Name _____ Date _____

Shades of Meaning and Connotation: Stubborn, Firm and Persistent

Directions: Every word in this set describes someone or something that keeps going or will not change. The words share a denotation, but their connotations differ. Read each sentence closely to decide how the speaker feels.

1. Three neighbors describe Mr. Okoye, who has tried for eight years to grow a prizewinning pumpkin. One praises his steady effort. Another simply observes that he refuses to give up. A third thinks his refusal to give up is unreasonable. Which list gives the best word for each neighbor to use, in that order?

A. dogged, mulish, stubborn
B. dogged, stubborn, mulish
C. stubborn, mulish, dogged
D. mulish, dogged, stubborn

2. Ms. Ortiz wants her students to see her as steady and fair, not difficult, when she says phones stay in backpacks during every test. Which word describes the way she wants to come across?

A. mulish
B. obstinate
C. firm
D. pigheaded

3. Leo would not switch his science fair topic, even after three friends warned him it was too hard. His proud mom called him *determined*. His annoyed older brother described the same choice with a different word. Which word did the brother most likely use?

A. committed
B. headstrong
C. steadfast
D. dedicated

4. The band director wanted to praise a trumpet player who practiced the hardest solo every day for months until she could play it perfectly. Which word fits the director's praise?

A. obstinate
B. pigheaded
C. tenacious
D. inflexible

5. "Grandpa *stubbornly* refused to trade his old flip phone for a new one, no matter what anyone said."

Which word could replace *stubbornly* to make Grandpa's refusal sound steady and sure instead of difficult?

A. sulkily
B. grumpily
C. defiantly
D. resolutely

6. At the assembly, the principal praised the robotics team as *determined* for rebuilding its robot after every failed test. A rival coach called the same team *bullheaded*. What does the rival coach's word suggest?

A. The coach admires how hard the team works.
B. The coach thinks the team gives up too easily.
C. The coach thinks the team's robot is the fastest one.
D. The coach thinks the team is foolishly refusing to change its plan.

7. *Persistent* can sound admiring or annoyed, depending on what a person keeps doing. In which sentence does the speaker sound annoyed?

A. The *persistent* salesman called the house every evening for two weeks, even after the family said no.

B. The *persistent* volunteers kept cleaning the beach until every bottle was gone.

C. The *persistent* detective kept digging until she solved the old case.

D. Thanks to her *persistent* practice, Mei finally landed a backflip.

8. *Stubborn* usually criticizes, but it can also be a compliment. In which sentence does *stubborn* praise the people it describes?

A. The *stubborn* stain on Dad's shirt would not come out, no matter how hard he scrubbed.

B. The firefighters' *stubborn* courage kept them battling the blaze long after midnight.

C. Ben's *stubborn* refusal to apologize made the argument drag on for days.

D. Her *stubborn* habit of interrupting drove her teammates crazy.

9. "The *willful* puppy kept digging under the fence, no matter how many times Ty called it back."

What feeling does the word *willful* show toward the puppy?

A. Pride in a pet that is brave

B. Worry about a pet that is sick

C. Surprise at a pet that is very fast

D. Frustration with a pet that will not obey

10. "Through months of practice and three straight losses, Coach Lin's belief in her team stayed *unwavering*."

What does the writer's word choice suggest?

A. The writer admires how steady Coach Lin's belief stayed.

B. The writer thinks Coach Lin should have given up.

C. The writer is making fun of Coach Lin.

D. The writer thinks Coach Lin changed her mind every week.