

A Spool of Blue Thread

by Anne Tayler

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Contents & Printing Notes

Unlike our most popular resources, this one's auto-selected.
Review before use, or edit the DOCX via "View / Print / Edit Web
Quiz" on the Resources menu.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Answer Key — Preview	2	teacher use / self-check only
Vocabulary Preview	3	

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context	5	
Answer Key — In Context	7	teacher use only

Pages are ordered for double-sided printing.

About the Pre-Reading Activity

Open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade. Students preview 20 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz

Use after reading, or skip. The same words appear in excerpts from the text.

Practice words: competent, condescending, confide, congregation, contemplate, contingent (2), demure, exasperated, imply, insistent, nonchalant, ordinance, ostentatious, serene, shamble, tact, unassuming, vary, wistful



More Vocabulary Printables

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ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	B
2	A
3	A
4	B
5	C
6	A
7	C
8	B
9	C
10	A
11	B
12	B
13	C
14	C
15	B
16	B
17	B
18	B
19	B
20	A

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. She is **competent** on both violin and piano.
 - A. below average
 - B. sufficiently capable
 - C. outstanding
2. She tried to sound supportive, but her advice came across as **condescending**.
 - A. acting superior
 - B. harmful or unhelpful
 - C. sounding uninformed
3. She **confided** in her parents.
 - A. trusted
 - B. didn't trust
 - C. was proud
4. The **congregation** voted to approve appointment of the new minister.
 - A. people who agree
 - B. people who worship together
 - C. people who meet periodically
5. The philosopher **contemplated** the meaning of life, pondering the big questions of existence.
 - A. wrote about
 - B. read about
 - C. thought about
6. We made an offer to buy the house, but the offer is **contingent** upon our selling our existing home before closing the sale on the new one.
 - A. dependent upon
 - B. grouped with things in common
 - C. is better
7. The peacekeeping force includes a British **contingent**.
 - A. leader
 - B. translator
 - C. group
8. She gave a **demure** nod and let her friend do most of the talking.
 - A. sharp and dismissive
 - B. modest and quiet
 - C. confused and nervous
9. My little brother can be **exasperating**. He's always testing his boundaries.
 - A. very active
 - B. endearing (lovable)
 - C. greatly annoying
10. She **implied** that she would vote with us.
 - A. hinted
 - B. insisted
 - C. denied
11. She made an **insistent** request for more time on the project.
 - A. shy and hesitant
 - B. firmly demanding
 - C. unclear and brief

12. How could she be so nonchalant about making him suffer?
- A. dishonest
 - B. unconcerned
 - C. happy
13. The Chicago ordinance required that new streets be laid out with eight streets per mile in one direction and sixteen in the other direction.
- A. custom
 - B. suggestion
 - C. law
14. She arrived in an ostentatious stretch limo.
- A. expensive
 - B. long
 - C. showy
15. She remained serene even when he was yelling at her.
- A. unmoved
 - B. calm
 - C. aggressive
16. After the long hike, he shambled into camp, shoulders slumped and feet dragging.
- A. walked in a proud way
 - B. walked in a shuffling way
 - C. walked in a quick way
17. She means well, but she lacks tact.
- A. a plan
 - B. sensitivity
 - C. ability
18. Despite her fame, she remained unassuming and friendly to everyone.
- A. outgoing
 - B. humble
 - C. insecure
19. McDonald's menu options vary by location.
- A. are consistent
 - B. are different
 - C. are known
20. She had a wistful, dreamy look as she thought about how life would change if she could get a good job.
- A. showing longing
 - B. showing determination
 - C. showing optimism

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 20

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

- 1 Denny proved **competent**, but not so good with the customers.
 - A. sincerity (realness)
 - B. sufficiently capable
 - C. sensible and careful
- 2 All along she had thought of it, but now she grew more **insistent**.
 - A. able to be taken on as one's own
 - B. persistent or continuing or firm
 - C. indicating approval or agreement
- 3 Then she lay down and smoothed her covers and **ostentatiously** closed her eyes, so Red got into bed himself and switched the lamp off.
 - A. in a manner that is supposed (rather than known to be so)
 - B. not in a manner that is able to be promised or guaranteed
 - C. in a manner intended to attract notice and impress others
- 4 She believed devoutly in people's capacity for change, sometimes to the **exasperation** of everyone else in the family.
 - A. relative amount
 - B. in disagreement
 - C. great annoyance
- 5 This was a fact so little known that his own daughter-in-law had to ask his name when she was briefly **contemplating** making her firstborn a III if he turned out to be a boy.
 - A. restarted (a fire)
 - B. wrongly translates
 - C. consider or ponder
- 6 They **implied** illustrious forebears, perhaps on the mother's side.
 - A. suggested (said indirectly)
 - B. not wanting to do something
 - C. was attractive or desirable
- 7 The answer seemed to **vary**.
 - A. influence opinion
 - B. differ; or change
 - C. show or represent
- 8 Junior was probably gloating: all those shiny-haired, **nonchalantly** graceful boys and girls on his porch, when their folks had never invited him and Linnie to their porches, not on a single occasion.
 - A. in a good or beneficial manner
 - B. calmly (appearing unconcerned)
 - C. in a manner that does not stop
- 9 Most people just **tactfully** discarded them, but Marge Ellis brought a whole handful to the Whitshanks' front door, where Red accepted them with a confused look on his face.
 - A. in a pessimistic or disagreeable manner
 - B. in a manner that makes others feel good
 - C. enthusiastically or with great interest
- 10 "It's served us so well," she said **wistfully**.
 - A. with longing or unfulfilled desire
 - B. in a manner that involves betrayal
 - C. following as a result of something
- 11 "Yes, of course," Nora said **serenely**.
 - A. in a pessimistic or disagreeable manner
 - B. in a manner that is calm and untroubled
 - C. enthusiastically or with great interest

- 12 He returned her hug briefly and then bent to pet Brenda, who had struggled to her feet and **shambled** over to nuzzle him.
- A. not learned, discovered, or decided
 - B. walked in an awkward, shuffling way
 - C. blended three or more musical notes
- 13 The other girls had had their hearts set on pre-med students, but evidently one look at **unassuming** Hugh, with his sawdust-colored beard and his tool belt slung low around his hips, had made Jeannie feel instantly at home.
- A. sloped
 - B. humble
 - C. hidden
- 14 Evidently Denny was having one of his unexpectedly **confiding** moments.
- A. placing trust (in someone) by talking about private things
 - B. showing, demonstrating, determining, or causing acceptance
 - C. viewing in a certain way so as to form a belief or opinion
- 15 She saw the way salesclerks treated him lately, how **condescendingly**, speaking to him too loudly and using words of fewer syllables.
- A. in a manner treating others as inferior
 - B. in a pessimistic or disagreeable manner
 - C. enthusiastically or with great interest
- 16 This agreement is **contingent** upon his mother's promise that she will never, ever, for any reason, reveal her identity to her son unless and until she assumes permanent responsibility for him; nor will I reveal it myself.
- A. dependent upon
 - B. clear, easily noticed, and/or identifiable as different or separate
 - C. not capable of being better understood through detailed examination
- 17 The Bouton Road **contingent** was eating supper at her house, now that their pots and dishes were packed, and she had just set a pork roast in front of Amanda's Hugh for carving.
- A. a particular understanding or explanation
 - B. the time during which something continues
 - C. group
- 18 She wore a charcoal knit dress with a **demure** white collar, and black tights and black suede pumps.
- A. tendency to be direct in a disagreeable, insensitive manner
 - B. modest, quiet, and shy; or pretending such in a playful way
 - C. the quality of believing oneself morally superior to others
- 19 Apparently, in the process of rising for the prayer, Jeannie had contrived to cast a backward glance at the **congregation**.
- A. the act, process, or instance of telling a story
 - B. people who worship together in the same building
 - C. a general feeling of not being as good as others
- 20 They're bound to have **ordinances** dealing with this kind of thing.
- A. acts or processes of stopped something from happening
 - B. bands of inelastic tissue connecting a muscle to bone
 - C. a rule or law -- typically enacted by city government

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	WORD	NOTE
1	B	competent	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this book.
2	B	insistent	Used 4 times in this book.
3	C	ostentatious	High-utility academic word; used 4 times in this book.
4	C	exasperated	High-utility academic word; used 4 times in this book.
5	C	contemplate	Used 3 times in this book.
6	A	imply	High-utility academic word; used 5 times in this book.
7	B	vary	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this book.
8	B	nonchalant	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this book.
9	B	tact	High-utility academic word; used 4 times in this book.
10	A	wistful	Used 3 times in this book.
11	B	serene	Used 4 times in this book.
12	B	shamble (<i>as in: she shambled along</i>)	Used 3 times in this book.
13	B	unassuming	Used 4 times in this book.
14	A	confide	High-utility academic word; used 5 times in this book.
15	A	condescending	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this book.
16	A	contingent (<i>as in: contingent upon</i>)	2 meanings in this book.
17	C	contingent (<i>as in: the Canadian contingent</i>)	2 meanings in this book.
18	B	demure	Used 3 times in this book.
19	B	congregation (<i>as in: the congregation voted</i>)	High-utility academic word; used 6 times in this book.
20	C	ordinance (<i>as in: passed the ordinance</i>)	Used 3 times in this book.