

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

Chapters 10–16

by Harriet Jacobs

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: abject, avarice, condescended, consternation, epithet, impunity, insurrection, mortification, sanctimonious, sophistry

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 · Chapters 1–9 · Linda's childhood and family

Section 2 · Chapters 10–16 · A young woman's perilous years

Section 3 · Chapters 17–23 · The flight and life in hiding

Section 4 · Chapters 24–30 · The long wait in hiding

Section 5 · Chapters 31–41 and Appendix · A new life in the North

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. After losing everything, he lived in **abject** poverty.
 - A. recent and temporary
 - B. barely noticeable
 - C. utterly hopeless and extreme
2. His **avarice** drove him to cheat his own brother out of the inheritance.
 - A. extreme greed for wealth
 - B. reckless pride
 - C. fierce jealousy
3. The famous chef **condescended** to taste the student's simple soup.
 - A. grudgingly obeyed an order
 - B. happily helped, as an equal
 - C. stooped to it, acting superior
4. To her **consternation**, the train left ten minutes early.
 - A. dismay and alarm
 - B. puzzled curiosity
 - C. bitter resentment
5. The angry driver shouted an **epithet** at the other car.
 - A. an insulting name
 - B. a loud command
 - C. an urgent warning
6. The corrupt official broke the law with **impunity** for years.
 - A. complete secrecy
 - B. freedom from punishment
 - C. obvious enjoyment
7. Fearing **insurrection**, the king doubled the guards around the palace.
 - A. a plot to assassinate the ruler
 - B. a violent uprising or rebellion
 - C. an invasion by a foreign army
8. Tripping in front of the whole school filled him with **mortification**.
 - A. deep humiliation
 - B. sudden anger
 - C. physical pain
9. His **sanctimonious** tone made the long lecture hard to sit through.
 - A. dull and droning
 - B. sharp and impatient
 - C. preachy and self-righteous
10. The salesman's **sophistry** almost convinced us to buy the broken car.
 - A. smooth flattery and charm
 - B. clever but deceptive reasoning
 - C. loud, stubborn arguing

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

vent one's spleen — to express pent-up anger; 'spleen' here means bad temper

communion — the Christian rite of sharing bread and wine

difference between Christianity and religion — Jacob points to an outward show of religious devotion without sincere belief or moral goodness

ANSWER KEY

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

Vocabulary in Context
Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

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

1 *“There may be sophistry in all this; but the condition of a slave confuses all principles of morality, and, in fact, renders the practice of them impossible.”*

As it is used in the passage, ‘sophistry’ most nearly suggests that the narrator’s reasoning may be...

- A. subtly false but persuasive
- B. completely honest and plain
- C. cold and heartless

2 *“He even condescended to pity me. Could he have offered wormwood more bitter?”*

In the passage, Dr. Flint is characterized as...

- A. humbly apologetic
- B. warmly compassionate
- C. smugly superior

3 *“Not far from this time Nat Turner’s insurrection broke out; and the news threw our town into great commotion.”*

It can reasonably be inferred that the insurrection led directly to...

- A. a period of calm and relief
- B. brutal reprisals on the enslaved
- C. new freedoms for the enslaved

4 *“The consternation was universal. No two people that had the slightest tinge of color in their faces dared to be seen talking together.”*

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. convey the community’s deep dread
- B. report a brief, minor disturbance
- C. show the community’s bold defiance

5 *“... the most shocking outrages were committed with perfect impunity.”*

The passage most strongly suggests that the patrols...

- A. feared no punishment for their cruelty
- B. showed mercy to their victims
- C. were punished for their cruelty

6 *“Many of them are sincere, and nearer to the gate of heaven than sanctimonious Mr. Pike, and other long-faced Christians, who see wounded Samaritans, and pass by on the other side.”*

Which choice best describes the narrator’s attitude toward Mr. Pike?

- A. pity for his troubled conscience
- B. respect for his sincere faith
- C. scorn for his hollow piety

7 *“... thus taking care that licentiousness shall not interfere with avarice.”*

The author most likely points to this law in order to...

- A. praise the law’s careful fairness
- B. expose how greed shaped slave law
- C. explain a minor legal formality

8 *“Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own.”*

Which choice best describes how the excerpt functions in the text as a whole?

- A. highlights women’s deep humiliations
- B. contrasts men’s and women’s labor
- C. recounts a single painful event

9 *“... while I stood before him, trembling with weakness, he heaped upon me and my little one every vile epithet he could think of.”*

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

- A. the formal titles he used
- B. the calm threats he made
- C. the abusive names he hurled

10 *“... it was a good place to break us all in to abject submission to our lot as slaves.”*

According to the passage, the Flints intended the plantation to...

- A. offer the family lighter work
- B. force the family into total submission
- C. prepare the children for freedom

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	C	
3	B	Event comprehension.
4	A	
5	A	
6	C	
7	B	
8	A	Theme comprehension.
9	C	The tested sense is an abusive name, not the neutral descriptive meaning.
10	B	Event comprehension.

Teacher Context: Chapters 10–16

Pursued relentlessly by Dr. Flint, Linda makes the desperate choice to take Mr. Sands as a lover and bears two children, Benny and Ellen. The section traces her continued persecution, the church's complicity in slavery, and her eventual removal to Flint's plantation. It ends before Chapter 17 because the next chapter shifts from endurance to active resistance as Linda flees.