

Lesson 20

Negative Connotations

All the words in this lesson may be associated with discrediting a person's character or reputation.

- abase** V. to reduce in prestige or rank; to humble or degrade (Without trying, our society has managed to *abase* its poor.)
- aspersion** N. the act of casting false and injurious charges (Simone felt the remark was an *aspersion* on her character.)
- assail** V. to violently attack physically or verbally (A woman in the audience began to verbally *assail* the speaker and was asked to leave the auditorium.)
- befoul** V. to speak poorly of; to make something seem dirty (Senator Eagleton's opponents tried to *befoul* his reputation by bringing up his bouts of depression.)
- belittle** V. to cause one to feel small or unimportant (Candidates who *belittle* their opponents are themselves generally considered petty politicians.)
- besmirch** V. to dishonor; to soil (The candidate formally protested his opponent's ad campaign, which attempted to *besmirch* his character.)
- calumniate** V. to issue untrue statements about; to misrepresent (Despite efforts to *calumniate* him, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., has always been highly respected.)
- debase** V. to lower a person's character, status, or quality; to degrade (One of poverty's worst effects is its tendency to *debase* its victims.)
- decry** V. to censure or openly express strong disapproval (Many groups call upon all people to *decry* violations of human rights.)
- defamation** N. slander; harm to one's reputation (The publishers were sued for *defamation* of character after an insulting article appeared in their magazine.)
- degraded** ADJ. reduced far below accepted moral standards; humiliated (The waitress felt *degraded* at being required to wear a ridiculous clown costume.)
- demean** V. to degrade; to lower one's dignity (Unlike his cruel colleagues, Joe refused to *demean* Franklin by giving him the worst jobs around the office.)
- denigrate** V. to undermine the importance or integrity of (Women's rights advocates point out how many TV commercials *denigrate* women.)
- ignominious** ADJ. characterized by shame or dishonor; deserving of disgrace (Roman legions suffered an *ignominious* defeat by barbaric tribes of the north.)
- ignominy** N. dishonor; humiliation; disgrace (Following the Civil War, the South suffered *ignominy* at the hands of the carpetbaggers from the North.)
- impute** V. to lay blame or responsibility for something on someone, often unjustly (James tried to *impute* everyone but himself for his poor grades.)
- slanderous** ADJ. having to do with speaking falsely about someone to damage the person's reputation (Unless you can prove your accusation, do not say it, or you could be sued for making a *slanderous* statement.)
- traduce** V. to slander or falsely blame; to expose to shame (These personal memoirs were intended to *traduce* the writer's former colleagues in the White House.)
- villify** V. to slander; to speak evil of (Albert took every opportunity to *villify* his boss.)
- vituperative** ADJ. consisting of abusive verbal comments (The crowd erupted into *vituperative* shouts as the defendant entered the courtroom.)