

Murder On The Orient Express

Part 1: The Facts

by Agatha Christie

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: acquitted, autocratic, benevolent, ferocity, incriminating, indolent, malevolence, sardonic, surreptitious, susceptible

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 1: The Facts · Poirot boards the Orient Express

Section 2 · Part 2: The Evidence · Questioning the train's passengers

Section 3 · Part 3: Poirot Sits Back and Thinks · Poirot sits back and thinks

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 trial, the court **acquitted** the prisoner.

- A. questioned at length
- B. ordered to pay a fine
- C. found not guilty

2. The factory had an **autocratic** boss who was feared by the workers.

- A. domineering and controlling
- B. careful and well organized
- C. ambitious and hardworking

3. Everyone admired the **benevolent** queen who ruled the land.

- A. wealthy and powerful
- B. kind and well-meaning
- C. strict and demanding

4. The storm battered the coast with terrible **ferocity**.

- A. strange beauty
- B. savage fierceness
- C. steady persistence

5. The detective found **incriminating** fingerprints on the locked safe.

- A. showing someone is guilty
- B. showing signs of age
- C. showing a faint pattern

6. He spent the **indolent** summer lying in a hammock.

- A. lazy and inactive
- B. hot and humid
- C. long and pleasant

7. A feeling of **malevolence** rose in him whenever he saw his rival.

- A. a wish to be admired
- B. a sense of deep sadness
- C. a desire to harm others

8. He gave a **sardonic** smile when he heard the weak excuse.

- A. shy and uncertain
- B. mocking and scornful
- C. tired and bored

9. She took a **surreptitious** bite of candy during class.

- A. done in a great hurry
- B. done with careful effort
- C. done secretly to avoid notice

10. Teenagers are often **susceptible** when their friends urge them on.

- A. easily influenced
- B. easily worn out
- C. easily annoyed

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

the little grey cells — Poirot's term for the brain and its powers of reasoning — 'use ... the little grey cells of the mind ... and you will know!'

words of fire — a figurative phrase for the glowing letters that surface on the burnt note

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	C
2	A
3	B
4	B
5	A
6	A
7	C
8	B
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 "Lieutenant Dubosc managed to cast a surreptitious glance at his watch."

As it is used in the passage, the word "surreptitious" most nearly suggests that Dubosc looked at his watch...

- A. with great impatience
- B. without being noticed
- C. for a long moment

2 "He is susceptible, our Colonel," thought Hercule Poirot to himself with some amusement."

It can reasonably be inferred that Poirot is amused because Colonel Arbuthnot is...

- A. annoyed by the young woman
- B. taken with the young woman
- C. indifferent to the journey

3 "...the smiling mouth that displayed a very white set of false teeth—all seemed to speak of a benevolent personality. Only the eyes belied this assumption."

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. hint that his kindness is a mask
- B. stress his genuine warmth
- C. describe his failing health

4 "...his gaze stopped on Poirot for a moment and just for that second there was a strange malevolence, an unnatural tensivity in the glance."

The passage most strongly suggests that, for an instant, the man feels...

- A. open hostility toward Poirot
- B. sudden fear of Poirot
- C. mild curiosity about Poirot

5 "She was speaking now to the restaurant attendant in a clear, courteous, but completely autocratic tone."

In the passage, the speaker is characterized as...

- A. nervous and uncertain
- B. eager to please others
- C. used to being obeyed

6 "It's natural to the folks here to be indolent," she said."

According to the passage, the local people are...

- A. naturally lazy
- B. naturally suspicious
- C. naturally cheerful

7 "The Greek doctor gave a sardonic laugh."

Which choice best describes the doctor's attitude toward the suggestion of suicide?

- A. cautious agreement
- B. genuine sympathy
- C. scornful dismissal

8 "Does a man who commits suicide stab himself in ten-twelve-fifteen places?" he asked. ... "That is great ferocity," he said."

The author most likely includes the count of ten to fifteen wounds in order to...

- A. show the killer's haste
- B. hint the victim fought back
- C. stress the savagery of the attack

9 "It was used to burn an incriminating paper of some kind."

Which statement is best supported by the excerpt?

- A. It revealed someone's guilt.
- B. It was burned by accident.
- C. It listed travel plans.

10 "...owing to the secret hold he had over various persons, he was acquitted on some technical inaccuracy."

According to the passage, Cassetti escaped punishment because he was...

- A. pardoned years later
- B. freed on a technicality
- C. never charged at all

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	B	Character comprehension. Poirot has watched Arbuthnot grow attentive to Miss Debenham earlier in the journey.
3	A	
4	A	
5	C	
6	A	
7	C	Event comprehension.
8	C	
9	A	
10	B	Event comprehension. 'Acquitted' means a not-guilty verdict, not proven innocent; Cassetti was guilty but freed on a technicality.

Teacher Context: Part 1: The Facts

Detective Hercule Poirot, traveling back to England, boards the crowded Orient Express and takes note of his fellow passengers. The train is halted by a snowdrift, and the next morning a wealthy American passenger who had feared for his life is found stabbed to death in his compartment. Poirot agrees to investigate before the police can be reached.