

Murder On The Orient Express

Part 2: The Evidence

by Agatha Christie

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: demur, furtive, inordinate, instigator, latent, perfunctory, reticent, spurious, vengeance, voluble

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. When the boss asked her to stay late, she began to **demur**.

- A. to apologize at once
- B. to object or hesitate
- C. to ask for help

2. She cast a **furtive** glance at the locked drawer.

- A. angry and sharp
- B. bored and tired
- C. secret and sneaky

3. She showed an **inordinate** interest in her neighbor's business.

- A. far more than is reasonable
- B. sincere and heartfelt
- C. open and obvious

4. He was the **instigator** of the schoolyard fight.

- A. the one who cheered it on
- B. the one who joined in late
- C. the one who started it

5. The coach saw that the recruit's talent was **latent**.

- A. rare and valuable
- B. built through practice
- C. hidden and not yet shown

6. He gave the new intern only a **perfunctory** glance.

- A. quick and with little care
- B. nervous and unsure
- C. stern and serious

7. He stayed **reticent** when reporters asked about his past.

- A. unwilling to speak
- B. calm and patient
- C. confused and unsure

8. The website made **spurious** claims about the new diet.

- A. detailed and scientific
- B. false; not genuine
- C. bold and surprising

9. After the betrayal, he was consumed by **vengeance**.

- A. worry and doubt
- B. revenge for a wrong
- C. sorrow and regret

10. The **voluble** customer held up the line at the counter.

- A. very talkative
- B. rude and demanding
- C. slow and indecisive

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

cauchemar — French for nightmare

rejoiced at his end — was glad that he had died; a disturbing use of a word usually associated with happiness

bona fides — credentials or other evidence establishing a person's identity, background, or legitimacy; used here to determine whether passengers are who they claim to be

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	B
2	C
3	A
4	C
5	C
6	A
7	A
8	B
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 *"I should be more inclined to suspect you, Mr. MacQueen, if you displayed an inordinate sorrow at your employer's decease."*

As it is used in the passage, the word "inordinate" most nearly describes sorrow that is...

- A. deeply sincere and genuine
- B. quietly kept hidden
- C. far greater than is fitting

2 *"Did you know that your employer, Mr. Ratchett, was the principal instigator in that affair?"*

According to the passage, the phrase "principal instigator" identifies Ratchett as the one who...

- A. looked on without acting
- B. set the crime in motion
- C. was wrongly blamed for it

3 *"He could visualize the scene—the large, voluble Italian, and the snub direct administered by the gentleman's gentleman."*

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

- A. rude and hot-tempered
- B. silent and withdrawn
- C. talkative and outgoing

4 *"She was certainly ugly, and yet, like the toad, she had eyes like jewels, dark and imperious, revealing latent energy and an intellectual force that could be felt at once."*

The description of the Princess's "latent energy" primarily functions to...

- A. praise her outward beauty
- B. hint at concealed power
- C. stress her dull weakness

5 *"In fact, Colonel Arbuthnot, you prefer law and order to private vengeance?"*
"Well, you can't go about having blood feuds and stabbing each other like Corsicans or the Mafia," said the Colonel. "Say what you like, trial by jury is a sound system."

Which choice best describes Colonel Arbuthnot's attitude toward private vengeance?

- A. he rejects it for the law
- B. he defends it as just
- C. he is amused by it

6 *"And the fellow inside peered out in a furtive sort of way."*

It can reasonably be inferred that the man Arbuthnot glimpsed was behaving as though he...

- A. wished to avoid notice
- B. was admiring the snow
- C. was seeking assistance

7 *"No, he was kinda reticent about that part of it."*

The passage most strongly suggests that, about why he was threatened, Ratchett had been...

- A. openly boastful
- B. eager to explain fully
- C. unwilling to say much

8 *"The Italian seemed the first person to demur to this view."*

In context, the word "demur" emphasizes that the Italian...

- A. was reluctant to agree
- B. at once agreed warmly
- C. failed to understand

9 *"Was she one and the same with the spurious Wagon Lit attendant?"*

The passage most strongly suggests that the "spurious Wagon Lit attendant" was...

- A. a disguise, not a real official
- B. Pierre Michel acting oddly
- C. an off-duty conductor

10 *"A rapid and somewhat perfunctory search followed."*

The author most likely calls the search "perfunctory" in order to...

- A. show Poirot's care
- B. signal it lacked real effort
- C. stress the Count's guilt

ANSWER KEY
Vocabulary in Context
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#	KEY	NOTE
1	C	
2	B	Event comprehension.
3	C	
4	B	
5	A	
6	A	
7	C	
8	A	The Italian 'demurs' by brushing the kidnapping aside as something that simply happens, rather than by openly arguing.
9	A	Event comprehension.
10	B	

Teacher Context: Part 2: The Evidence

Poirot, with the railway director Bouc and a doctor, interviews each passenger and member of the train staff in turn, collecting accounts, alibis, and physical clues. Contradictions, odd coincidences, and small discoveries about the luggage accumulate as the questioning proceeds.