

Do You Speak American?

by Robert MacNeil and William Crane

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

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OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

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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: adapt, assimilate, context, dialect, diversity, gender, idiom, innovate, jargon, linguist, linguistic, migrate, negative (2), ordinance, paradigm, prejudice, satire, synthetic, urban



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ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	C
2	A
3	C
4	A
5	B
6	C
7	B
8	A
9	A
10	C
11	C
12	C
13	A
14	C
15	A
16	C
17	C
18	C
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. This passage is **adapted** from Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* ©1952.
 - A. copied
 - B. read
 - C. changed
2. The immigrants worked hard to **assimilate** the customs of their new homeland.
 - A. absorb and adopt
 - B. openly reject
 - C. secretly mock
3. India has twenty-two officially recognized languages and thousands of **dialects**.
 - A. different ethnic groups
 - B. words shared by different languages
 - C. regional varieties of languages
4. The team values **diversity** of thought and welcomes different perspectives.
 - A. variety of differences
 - B. agreement on principles
 - C. loyalty to tradition
5. The court found the company guilty of **gender** discrimination.
 - A. religious
 - B. male/female/trans
 - C. race or ethnic
6. She was not familiar with the **idiom**, "bite the bullet."
 - A. a type of figurative language that uses words in a non-literal way to create a vivid or imaginative description
 - B. an expression that is unique to a particular language or dialect and cannot be translated directly into another language
 - C. an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of the words that make it up
7. Companies must **innovate** quickly to stay ahead of their competitors.
 - A. follow old rules
 - B. create new methods
 - C. imitate rivals
8. The legal **jargon** in the contract was so complex that the client had to hire a lawyer to interpret it.
 - A. special vocabulary
 - B. complex ideas
 - C. underlying philosophy
9. A forensic **linguist** testified that the latest will appears to have been authored by someone else.
 - A. someone who specializes in the study of language
 - B. a period of time or a stage during the development of something
 - C. an optical device that produces an intense narrow beam of light
10. Indonesia has hundreds of ethnic and **linguistic** groups.
 - A. racial
 - B. religious
 - C. language
11. Many Germans **migrated** to South America in the mid-19th century
 - A. flew toward
 - B. flew away
 - C. moved

12. Higher gasoline prices **negatively** affected fast food sales.
- A. in a helpful manner
 - B. surprisingly
 - C. in a harmful manner
13. We're getting a lot of **negative** feedback about the proposed changes.
- A. indicating criticism or disagreement
 - B. indicating popular support
 - C. harmful
14. 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
15. She quoted him **out of context**.
- A. in a misleading manner
 - B. in a convincing manner
 - C. in a respectful manner
16. Since then, there's been a **paradigm** shift, and we have a new way of thinking about such things.
- A. technological breakthrough
 - B. social trend
 - C. conceptual model
17. Seeing the defendant wear prison clothes may **prejudice** the jury against the defendant.
- A. create a sympathetic belief in
 - B. create a serious attitude in
 - C. create an unfair belief in
18. Through **satire**, the cartoon exposed how ridiculous the new policy looked in practice.
- A. literal description
 - B. factual reporting
 - C. humorous criticism
19. They are trying to make a good **synthetic** fabric that breathes better than cotton.
- A. durable
 - B. man-made
 - C. insulating
20. Urban neighborhoods often have more buses and sidewalks than rural areas.
- A. related to a city
 - B. related to farming
 - C. related to weather

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 But if our language stopped changing it would mean that American society had ceased to be dynamic, **innovative**, pulsing with life—that the great river had frozen up.
A. greater than zero
B. new and different
C. not demonstrating
- 2 Linguists would challenge Prince Charles on two grounds: First, the concept of "words that shouldn't be" is alien to the freedom inherent in English.
A. language specialists
B. ways of doing things
C. acts of hiring again
- 3 To communicate all of this, American language **adapts**.
A. makes different; or shows difference
B. declares invalid; or ends or cancels
C. changes to fit a different situation
- 4 Think, for example, of how you guys has now become a generic form of address: it is **gender-**, **age-**, and **class-neutral**, and decidedly informal.
A. an official charge (of having broken the law)
B. male, female, or any of many trans categories
C. quick, informal vote to see what people think
- 5 Surfer Dude or Valley Girl, the **urban** black language of hip-hop artists, or any of a dozen other regional or ethnic dialects that together constitute American English—some of them barely intelligible to one another?
A. city
B. real
C. wise
- 6 Some regional **dialects** have long enjoyed prestige; others suffer from generations of prejudice.
A. measures of general intelligence
B. wedding ceremony and festivities
C. regional varieties of a language
- 7 Some regional dialects have long enjoyed prestige; others suffer from generations of **prejudice**.
A. fear, or anticipate with worry (commonly only seen in the forms "apprehensive" and "apprehension," but seen in this form in classic literature)
B. to expression feelings or thoughts enthusiastically OR to squirt or give off (typically under pressure such as blood or leaking gas)
C. bias that prevents objective consideration -- especially an unreasonable belief that is unfair to members of a race, religion, or other group
- 8 In the right **context**, a split infinitive can look like the end of civilization as we know it.
A. the setting or situation in which something occurs
B. the act of interacting or getting interested again
C. an image (seen on a mirror or other shiny surface)
- 9 Away from that intellectual battleground, ordinary Americans can be either gloriously relaxed about their language or, to use the popular **idiom**, decidedly uptight.
A. microorganisms (living creatures so small it takes a microscope to see them)
B. the smallest part of any material that cannot be broken up by chemical means
C. a way of putting things that is characteristic of a specific group of people
- 10 He believes that coming to a language late can be an advantage, because one brings better credentials, **linguistic**, cultural, and emotional.
A. not done on purpose
B. not straightforward
C. related to language

- 11 Simon's own strong emotions about the state of American English came to national attention in 1980 with his book **Paradigms Lost: Reflections on Literacy and Its Decline**.
- A. unties or releases
 - B. sharp hooked claws
 - C. a conceptual model
- 12 Take the common American expression *come clean*, to tell or confess everything, which originated in *cant*, or *underworld jargon*, and emerged as common slang in the 1920s.
- A. specialized vocabulary
 - B. mirror back (an image)
 - C. create dramatic change
- 13 Paradoxically, the truth seems to be that, where change occurs, it is often creating more **diversity**, not less.
- A. the condition of variety -- especially in reference to members of a population group who are of different races or cultures
 - B. classical music in which a theme is introduced and then extended and developed through some number of successive imitations
 - C. the ability and tendency to determine what should be done and to start doing it without instruction; or to start something
- 14 Some distinctive expressions have been on the rise—for example, the use of *weren't* for the past tense in **negative** sentences regardless of subject person or number, such as "weren't me," or "She weren't home."
- A. saying "no"
 - B. to be most powerful, important, or noticeable
 - C. argument -- typically over unimportant things
- 15 These **negative** attitudes find their focus in attacks on minority languages, which are all too obviously *badges of ethnicity*.
- A. tell (a story)
 - B. begin fighting
 - C. bad or harmful
- 16 In the 1720s, when they began **migrating** to America in large numbers, many landed in Philadelphia.
- A. selecting (on a computer screen)
 - B. limiting or acting as a boundary
 - C. moving from one place to another
- 17 Many authorities claimed that the nation could no longer **assimilate** immigrants in such numbers as in the past.
- A. take in, transform, or fit in
 - B. preserve an ancestral culture
 - C. understand a prevailing culture
- 18 Recently *La Cucaracha* has emerged as the title and chief character, a human-size cockroach, of a **satirical** cartoon strip syndicated in more than sixty American newspapers.
- A. full of anger or unhappiness at having to accept something not liked
 - B. relating to expert judgement of what is good and bad about something
 - C. a way of making fun of people or ideas -- often through exaggeration
- 19 Wall faulted Bush, as governor of Texas, for not taking action, like cutting off state funds, after the El Cenizo **ordinance**.
- A. an expert in the branch of geology that studies rocks
 - B. someone who exposes wrongdoing within an organization
 - C. a rule or law -- typically enacted by city government
- 20 They thought to solve it by substituting **synthetic** voices so clearly nonhuman that people would not succumb to gender stereotypes, but people still did.
- A. title for the head of a government body in some countries
 - B. artificial (man-made rather than natural); or not genuine
 - C. an unborn child (or other unborn or unhatched vertebrate)

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	WORD	NOTE
1	B	innovate	High-utility academic word; used 7 times in this book.
2	A	linguist	Used 85 times in this book.
3	C	adapt (<i>as in: adapted to the new rules</i>)	High-utility academic word; used 6 times in this book.
4	B	gender (<i>as in: gender discrimination</i>)	High-utility academic word; used 12 times in this book.
5	A	urban	Used 12 times in this book.
6	C	dialect	Used 135 times in this book.
7	C	prejudice	Used 10 times in this book.
8	A	context	High-utility academic word; used 7 times in this book.
9	C	idiom	Used 7 times in this book.
10	C	linguistic	Used 45 times in this book.
11	C	paradigm	Used 2 times in this book.
12	A	jargon	Used 6 times in this book.
13	A	diversity	Used 11 times in this book.
14	A	negative (<i>as in: negative feedback from customers</i>)	High-utility academic word; 3 meanings in this book.
15	C	negative (<i>as in: had a negative effect</i>)	High-utility academic word; 3 meanings in this book.
16	C	migrate	Used 14 times in this book.
17	A	assimilate	High-utility academic word; used 17 times in this book.
18	C	satire (<i>as in: wrote a satire</i>)	Used 4 times in this book.
19	C	ordinance (<i>as in: passed the ordinance</i>)	Used 5 times in this book.
20	B	synthetic	Used 9 times in this book.