

Connotation and Political Language

A word's dictionary definition is called its *denotation*. A word's *connotation* consists of its emotional associations, the emotions you feel or think when you or read a word.

Connotatively neutral words have few if any of these so they are commonly used to inform, explain, or clarify.

The connotations of some words, however, are so powerful that they overwhelm all a word's denotations. These emotionally charged words can limit or destroy rational discussion and debate; they are often used persuasion. If sufficiently incendiary, demagogues use them to propagandize uncritical minds.