Name _____ Date _____

Nuance: Words with Similar Denotations

Directions: Read each sentence or short exchange closely, paying attention to the attitude that each word carries. Then choose the word or meaning that best fits the context.

1. Two neighbors describe Mr. Okafor, who reuses tea bags and has not bought a new coat in ten years. One calls him *thrifty*, and the other calls him *stingy*. What does the difference between these two words reveal?

A. Both neighbors admire him for saving so carefully.

B. The first neighbor criticizes him, while the second praises him.

C. The first neighbor thinks he is poor, while the second thinks he is secretly rich.

D. The first neighbor admires his careful habits, while the second criticizes him as unwilling to spend or share.

2. Mom sighs that Theo is being "so stubborn" about his science project. Dad replies, "I'd call him ___. He has rebuilt that bridge model thirty times because he wants it to hold the weight." Which word best completes Dad's reply?

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

3. My grandmother still pulls the car over to watch rainbows, and she claps out loud when snow starts to fall. She has a ___ sense of wonder that I hope I never lose. Which word, said of an adult, usually signals approval of that sense of wonder?

A. immature B. childish C. babyish D. childlike

4. One critic wrote that a new film's plot was *simple*. Another critic described the same plot as *simplistic*. How does the second critic's word change the meaning?

A. It suggests that the plot is more confusing than the first critic thought.

B. It suggests that the plot is too simple, as if the film ignores real complexity.

C. It suggests that the plot is clear and easy to follow, which is a strength.

D. It means exactly the same thing as *simple*.

5. Mrs. Dale read the postcards in our mailbox, asked my mother what our new car had cost, and wanted to know who had visited us so late on Friday. I wished she would mind her own business. Which word best describes Mrs. Dale as the speaker sees her?

A. interested B. observant C. inquiring D. nosy

6. The ___ of warm cinnamon bread drifted out of the bakery, and people on the sidewalk slowed down and smiled. Which word itself suggests that the smell is a pleasant one?

A. stench B. odor C. aroma D. reek

7. When I accidentally knocked his lunch tray onto the floor, the boy did not say a word. He just ___ at me, his jaw tight, until I looked away. Which verb best captures the boy's reaction?

A. gazed B. glanced C. glared D. peeked

8. The intersection at Fifth and Main is ___ for its traffic jams, and delivery drivers plan whole routes just to avoid it. Which word itself tells the reader that the intersection is known for something bad?

A. celebrated B. esteemed C. notorious D. acclaimed

9. After the championship game, one newspaper described the fans who poured into the streets as a *crowd*. Another newspaper called the same fans a *mob*. What does the word *mob* suggest about the second newspaper's view of the fans?

A. It sees the fans as joyful and well behaved.

B. It thinks there were fewer fans than the first newspaper reported.

C. It sees the fans as disorderly and possibly dangerous.

D. It is simply using a more exact word for the size of the group.

10. Grandpa still drives his ___ pickup truck to the hardware store every Saturday, and he waxes it twice a month. Which two words would show that the speaker admires the old truck? Select two.

☐ A. decrepit ☐ B. classic ☐ C. vintage

☐ D. rundown ☐ E. outdated