

Frankenstein

Chapters 17–20

by Mary Shelley

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: abhor, atrocious, calamity, condescension, harrowing, insurmountable, melancholy, precarious, repugnance, shun

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. I **abhor** the smell of rotten eggs.

- A. to detest utterly
- B. to dislike mildly
- C. to feel uneasy about

2. The dictator was condemned for his **atrocious** crimes against civilians.

- A. frequently repeated
- B. shockingly cruel
- C. cleverly planned

3. The flood was the worst **calamity** the town had seen in decades.

- A. a shortage
- B. a scandal
- C. a disaster

4. She thanked the volunteers with a faint **condescension** in her voice.

- A. an air of superiority
- B. a note of gratitude
- C. a hint of impatience

5. The survivors described their **harrowing** escape from the burning building.

- A. long and exhausting
- B. thrilling and exciting
- C. deeply distressing

6. The young climbers faced an **insurmountable** wall of ice.

- A. impossible to overcome
- B. very slippery
- C. extremely tall

7. A quiet **melancholy** settled over her as autumn turned the leaves brown.

- A. deep, lasting sadness
- B. sharp irritation
- C. restless energy

8. The hikers inched along the **precarious** ledge high above the canyon.

- A. steep and rocky
- B. dangerously unstable
- C. narrow and winding

9. She felt a deep **repugnance** as she cleaned the maggot-filled trash bin.

- A. sudden weariness
- B. intense disgust
- C. quiet curiosity

10. After the scandal, his old friends began to **shun** him at every gathering.

- A. to openly mock
- B. to quietly pity
- C. to deliberately avoid

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

ennui — a feeling of weary, dissatisfied boredom.

tormentor — one who inflicts torment or suffering; here, the creature names his maker 'my tyrant and tormentor' as he vows revenge -- the famous threat 'I shall be with you on your wedding-night.'

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	A
2	B
3	C
4	A
5	C
6	A
7	A
8	B
9	B
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 “You are in the wrong,” replied the fiend; “and instead of threatening, I am content to reason with you. I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind?”

As it is used in the passage, “shunned” most nearly means that the creature is...

- A. feared and obeyed by all
- B. avoided and rejected by all
- C. pitied and excused by all

2 “Yet even thus I loved them to adoration; and to save them, I resolved to dedicate myself to my most abhorred task.”

The passage most strongly suggests that Victor takes up his “abhorred task” because...

- A. he craves scientific fame
- B. he enjoys the gruesome work
- C. he loves his family deeply

3 “I feared the vengeance of the disappointed fiend, yet I was unable to overcome my repugnance to the task which was enjoined me.”

According to the passage, Victor’s “repugnance to the task” leads him to...

- A. put off and avoid the work
- B. beg his father for help
- C. rush to finish it quickly

4 “I was aware also that I should often lose all self-command, all capacity of hiding the harrowing sensations that would possess me during the progress of my unearthly occupation.”

The author most likely calls Victor’s sensations “harrowing” in order to...

- A. emphasize his pride in the work
- B. show how he enjoys the secrecy
- C. stress how deeply the work pains him

5 “After so long a period of an absorbing melancholy that resembled madness in its intensity and effects ...”

It can reasonably be inferred that Victor’s “melancholy” was...

- A. a brief, passing low mood
- B. severe enough to unsettle his mind
- C. brought on by physical illness

6 “I saw an insurmountable barrier placed between me and my fellow men; this barrier was sealed with the blood of William and Justine...”

Monsieur Frankenstein’s image of an “insurmountable barrier” primarily functions to...

- A. show his guilt cuts him off from others
- B. prove the barrier will soon be crossed
- C. describe a real wall outside London

7 “Even if they were to leave Europe and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror.”

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. A new race could endanger all humanity
- B. Mankind would soon destroy the new race
- C. The creatures would live peacefully apart

8 “Slave, I before reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension. Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master; obey!”

Which choice best describes the creature’s attitude toward Victor in this excerpt?

- A. humble gratitude toward his maker
- B. lofty superiority over his maker
- C. cautious respect for his maker

9 “I had resolved in my own mind that to create another like the fiend I had first made would be an act of the basest and most atrocious selfishness ...”

Which choice best describes Victor’s attitude toward creating a second creature?

- A. reluctant but dutiful acceptance
- B. cautious scientific curiosity
- C. moral revulsion at its wickedness

10 “Little did I then expect the calamity that was in a few moments to overwhelm me and extinguish in horror and despair all fear of ignominy or death.”

Which choice best describes this sentence?

- A. it foreshadows a coming disaster
- B. it resolves the scene’s tension
- C. it recalls a past relief

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	C	
3	A	
4	C	
5	B	
6	A	Event comprehension. The barrier's permanence rests on Victor's guilt over the earlier deaths of William and Justine, named in the excerpt.
7	A	Theme comprehension. Victor's dread turns on the section's reckoning with the consequences of loosing a new race upon humankind.
8	B	Character comprehension. The creature has reversed roles from the pleading supplicant earlier in the section to the dominating master here.
9	C	
10	A	Event comprehension. The 'calamity' is the accusation awaiting Victor, who has just been seized and taken before the magistrate over a murder.

Teacher Context: Chapters 17–20

Pressed by the creature's arguments, Victor reluctantly agrees to create a female. He travels through England and Scotland with Clerval and withdraws to a remote Orkney island to work, but, fearing the consequences, destroys the half-finished creature. The creature vows revenge with the threat to be with Victor on his wedding night. Section ends on that threat, the break before the cascade of retribution.