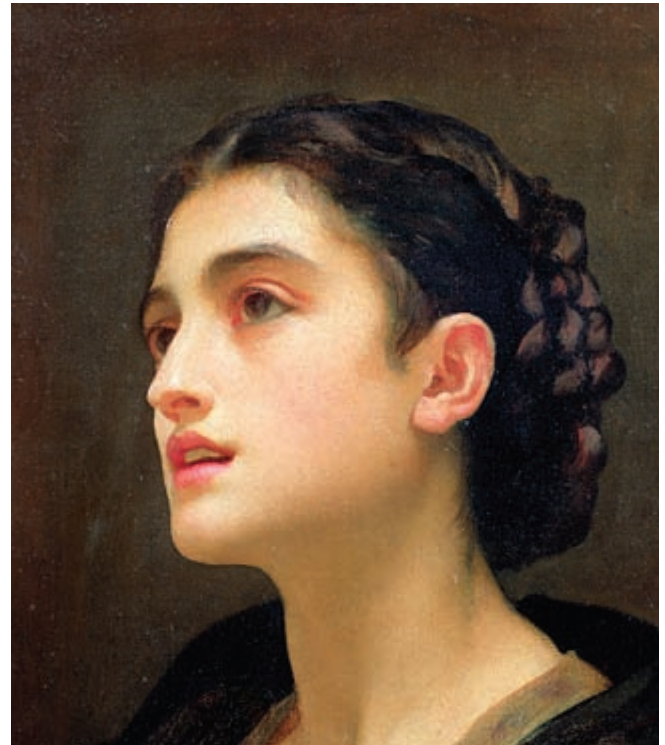
**Connotations** The images or feelings you connect to words are called *connotations*. In line 60, *cheerily* suggests *smiles*, while *solemnized* calls to mind seriousness. Why do you suppose Stockton describes the crowd's behavior at the wedding in such a contradictory way?

### **C** PARAPHRASE

Reread lines 64–72. How would you explain the king's “perfect” system of justice?



*Head Study of a Tiger*, Roland Wheelwright. Oil on board, 49.5 cm × 60.9 cm. Private collection. © Roland Wheelwright/Bridgeman Art Library.



Detail of *Study of a Lady*, Frederic Leighton. Oil on canvas, 25.5 cm × 19 cm. Private collection. © Bridgeman Art Library.

The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus, the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan; for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?

80 **T**his semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent<sup>9</sup> and imperious<sup>10</sup> as his own. As is usual in such cases, she was the apple of his eye and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his courtiers was a young man of that fineness of blood and lowness of station common to the **conventional** heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom; and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love affair moved on happily for many months, until one day the king happened to discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor **waver** in regard to his duty in the premises. The youth was immediately cast into prison, and a day was appointed for his trial in the king's arena. This, of course, was an especially important occasion; and his majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the workings and development of this trial. Never before had such a case occurred; never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of a king. In after-years such things became commonplace enough, but then they were, in no slight degree, novel and startling. **D**

The tiger-cages of the kingdom were searched for the most savage and relentless beasts, from which the fiercest monster might be selected for the arena; and the ranks of maiden youth and beauty throughout the land were 100 carefully surveyed by competent judges, in order that the young man might have a fitting bride in case fate did not determine for him a different destiny. Of course, everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been done. He had loved the princess, and neither he, she, nor any one else thought of denying the fact; but the king would not think of allowing any fact of this kind to interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of; and the king would take an aesthetic<sup>11</sup> pleasure in watching the course of events, which would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess. **E**

110 The appointed day arrived. From far and near the people gathered, and thronged the great galleries of the arena, and crowds, unable to gain admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court were in their places, opposite the twin doors,—those fateful portals, so terrible in their similarity.

### **conventional**

(kən-vən'shə-nəl) *adj.*  
conforming to established practice or accepted standards; traditional

**waver** (wā'vər) *v.*  
to exhibit indecision;  
to hesitate

### **D TONE**

Reread lines 91–96. Stockton describes the citizens as being “greatly interested” in the “novel and startling” events that are unfolding. In what way might this description be **ironic**, stating the opposite of what Stockton believes?

### **E PARAPHRASE**

Reread lines 102–109. What is the young man's fate? Rewrite this passage in your own words.

9. **fervent** (fūr'vənt): having or showing great emotion or zeal.

10. **imperious** (īm-pīr'ē-əs): arrogantly domineering or overbearing.

11. **aesthetic** (ēs-thēt'ĭk): concerning the artistic appreciation of beauty.

All was ready. The signal was given. A door beneath the royal party opened, and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

As the youth advanced into the arena, he turned, as the custom was, to  
 120 bow to the king: but he did not think at all of that royal personage; his eyes were fixed upon the princess, who sat to the right of her father. Had it not been for the moiety<sup>12</sup> of barbarism in her nature, it is probable that lady would not have been there; but her intense and fervid<sup>13</sup> soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. From the moment that the decree had gone forth, that her lover should decide his fate in the king's arena, she had thought of nothing, night or day, but this great event and the various subjects connected with it. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done—she  
 130 had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms, that lay behind those doors, stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the lady. Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person who should approach to raise the latch of one of them; but gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess. **F**

And not only did she know in which room stood the lady ready to emerge, all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court  
 140 who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of **aspiring** to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together; it was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space; it may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know that? The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of the princess; and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of  
 150 wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who blushed and trembled behind that silent door. **G**

When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eyes met hers as she sat there paler and whiter than anyone in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her, he saw, by that power of quick perception which is given to those whose souls are one, that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger, and behind

### **F** TONE

Reread lines 119–136. What is Stockton's attitude toward the princess? Tell what words and details in the passage reveal this attitude.

**aspire** (ə-spīr') v. to have a great ambition or an ultimate goal; to desire strongly

### **G** TONE

Stockton frequently refers to barbarism in this story. What does this reveal about his attitude toward the characters?

12. **moiety** (moi'ī-tē): a portion.

13. **fervid** (fūr'vīd): passionate.



which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it. He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even to the king. The only hope for the youth in which there was any element of certainty was  
160 based upon the success of the princess in discovering this mystery; and the moment he looked upon her, he saw she had succeeded, as in his soul he knew she would succeed.

Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question: “Which?” It was as plain to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a flash; it must be answered in another.



*Cleopatra* (about 1888), John W. Waterhouse. Oil on canvas, 65.4 cm × 56.8 cm. © 2002 Christie's Images Limited.

### ◀ Analyze Visuals

Does the person in this painting match your idea of the princess in the story? Explain why or why not.

Her right arm lay on the cushioned parapet<sup>14</sup> before her. She raised her hand and made a slight, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw her. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena.

170 He turned, and with a firm and rapid step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right and opened it.

**N**ow, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?

The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through **devious** mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon that hot-blooded, 180 semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him? **H**


How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild horror, and covered her face with her hands as she thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the cruel fangs of the tiger!

But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! How in her grievous reveries<sup>15</sup> had she gnashed her teeth, and torn her hair, when she saw his start of rapturous<sup>16</sup> delight as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his 190 whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned!

Would it not be better for him to die at once, and go to wait for her in the blessed regions of semi-barbaric futurity?

And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood!

Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after 200 days and nights of **anguished** deliberation. She had known she would be asked, she had decided what she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation, she had moved her hand to the right.

The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door—the lady, or the tiger? 

**devious** (dē'vĕ-əs) *adj.*  
departing from the straight or direct course



TEKS RC-8(E)

**H PARAPHRASE**

Reread lines 176–181. What is Stockton saying to his readers? Paraphrase this passage in your notebook. Remember that to paraphrase well you will need to reread the passage and then restate the most important ideas and details in your own words. If you have paraphrased the passage well, your paraphrase should be about as long as the original text.

**anguished** (äng'gwĭsh) *adj.* tormented; distressed

14. **parapet** (pär'ə-pĭt): a low railing at the edge of a balcony.

15. **reveries** (rĕv'ə-rĕz): daydreams.

16. **rapturous** (răp'chər-əs): filled with great joy; ecstatic.

## Comprehension

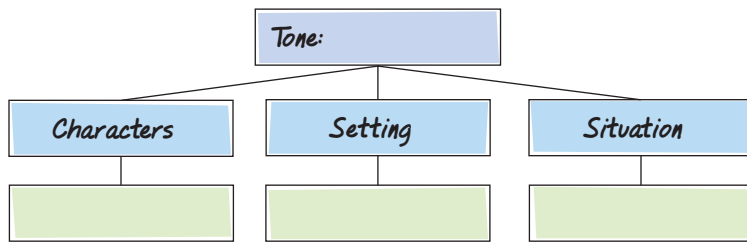
- Recall** How do the citizens of the kingdom feel about the king’s method of justice?
- Recall** What “crime” has the young man committed?
- Represent** Reread lines 21–24 and 33–63. Create a diagram of the arena. Use information from the story to include at least three labels in your diagram.



**READING 6** Make inferences and draw conclusions about the elements of fiction. **RC-8(E)** Paraphrase texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order.

## Literary Analysis

- Examine a Story’s Ending** What was surprising about the way “The Lady, or the Tiger?” ended? Why did you expect something different?
- Identify Tone** Consider the way Frank R. Stockton describes the place, time, characters, events, and customs in this kingdom. Then describe his tone with one of these words: *sarcastic*, *sad*, *serious*, *playful*, *bitter*, *anxious*, *sentimental*, or *curious*. Write the word in the top of a chart like the one shown, and support your choice with words and details about the characters, setting, and situation.



- Explore Paraphrasing** Choose two of the passages you paraphrased in your notebook. What crucial information did you gain from paraphrasing these passages that helped you understand the story?
- Evaluate** Describe the king’s system of “justice.” Is there anything just, or fair, about it? Explain.
- Draw Conclusions** Based on what you know about the princess, which door do you think she **decides** on? Use details from the selection to support your response.

## Extension and Challenge

- Literary Criticism** Frank R. Stockton once said, “If you decide which it was—the lady or the tiger—you find out what kind of person you are yourself.” What might your interpretation of the story show you about yourself and your view of human nature?

### How do you make DECISIONS?

Create a list of ways people commonly make decisions. Be sure to put on your list both the way the princess makes her decision and the way the man who loves her makes his choice.

## Vocabulary in Context

### ▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose the word in each group that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the boldfaced word.

1. **impartial:** (a) unbiased, (b) fair, (c) prejudiced, (d) objective
2. **assert:** (a) deny, (b) claim, (c) declare, (d) stress
3. **subordinate:** (a) beneath, (b) second-in-command, (c) presiding, (d) assisting
4. **conventional:** (a) customary, (b) unusual, (c) accepted, (d) traditional
5. **waver:** (a) hesitate, (b) falter, (c) pause, (d) continue
6. **devious:** (a) straightforward, (b) cunning, (c) sneaky, (d) deceitful
7. **aspire:** (a) plan, (b) hope, (c) attempt, (d) fail
8. **anguished:** (a) tormented, (b) pained, (c) miserable, (d) pleased
9. **progressiveness:** (a) narrow-mindedness, (b) forward-thinking, (c) acceptance, (d) tolerance

### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

• achieve • income • individual • strategy • trend

The young man standing before the two doors has a plan of action in mind. Do you agree with his **strategy**? Explain why or why not in a paragraph, using at least one Academic Vocabulary word.

### VOCABULARY STRATEGY: CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION

A **denotation** is the literal meaning of a word—that is, the definition found in a dictionary. A word's **connotation** is a feeling or attitude linked with a word. Connotations have a big impact on the meaning a word conveys. For example, the vocabulary word *conventional* means “traditional.” But it also connotes “old-fashioned” or “unimaginative.” Recognizing connotations will help you identify the tone of what you read. If you don't recognize the connotations of a word, use context clues to figure them out.

**PRACTICE** Show the difference in the connotations of the word pairs by writing a sentence for each word.

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. bland/simple      | 5. cunning/smart        |
| 2. youthful/immature | 6. adventurous/reckless |
| 3. fierce/strong     | 7. smell/stench         |
| 4. disagree/clash    | 8. grueling/challenging |



**READING 2B** Use context to clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or ambiguous words.

Interactive Vocabulary **THINK** central

Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com).  
KEYWORD: HML8-715