

Little Women

Part Two, Chapters 32–39

by Louisa May Alcott

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: acquiesced, apathy, benevolence, conjectures, desecrate, didactic, diffident, morbid, reverence, unrequited

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. After a long debate, the council members finally **acquiesced**.

- A. demanded a revote
- B. gave in quietly
- C. delayed the decision

2. The long heat wave left the whole town in a state of **apathy**.

- A. a feeling of confusion
- B. lack of interest or energy
- C. a sense of growing fear

3. The old shopkeeper was known throughout town for his **benevolence**.

- A. sharp business sense
- B. strict discipline
- C. kindly goodwill

4. The new students could only make **conjectures** about why the school had closed early.

- A. guesses made without proof
- B. announcements to the class
- C. complaints to the office

5. Soldiers will punish anyone who tries to **desecrate** the temple.

- A. violate what is sacred
- B. take photos that are banned
- C. enter a forbidden place

6. Critics found the new novel far too **didactic** for their taste.

- A. meant to teach a lesson
- B. dark and frightening
- C. long and slow-moving

7. He gave a **diffident** smile and waited at the edge of the party.

- A. shy and unsure
- B. warm and friendly
- C. sly and scheming

8. His jokes took a **morbid** turn that made everyone uneasy.

- A. silly and childish
- B. sharp and clever
- C. obsessed with death

9. The pilgrims spoke of the old mountain with great **reverence**.

- A. nervous fear and dread
- B. mild curiosity and doubt
- C. deep respect and awe

10. For years he carried an **unrequited** love for his neighbor.

- A. forbidden by both families
- B. not returned by the other person
- C. kept completely secret

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

liberty — personal freedom and independence to live as one chooses

frail — physically weak and delicate; easily broken or worn down

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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

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 "... Jo watched Beth, and after many conflicting conjectures, finally settled upon one which seemed to explain the change in her."

As it is used in the passage, the word "conjectures" most nearly suggests that Jo...

- A. had clear proof of the cause
- B. reached her view by guessing
- C. refused to think it over

2 "That I'm not!" acquiesced Laurie, with an expression of humility quite new to him, as he dropped his eyes and absently wound Jo's apron tassel round his finger."

It can reasonably be inferred that, in answering "That I'm not!", Laurie...

- A. demanded she take it back
- B. playfully denied her remark
- C. agreed with Jo's low opinion of him

3 "... but unconsciously she was beginning to desecrate some of the womanliest attributes of a woman's character."

The passage most strongly suggests that Jo's new pursuits were...

- A. quietly spoiling her finer nature
- B. strengthening her character
- C. openly shaming her family

4 "... much describing of other people's passions and feelings set her to studying and speculating about her own, a morbid amusement in which healthy young minds do not voluntarily indulge."

The author most likely calls Jo's self-study "a morbid amusement" in order to...

- A. show the habit was harmless fun
- B. warn that her brooding was unhealthy
- C. praise her deepening self-awareness

5 "Jo often watched him, trying to discover the charm, and at last decided that it was benevolence which worked the miracle."

Which statement about Mr. Bhaer is best supported by the text?

- A. His kindly goodwill won people's hearts
- B. His wealth and rank drew admirers
- C. His good looks made him beloved

6 "Now, Mr. Bhaer was a diffident man and slow to offer his own opinions, not because they were unsettled, but too sincere and earnest to be lightly spoken."

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

- A. modest and slow to push his views
- B. bold and quick to argue
- C. unsure of what he believes

7 "She began to see that character is a better possession than money, rank, intellect, or beauty, and to feel that if greatness is what a wise man has defined it to be, 'truth, reverence, and good will', then her friend Friedrich Bhaer was not only good, but great."

The passage most strongly suggests that Jo now prizes, above all...

- A. fear of powerful people
- B. wealth, rank, and beauty
- C. deep respect for what is good

8 "She sent this didactic gem to several markets, but it found no purchaser ..."

The narrator's ironic label "didactic gem" best reveals an attitude that is...

- A. angered by its poor sales
- B. amused at its heavy preaching
- C. admiring of its moral lessons

9 "Unlike some sufferers, he never spoke of his unrequited passion, and would allow no one, not even Mrs. March, to attempt consolation or offer sympathy."

According to the passage, how does Laurie bear his unrequited love?

- A. he pours out his grief to Mrs. March
- B. he gladly accepts his friends' comfort
- C. he hides his suffering from everyone

10 "Being decidedly nettled herself, and longing to see him shake off the apathy that so altered him, Amy sharpened both tongue and pencil ..."

In the excerpt, the detail about Laurie's "apathy" primarily functions to...

- A. mark how far his old spirit has sunk
- B. show he is content with life abroad
- C. prove he has outgrown his teasing

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	C	
3	A	
4	B	
5	A	Character comprehension.
6	A	The text rules out 'unsure of his beliefs' -- Bhaer holds back from sincerity, not doubt.
7	C	
8	B	
9	C	
10	A	Character comprehension.

Teacher Context: Part Two, Chapters 32–39

Restless at home, Jo goes to New York, where she boards with a kindly German professor and tries her hand at sensational writing. Laurie's long-held feelings come to a head, Beth's health quietly worsens, and Amy's travels abroad continue. Section ends after Chapter 39 to keep these turning-point chapters together before the family's final movement.