

Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat

by Winston Churchill

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: conceived, confidence, entitled, ordeal, principal, reconstruction, summoned, toil, undertaking, wage

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 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):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.



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Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. The bridge was **conceived** as a link between two neighborhoods.

- A. planned or designed
- B. built or constructed
- C. approved or funded

2. The board voted to declare its **confidence** in the new director.

- A. strong interest in someone
- B. personal pride in someone
- C. formal trust in someone

3. Season ticket holders are **entitled** to enter an hour early.

- A. eager to do something
- B. having the right to something
- C. required to do something

4. The week-long search became an **ordeal** for the whole family.

- A. a puzzling mystery
- B. a costly mistake
- C. a severe, painful trial

5. The **principal** reason for the delay was a snowstorm in the mountains.

- A. most surprising
- B. most important
- C. most recent

6. The **reconstruction** of the company left few departments unchanged.

- A. a reorganizing or rebuilding
- B. a careful inspection
- C. a temporary shutdown

7. The whole council was **summoned** on a Sunday afternoon.

- A. officially called together
- B. given a formal warning
- C. moved to a new building

8. The harvest was brought in only after months of **toil**.

- A. careful planning
- B. hard, exhausting labor
- C. patient waiting

9. Organizing the fair proved to be a bigger **undertaking** than anyone expected.

- A. a demanding task taken on
- B. a financial expense
- C. a public celebration

10. The city decided to **wage** a campaign against litter.

- A. to plan out in advance
- B. to pay for or fund
- C. to carry on or conduct

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

the late Government — Here 'late' means former — the government just replaced, not a recent one and not a dead one.

the Opposition — In Parliament, the official name for the parties out of power — a recognized body, not merely people who disagree.

War Cabinet — A small group of senior ministers who run a country's war effort — five members here, in place of the usual full cabinet.

buoyancy — Cheerful confidence — a lift of spirits, not the physics sense of floating.

suffered to fail — Allowed to fail. The older sense of 'suffer' is to permit, not to endure.

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	A
2	C
3	B
4	C
5	B
6	A
7	A
8	B
9	A
10	C

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 *"It was the evident wish and will of Parliament and the nation that this should be conceived on the broadest possible basis and that it should include all parties ..."*

As used in the passage, the word 'conceived' most nearly means...

- A. planned or designed
- B. approved by a vote
- C. announced to the public

2 *"I hope to complete the appointment of the principal Ministers during tomorrow. The appointment of the other Ministers usually takes a little longer ..."*

According to the passage, the Ministers Churchill hopes to appoint by tomorrow are...

- A. the most important ones
- B. the longest-serving ones
- C. the newly promoted ones

3 *"Sir, I considered it in the public interest to suggest that the House should be summoned to meet today."*

According to the passage, Churchill suggested that the House...

- A. be consulted on the appointments
- B. be invited to meet informally
- C. be officially called to assemble

4 *"I now invite the House, by the Resolution which stands in my name, to record its approval of the steps taken and to declare its confidence in the new Government."*

In the excerpt, the invitation to 'declare its confidence' primarily functions to...

- A. promise that victory is certain
- B. reveal secret plans to Members
- C. seek the House's formal backing

5 *"Sir, to form an Administration of this scale and complexity is a serious undertaking in itself, but it must be remembered that we are in the preliminary stage of one of the greatest battles in history ..."*

In the excerpt, calling the task 'a serious undertaking in itself' primarily functions to...

- A. boast of how quickly it was done
- B. set the task against the larger war
- C. ask the House for extra time

6 *"I hope that any of my friends and colleagues, or former colleagues, who are affected by the political reconstruction, will make all allowances for any lack of ceremony with which it has been necessary to act."*

It can reasonably be inferred that the political 'reconstruction' has...

- A. won unanimous praise in the House
- B. cost some officials their posts
- C. begun repairing damaged buildings

7 *"I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined the government: 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.'"*

The speaker's attitude in promising 'blood, toil, tears and sweat' is best described as...

- A. unsparing honesty about hardship
- B. despair at the struggle ahead
- C. bitter resentment of his burden

8 *"We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering."*

As used in the passage, the word 'ordeal' most nearly means...

- A. a sudden defeat in battle
- B. a severe and painful trial
- C. an unwanted duty or chore

9 *"You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us ..."*

According to the passage, the Government's policy is to...

- A. fight the war with all its strength
- B. raise the pay of the armed services
- C. negotiate an end to the tyranny

10 *"At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say, 'Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength.'"*

As used in the passage, the word 'entitled' most nearly suggests that Churchill...

- A. feels superior to other Members
- B. has been given a new official title
- C. may rightfully call on everyone's help

ANSWER KEY
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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	A	
3	C	
4	C	'Confidence' here is the parliamentary sense — the House's formal trust in a government — not self-assurance.
5	B	
6	B	
7	A	
8	B	
9	A	
10	C	Targets the neutral sense 'having a right'; students mostly know the word as an insult.