

# English Toolkit: Indicator 3.2.2

## Goal 3.0 Controlling Language

Expectation 3.2 The student will identify how language choices in writing and speaking affect thoughts and feelings.

Indicator 3.2.2 The student will differentiate connotative from denotative meanings of words.

### Assessment Limits:

Determining implied meaning(s) or image(s) associated with a particular word or phrase

- Will not focus on the meaning of above-grade-level words

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## Public Release #1 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 3.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: High Tide in Tucson

Read the essay "High Tide in Tucson." Then answer the following.

Read this sentence from the essay.

But our household had a deficit of males, so my daughter and I chose Buster, for balance.

What is meant by the phrase "deficit of males"?

- The females in the house have more money.
- The females outnumber the males in the house.
- The males spend less time inside the house than outside.
- The males in the house are interested in other things.

## Public Release #2 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 3.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: A Sea Worry

Read the essay "A Sea Worry." Then answer the following:

Read this sentence from the first paragraph.

The ocean pulls at the boys, who turn into surfing addicts.

In this sentence, the phrase "pulls at the boys" suggests that the ocean

- carries the boys out to sea
- creates problems for the boys
- captures the interest of the boys
- causes the boys to act strangely

### Sample Assessment #1 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2003

#### English Indicator 3.2.2

This item should be answered upon reading the essay "Starving Pea Pickers" from *Restless Spirit: The Life and Work of Dorothea Lange* by Elizabeth Partridge. Then answer the following:

Read this sentence from paragraph 12.

She knew she had just recorded the essence of her month-long assignment.

The word *essence* best suggests that the photographs referred to in this paragraph are

- A. imaginative
- B. meaningful
- C. sharp
- D. simple

### Sample Assessment #2 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2003

#### English Indicator 3.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Communication Technology

After reading a novel set in the future, students wrote essays about significant changes that occurred in the last two centuries. Pedro decided to write about changes in communication technology. For the following question, choose the best answer to questions about Pedro's essay. Read Pedro's essay: Communication Technology.

In Sentence 3, which of these phrases is best to use instead of "move technology forward" to suggest that the changes will be occurring rapidly?

- A. push technology ahead
- B. keep technology moving
- C. clear the way for technology
- D. make improvements in technology

### Sample Assessment #3 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2002

#### English Indicator 3.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Tenzing Norgay, Mountain Climber

Read the draft of Michael's report: "Tenzing Norgay, Mountain Climber." Then answer the following:

In Sentence 1, the word *humble* is used to describe Tenzing Norgay. In Sentence 12, *humble* is used to describe his beginnings.

Which pair of words best suggests the two meanings of *humble*

- A. shy . . . polite
- B. modest . . . plain
- C. timid . . . reserved
- D. unimportant . . . quiet

## Handouts

## High Tide in Tucson

by Barbara Kingsolver

A hermit crab lives in my house. Here in the desert he's hiding out from local animal ordinances, at minimum, and maybe even the international laws of native-species transport. For sure, he's an outlaw against nature. So be it.

<sup>2</sup>He arrived as a stowaway two Octobers ago. I had spent a week in the Bahamas, and while I was there, wishing my daughter could see those sparkling blue bays and sandy coves, I did exactly what she would have done: I collected shells. Spiky murexes, smooth purple moon shells, ancient-looking whelks sand-blasted by the tide—I tucked them in the pockets of my shirt and shorts until my lumpy, suspect hemlines gave me away, like a refugee smuggling the family fortune. When it was time to go home, I rinsed my loot in the sink and packed it carefully into a plastic carton, then nested it deep in my suitcase for the journey to Arizona.

I got home in the middle of the night, but couldn't wait till morning to show my hand. I set the carton on the coffee table for my daughter to open. In the dark living room her face glowed, in the way of antique stories about children and treasure. With perfect delicacy she laid the shells out on the table, counting, sorting, designating scientific categories like yellow-striped pinky, Barnacle Bill's pocketbook...Yeek! She let loose a sudden yelp, dropped her booty,<sup>1</sup> and ran to the far end of the room. The largest, knottiest whelk had begun to move around. First it extended one long red talon of a leg, tap-tap-tapping like a blind man's cane. Then came half a dozen more red legs, plus a pair of eyes on stalks, and a purple claw that snapped open and shut in a way that could not mean: We Come in Friendship.

Who could blame this creature? It had fallen asleep to the sound of the Caribbean tide and awakened on a coffee table in Tucson, Arizona, where the nearest standing water source of any real account was the municipal sewage-treatment plant.

With red stiletto legs splayed in all directions, it lunged and jerked its huge shell this way and that, reminding me of the scene I make whenever I'm moved to rearrange the living room sofa by myself. Then, while we watched in stunned reverence, the strange beast found its bearings and began to reveal a determined, crabby grace. It felt its way to the edge of the table and eased itself over, not falling bang to the floor but hanging suspended underneath within the long grasp of its ice-tong legs, lifting any two or three at a time while many others still held in place. In this remarkable fashion it scrambled around the underside of the table's rim, swift and sure and fearless like a rock climber's dream.

If you ask me, when something extraordinary shows up in your life in the middle of the night, you give it a name and make it the best home you can.

The business of naming involved a grasp of hermit-crab gender that was way out of our league. But our household had a deficit of males, so my daughter and I chose Buster, for balance. We gave him a terrarium with clean gravel and a small cactus plant dug out of the yard and a big cockleshell full of tap water. All this seemed to suit him fine. To my astonishment our local pet store carried a product called Vitaminized Hermit Crab Cakes. Tempting enough (till you read the ingredients) but we passed, since our household leans more toward the recycling ethic. We give him leftovers. Buster's rapture is the day I drag the unidentifiable things in cottage cheese containers out of the back of the fridge.

We've also learned to give him a continually changing assortment of seashells, which he tries on and casts off like Cinderella's stepsisters preening for the ball. He'll sometimes try to squeeze into ludicrous outfits too small to contain him (who can't relate?). In other moods, he will disappear into a conch the size of my two fists and sit for a day, immobilized

by the weight of upward mobility. He is in every way the perfect housemate: quiet, entertaining, and willing to eat up the trash. He went to school for first-grade show-and-tell, and was such a hit the principal called up to congratulate me (I think) for being a broad-minded mother.

It was a long time, though, before we began to understand the content of Buster's character. He required more patient observation than we were in the habit of giving to a small, cold-blooded life. As months went by, we would periodically notice with great disappointment that Buster seemed to be dead. Or not entirely dead, but ill, or maybe suffering the crab equivalent of the blues. He would burrow into a gravelly corner, shrink deep into his shell, and not move, for days and days. We'd take him out to play, dunk him in water, offer him a new frock—nothing. He wanted to be still.

Life being what it is, we'd eventually quit prodding our sick friend to cheer up, and would move on to the next stage of a difficult friendship: neglect. We'd ignore him wholesale, only to realize at some point later on that he'd lapsed into hyperactivity. We'd find him ceaselessly patrolling the four corners of his world, turning over rocks, rooting out and dragging around truly disgusting pork-movementschop bones, digging up his cactus and replanting it on its head. At night when the household fell silent I would lie in bed listening to his methodical pebbly racket from the opposite end of the house.

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<sup>1</sup> booty: treasures

"High Tide in Tucson" by Barbara Kingsolver, from *High Tide in Tucson: Essays from Now or Never* by Barbara Kingsolver, copyright © 1995 by Barbara Kingsolver. Reprinted by permission of Frances Goldin Literary Agency.

## A Sea Worry

by Maxine Hong Kingston

THIS SUMMER MY SON body-surfs. He says it's his "job" and rises each morning at 5:30 to catch the bus to Sandy Beach. I hope that by September he will have had enough of the ocean. Tall waves throw surfers against the shallow bottom. Undertows have snatched them away. Sharks prowl Sandy's. Joseph told me that once he got out of the water because he saw an enormous shark. "Did you tell the lifeguard?" I asked. "No." "Why not?" "I didn't want to spoil the surfing." The ocean pulls at the boys, who turn into surfing addicts. At sunset you can see the surfers waiting for the last golden wave.

"Why do you go surfing so often?" I ask my students.

"It feels so good," they say. "Inside the tube, I can't describe it. There are no words for it."

"You can describe it," I scold, and I am very angry. "Everything can be described. Find the words for it, you lazy boy. Why don't you go home and read?" I am afraid that the boys give themselves up to the ocean's mindlessness.

When the waves are up, surfers all over Hawaii don't do their homework. They cut school. They know how the surf is breaking at any moment because every fifteen minutes the reports come over the radio; in fact, one of my former students is the surf reporter.

Some boys leave for mainland colleges, and write their parents heart-rending letters. They beg to come home for Thanksgiving. "If I can just touch the ocean," they write from Missouri and Kansas, "I'll last for the rest of the semester." Some come home for Christmas and don't go back.

Even when the assignment is about something else, the students write about surfing. They try to describe what it is to be inside the wave as it curls over them. Making a tube or "chamber" or "green room" or "pipeline" or "time warp." They write about the silence, the peace, "no hassles," the feeling of being reborn as they shoot out the end. They've written about the perfect wave. Their writing is full of clichés. "The endless summer," they say. "Unreal."

Surfing is like a religion. Among the martyrs are George Helm, Kimo Mitchell, and Eddie Aikau. Helm and Mitchell were lost at sea riding their surfboards from Kaho'olawe, where they had gone to protest the Navy's bombing of that island. Eddie Aikau was a champion surfer and lifeguard. A storm had capsized the *Hokule'a*, the ship that traced the route that the Polynesian ancestors sailed from Tahiti, and Eddie Aikau had set out on his board to get help.

Since the ocean captivates our son, we decided to go with him to Sandy's.

<sup>10</sup>We got up before dawn, picked up his friend, Marty, and drove out of Honolulu. Almost all the traffic was going in the opposite direction, the freeway coned to make more lanes into the city. We came to a place where raw mountains rose on our left and the sea fell on our right, smashing against the cliffs. The strip of cliff pulverized into sand is Sandy's. "Dangerous Current Exist," said the ungrammatical sign.

Earl and I sat on the shore with our blankets and thermos of coffee. Joseph and Marty put on their fins and stood at the edge of the sea for a moment, touching the water with their fingers and crossing their hearts before going in. There were fifteen boys out there, all about the same age, fourteen to twenty, all with the same kind of lean v-shaped build, most of them with black hair that made their wet heads look like sea lions. It was hard to tell whether our kid was one of those who popped up after a big wave. A few had surfboards, which are against the rules at a body-surfing beach, but the lifeguard wasn't on duty that day.

As they watched for the next wave the boys turned toward the ocean. They gazed slightly upward; I thought of altar boys before a great god. When a good wave arrived, they turned, faced shore, and came shooting in, some taking the wave to the right and some to the left, their bodies fish-like, one arm out in front, the hand and fingers pointed before them, like a swordfish's beak. A few held credit card trays, and some slid in on trays from McDonald's.

"That is no country for middle-aged women," I said. We had on bathing suits underneath our clothes in case we felt moved to participate. There were no older men either.

Even from the shore, we could see inside the tubes. Sometimes, when they came at an angle, we saw into them a long way. When the wave dug into the sand, it formed a brown tube or a golden one. The magic ones, though, were made out of just water, green and turquoise rooms, translucent walls and ceiling. I saw one that was powder-blue, perfect, thin; the sun filled it with sky blue and white light. The best thing, the kids say, is when you are in the middle of the tube, and there is water all around you but you're dry.

The waves came in sets; the boys passed up the smaller ones. Inside a big one, you could see their bodies hanging upright, knees bent, duckfeet fins paddling, bodies dangling there in the wave.

Once in a while, we heard a boy yell, "Aa-who!" "Poon tah!" "Aaroo!" And then we noticed how rare a human voice was here; the surfers did not talk, but silently, silently rode the waves.

Since Joseph and Marty were considerate of us, they stopped after two hours, and we took them out for breakfast. We kept asking them how it felt, so they would not lose language.

"Like a stairwell in an apartment building," said Joseph, which I liked immensely. He hasn't been in very many apartment buildings, so had to reach a bit to get the simile. "I saw somebody I knew coming toward me in the tube, and I shouted, 'Jeff. Hey Jeff,' and my voice echoed like a stairwell in an apartment building. Jeff and I came straight at each other—mirror tube."

"Are there ever girls out there?" EarlI asked. "There's a few who come out at about eleven," said Marty.

"How old are they?"

"About twenty."

"Why do you cross your heart with water?"

"So the ocean doesn't kill us."

I describe the powder-blue tube I had seen.

"That part of Sandy's is called Chambers," they said.

I am relieved that the surfers keep asking one another for descriptions. I also find some comfort in the stream of commuter traffic, cars filled with men over twenty, passing Sandy Beach on their way to work.

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## Communication Technology

*Here are the first three paragraphs of Pedro's essay.*

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<sup>1</sup>Every day after school Tyrone talks on the telephone, watches television, sends e-mail to his cousin, and plays music on his compact disc player. <sup>2</sup>Never even thinking about the technology required to make it all happen. <sup>3</sup>The last two centuries saw rapid increases in communication technology, and in the new millennium, inventors will continue to move technology forward.

<sup>4</sup>One of the earliest inventions in communication technology was the telegraph. <sup>5</sup>It had wires but did not carry a voice. <sup>6</sup>Using a metal lever, words were tapped out using short and long electrical impulses. <sup>7</sup>Someone on the receiving end translated the series of sounds into words. <sup>8</sup>This language of dots and dashes was called Morse code. <sup>9</sup>The language worked great, but it was a pain to learn.

<sup>10</sup>Alexander Graham Bell intended to improve the telegraph, but his invention, the telephone, made the telegraph go down the tubes. <sup>11</sup>It took a long time to make it work well. <sup>12</sup>First, thousands of miles of wire had to be installed on poles. <sup>13</sup>Then equipment had to be manufactured and operators needed to be hired.

## Tenzing Norgay, Mountain Climber

<sup>1</sup>Tenzing Norgay, a humble man from India, became famous as a member of the first team to reach the peak of Mt. Everest, Earth's highest mountain. <sup>2</sup>His accomplishments in mountain climbing and his attitude toward life brought him glory.

<sup>3</sup>Young Tenzing Norgay always believed he would have special luck and great achievement. <sup>4</sup>In 1932 he became a carrier for mountain climbers in India. <sup>5</sup>He climbed other mountains, but he remained focused on Everest.

<sup>6</sup>His famous climb occurred in 1953. <sup>7</sup>He made the climb with Sir Edmund Hillary, a beekeeper from New Zealand with a whole bunch of climbing experience. <sup>8</sup>The two men had great confidence in each other; however, this made them a strong team. <sup>9</sup>During the climb, they had to cross a river, navigate an icefall, and cut steps in the snow in order to reach the peak. <sup>10</sup>They wore eight layers of clothing and three pairs of gloves all at the same time.

<sup>11</sup>The team reached the 29,028-foot peak on May 29, 1953, two months after they started their trek.

<sup>12</sup>Tenzing Norgay became a role model for those striving to rise above humble beginnings. <sup>13</sup>His goal in life was to reach the summit of Mt. Everest. <sup>14</sup>He devoted his entire life to this goal. <sup>15</sup>His approach to life served as an inspiration to many other people, including his own son, who later climbed Mt. Everest also.

## English Indicator 3.2.2 Answer Key

Public Release Item #1 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006  
B. The females outnumber the males in the house.

Public Release Item #2 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007  
C. captures the interest of the boys

Sample Assessment Item #1 - Selected Response (SR) - 2003  
B. meaningful

Sample Assessment Item #2 - Selected Response (SR) - 2003  
A. push technology ahead

Sample Assessment Item #3 - Selected Response (SR) - 2002  
B. modest . . . plain