

Little Women

Part One, Chapters 1–8

by Louisa May Alcott

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: conceit, contraband, harboring, humility, ignominious, indolent, inexorable, remorse, treacherous, vivacity

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 · Part One, Chapters 1–8 · The March sisters at Christmas

Section 2 · Part One, Chapters 9–15 · Meg visits her fashionable friends

Section 3 · Part One, Chapters 16–23 · The sisters keep house alone

Section 4 · Part Two, Chapters 24–31 · The sisters, three years later

Section 5 · Part Two, Chapters 32–39 · Jo longs for a change

Section 6 · Part Two, Chapters 40–47 · Quiet days at the March home

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. Winning a few games filled him with **conceit**.

- A. cheerful confidence
- B. deep gratitude
- C. excessive self-pride

2. The guards searched the ship for **contraband** hidden in the cargo.

- A. valuable treasure
- B. forbidden goods
- C. spoiled supplies

3. He spent weeks **harboring** a secret hope.

- A. slowly building up
- B. quietly hiding away
- C. holding onto inwardly

4. Even after the big win, she spoke with **humility**.

- A. a modest, unproud spirit
- B. a warm, generous nature
- C. a calm, patient temper

5. The team suffered an **ignominious** loss in the very first round.

- A. close and hard-fought
- B. shameful and humiliating
- C. dull and forgettable

6. He grew **indolent** after a week of summer vacation.

- A. restless and bored
- B. moody and irritable
- C. lazy and inactive

7. Their coach was **inexorable** about being on time for practice.

- A. firm and unyielding
- B. fussy and demanding
- C. loud and impatient

8. He felt deep **remorse** for the cruel words he had spoken.

- A. deep guilt or regret
- B. deep embarrassment
- C. bitter resentment

9. The hikers crossed the **treacherous** mountain trail with great care.

- A. steep and tiring
- B. dangerously unsafe
- C. narrow and winding

10. She told the story with such **vivacity** that no one looked away.

- A. lively energy and spirit
- B. careful, exact detail
- C. calm, gentle warmth

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

bosom enemy — a fault within oneself that is hard to overcome; here, Jo's quick temper

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	C
2	B
3	C
4	A
5	B
6	C
7	A
8	A
9	B
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 “... color, light, and life in the boy’s face now, vivacity in his manner, and genuine merriment in his laugh.”

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘vivacity’ most nearly suggests that Laurie’s manner is...

- A. calm and reserved
- B. lively and spirited
- C. polite and formal

2 “... lively ways made him ashamed of the indolent life he led.”

The passage most strongly suggests that, before he knew the Marches, Laurie...

- A. had been idle and lazy
- B. had envied their money
- C. had worked very hard

3 “Now Mr. Davis had declared limes a contraband article ...”

According to the passage, Mr. Davis had declared that limes were...

- A. too costly to buy
- B. forbidden at school
- C. unhealthy to eat

4 “All flashed indignant or appealing glances at the inexorable Davis, and one passionate lime lover burst into tears.”

In the passage, Mr. Davis is characterized as...

- A. secretly amused by them
- B. ashamed of his harshness
- C. unmoved by their pleading

5 “... taking the ignominious place, she fixed her eyes on the stove funnel above what now seemed a sea of faces ...”

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. convey Amy’s public disgrace
- B. stress the crowded room
- C. show Amy’s boredom in class

6 “... there is no need of parading them, for conceit spoils the finest genius.”

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Talent matters more than modesty.
- B. Genius should be shown off.
- C. Vanity can ruin real talent.

7 “Jo glanced over her shoulder, and the little demon she was harboring said in her ear ...”

In context, the word ‘harboring’ emphasizes that Jo was...

- A. letting go of her anger
- B. afraid of the demon
- C. clinging to her resentment

8 “... golden head, which might have been swept away from her sight forever under the treacherous ice.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the ice...

- A. hid a deadly danger
- B. was clearly marked unsafe
- C. was perfectly solid

9 “The patience and the humility of the face she loved so well was a better lesson to Jo than the wisest lecture, the sharpest reproof.”

The author most likely describes the look on Mrs. March’s face in order to...

- A. show Mrs. March scolding Jo
- B. show her modest example taught Jo
- C. show Jo’s dislike of lectures

10 “... she had learned not only the bitterness of remorse and despair, but the sweetness of self-denial and self-control ...”

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

- A. marks Jo’s guilt turning to growth
- B. shows Jo blaming her sister
- C. introduces a new conflict for Jo

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	A	
3	B	
4	C	
5	A	
6	C	
7	C	Character comprehension. The 'little demon' is Jo's hot temper, the 'bosom enemy' the section keeps returning to.
8	A	
9	B	
10	A	Theme comprehension. The excerpt closes the section's arc of conquering one's temper through self-control.

Teacher Context: Part One, Chapters 1–8

The four March sisters – Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy – face a lean Christmas while their father serves as a chaplain in the Civil War, and each works at her own faults under Marmee's guidance. The girls befriend the wealthy neighbor Laurie, and small domestic dramas test their tempers, ending with Jo's anger nearly costing Amy her life on the ice. Section ends after Chapter 8 to keep the early character-establishing episodes together before the focus widens.