Connotation and Denotation

Read the following groups of words and rank the words in order from positive to negative.

Group 1

Thin, slim, lanky, skinny, gaunt, slender

Group 2

Aggressive, assertive, domineering, dynamic, pushy, forceful

Group 3

Shrewd, egghead, bright, clever, brilliant, cunning, smart, intelligent, brainy

* Connotation represents the various social overtones, cultural implications, or emotional

meanings associated with a sign.

* Denotation represents the explicit or referential meaning of a sign. Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a word, the ‘dictionary definition.’ For example, the name Hollywood’ connotes such things as glitz, glamour, tinsel, celebrity, and dreams of stardom. In the same time, the name ‘Hollywood’ denotes an area of Los Angeles, worldwide known as the center of the American movie industry.

Place the following list of terms in order of Positive, Neutral, or Negative connotation.

1. drug addict, druggie, drug fiend, substance abuser
2. handicapped, crippled, disabled, differently abled
3. horse, steed, nag, plug
4. house, home, abode, domicile, residence, dwelling place
5. thin, slender, slim, skinny, lean, beanpole
6. attractive, pretty, beautiful, handsome, fair
7. reporter, journalist, gossip columnist
8. broadcaster, newshound ,
9. unattractive, plain, dull, ugly
10. learning disabled, dumb unintelligent, academically challenged