

# Diction

## Consider:

Most men wear their belts low here, there being so many **outstanding** bellies, some big enough to have names of their own and be formally introduced. Those men don't **suck** them in or hide them in loose shirts; they **let them hang free**, they pat them, they stroke them as they stand around and talk.

— Garrison Keillor, "Home," *Lake Wobegon Days*

## Discuss:

1. What is the usual meaning of *outstanding*? What is its meaning here? What does this pun reveal about the attitude of the author toward his subject?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Read the second sentence again. How would the level of formality change if we changed *suck* to *pull* and *let them hang free* to *accept them*?

## Apply:

Write a sentence or two describing an unattractive but beloved relative. In your description, use words that describe the unattractive features honestly yet reveal that you care about this person, that you accept and even admire him/her, complete with defects. Use Keillor's description as a model. Throw in a pun if you can think of one. Share your description with the class.