

Frankenstein

Introductory Letters and Chapters 1–5

by Mary Shelley

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: ardour, convulsive, countenance, crucible, emaciated, inexorable, paroxysm, precept, predilection, sublime

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.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · Introductory Letters and Chapters 1–5 · Letters from an Arctic voyage

Section 2 · Chapters 6–10 · Recovery and a letter from home

Section 3 · Chapters 11–16 · The creature tells his own story

Section 4 · Chapters 17–20 · Victor weighs the creature's demand

Section 5 · Chapters 21–24 · Landing on an unknown shore

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. She threw herself into the new project with great **ardour**.

- A. calm patience
- B. stubborn pride
- C. passion and eagerness

2. A **convulsive** sob shook her shoulders when she heard the news.

- A. sudden and spasmodic
- B. soft and muffled
- C. long and weary

3. His calm **countenance** reassured the frightened children.

- A. a person's face
- B. a person's manner
- C. a person's voice

4. The chemist heated the powdered ore in a **crucible** over the open flame.

- A. a tray for drying samples
- B. a vessel for melting metals
- C. a flask for storing liquids

5. Months of illness had left the once-strong man **emaciated**.

- A. pale and feverish
- B. extremely thin and weak
- C. bruised and aching

6. Despite all our protests, the manager remained **inexorable**.

- A. anxious and unsure
- B. firm and unyielding
- C. calm and cheerful

7. A **paroxysm** of laughter left the whole room gasping for breath.

- A. a sudden, violent fit
- B. a long, slow build
- C. a gentle, rolling wave

8. He could recite the **precept** but rarely followed it himself.

- A. a well-rehearsed excuse
- B. a stern warning of danger
- C. a guiding rule or principle

9. From childhood she showed a **predilection** for solving puzzles.

- A. a passing curiosity
- B. a natural talent
- C. a special liking

10. From the summit we gazed at the **sublime** sweep of the valley below.

- A. grand and awe-inspiring
- B. neat and orderly
- C. quiet and peaceful

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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

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 *“But the old man decidedly refused, ... when he found the father inexorable, quitted his country, nor returned until he heard that his former mistress was married according to her inclinations.”*

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘inexorable’ most nearly suggests that the girl’s father...

- A. would not be swayed
- B. had a change of heart
- C. was driven by greed

2 *“His limbs were nearly frozen, and his body dreadfully emaciated by fatigue and suffering. I never saw a man in so wretched a condition.”*

The passage most strongly suggests that the stranger’s body had...

- A. wasted to extreme thinness
- B. swollen from frostbite
- C. been badly beaten

3 *“... if anyone performs an act of kindness towards him ... his whole countenance is lighted up, as it were, with a beam of benevolence and sweetness that I never saw equalled.”*

In the passage, the stranger’s changing countenance reveals a man who is...

- A. usually merry and carefree
- B. cold toward the sailors
- C. gentle despite his sorrow

4 *“Such words, you may imagine, strongly excited my curiosity; but the paroxysm of grief that had seized the stranger overcame his weakened powers, ... restore his composure.”*

In context, the word ‘paroxysm’ emphasizes...

- A. a calm, settled sorrow
- B. a sudden, violent fit of grief
- C. a slow, lasting sadness

5 *“... in the majestic and wondrous scenes which surrounded our Swiss home—the sublime shapes of the mountains ... she found ample scope for admiration and delight.”*

The mention of the ‘sublime’ mountain scenery primarily functions to...

- A. warn of the Alps’ dangers
- B. show nature’s awe-inspiring grandeur
- C. mark the change of seasons

6 *“Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate; ... those facts which led to my predilection for that science.”*

According to the passage, Victor sets out to explain the facts that led to his...

- A. strong liking for that science
- B. brief, passing interest
- C. deep distrust of science

7 *“The ancient teachers of this science promised impossibilities and performed nothing. The modern masters promise very little ... but these philosophers, whose hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pore over the microscope or crucible, have indeed performed miracles. ... even mock the invisible world with its own shadows.”*

Waldman pictures scientists poring over the crucible in order to...

- A. warn against studying chemistry
- B. mock their lowly, dirty work
- C. stress their patient labor

8 *“Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is ... will allow.”*

It can reasonably be inferred that Victor believes Walton will learn more from his...

- A. books than his teachers
- B. rules than his example
- C. example than his rules

9 *“These thoughts supported my spirits, while I pursued my undertaking with unremitting ardour.”*

Which choice best describes Victor’s attitude toward his work as he builds the creature?

- A. calm, detached interest
- B. burning, single-minded zeal
- C. weary, reluctant duty

10 *“It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. ... by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.”*

The passage most strongly suggests that the creature’s first movements were...

- A. sudden, involuntary jerks
- B. smooth, deliberate motions
- C. faint, barely seen stirrings

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	A	
3	C	Character comprehension. His countenance brightens only at kindness; the section shows him otherwise melancholy, so 'merry and carefree' is wrong.
4	B	
5	B	
6	A	
7	C	A crucible is a vessel for melting metals; its figurative sense, a severe test, is worth previewing.
8	C	The key turns on precept (a taught rule) versus example (a lived demonstration).
9	B	
10	A	

Teacher Context: Introductory Letters and Chapters 1-5

Robert Walton's letters to his sister frame the novel from his Arctic expedition, where he rescues Victor Frankenstein. Victor recounts his Geneva childhood, his bond with Elizabeth and Clerval, his mother's death, and his studies at Ingolstadt, ending with his discovery of the secret of life and the creation and animation of the creature, from which he recoils in horror. Section ends after the creation and Victor's collapse, the novel's iconic turning point.