

Our Town

by Thornton Wilder

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Contents & Printing Notes

Unlike our most popular resources, this one's auto-selected.
Review before use, or edit the DOCX from the Resources menu.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Answer Key — Preview	2	teacher use / self-check only
Vocabulary Preview	3	

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context	5	
Answer Key — In Context	7	teacher use only

Pages are ordered for double-sided printing.

About the Pre-Reading Activity

Open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade. Students preview 20 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. The same words appear in excerpts from the text.

Practice words: abundant, alacrity, banal, congregation, deprecate, diligent, ecstatic, fervor, languid, legacy, perplex, placid, poignant, precede, ravenous, respective, scorn, sentinel, stimulate, wean



More Vocabulary Printables

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ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	C
2	A
3	B
4	B
5	B
6	C
7	B
8	B
9	B
10	A
11	C
12	A
13	A
14	C
15	C
16	B
17	A
18	B
19	A
20	A

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

- The region has **abundant** natural resources, from oil to fresh water.
 - extremely scarce
 - highly disputed
 - widely available
- She accepted the invitation with **alacrity**.
 - quickness
 - embarrassment
 - concern
- The story was **banal**, but it had beautiful cinematography.
 - brutal
 - uninteresting
 - complicated
- The **congregation** voted to approve appointment of the new minister.
 - people who agree
 - people who worship together
 - people who meet periodically
- Critics continue to **deprecate** the film despite its strong box office success.
 - loudly praise
 - speak poorly of
 - carefully study
- A **diligent** detective investigates all clues.
 - lazy and careless
 - rude and dishonest
 - careful and hardworking
- She was **ecstatic** when her team won the championship.
 - exhausted
 - thrilled
 - angry
- She spoke about her cause with **great fervor**.
 - calm boredom
 - strong passion
 - mild dislike
- She greeted us with a **languid** wave of the hand.
 - quick and sharp
 - slow and relaxed
 - stiff and formal
- Her parents left her a small **legacy**.
 - inheritance
 - meal
 - "todo" list
- I am **perplexed** by her sudden change of mind on this important issue.
 - amused
 - annoyed
 - confused
- Her eyes were clear and **placid**.
 - calm
 - anxious
 - teary

13. Have you read MLK's poignant "Letter from Birmingham Jail"?
- A. arousing deep emotion
 - B. logically compelling
 - C. long
14. In English, most adjectives precede the noun they modify.
- A. follow
 - B. describe
 - C. go before
15. The ravenous lion prowled the savannah, searching for its next meal.
- A. extremely quiet
 - B. extremely dangerous
 - C. extremely hungry
16. The runners returned to their respective lanes after the practice drill.
- A. shared, common
 - B. separate, individual
 - C. randomly chosen
17. That coach scorns students who don't have natural ability.
- A. disrespects
 - B. encourages
 - C. trains
18. The cell is like an immunological sentinel that looks out for dangerous pathogens.
- A. medical professional
 - B. someone standing guard
 - C. biological structure
19. The government hopes that the new tax breaks will stimulate the economy.
- A. encourage activity or development in
 - B. directly control prices in
 - C. reduce overall spending in
20. She weaned her baby when he was three months old and started him on cow's milk.
- A. adapted to the removal of breastmilk
 - B. to make fit for service to humans or home life -- by breeding or taming
 - C. broke the law by telling lies after formally promising to tell the truth

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 20

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

- 1 ...all those elements of **poignant** sorrow and abundant happiness that make for...
 - A. intensely touching the emotions
 - B. able to be found
 - C. likely to change
- 2 The second act concerns the love affair between young George Gibbs and little Emily Webb, and thus culminates in a moving wedding scene, which contains all those elements of poignant sorrow and **abundant** happiness that make for solemnity and impressiveness.
 - A. able to be disagreed with
 - B. not tending to find fault
 - C. present in great quantity
- 3 It has already been proven that absence of scenery does not constitute a difficulty and that the cooperative imagination of the audience is **stimulated** by that absence.
 - A. encouraged growth or excitement, or caused something to happen
 - B. ignored someone's wishes or caused inconvenience or discomfort
 - C. supported a beam, bracket, or other structure on only one side
- 4 The **scorn** of verisimilitude throws all the greater emphasis on the ideas which the play hopes to offer.
 - A. disrespect or reject as not good enough
 - B. not answer questions; or block progress
 - C. move from more general to more specific
- 5 ...the very soft singing of the hymns by the **congregation**.
 - A. the act, process, or instance of telling a story
 - B. people who worship together in the same building
 - C. a general feeling of not being as good as others
- 6 Stage Manager now looks over the audience, puffs his pipe, consults watch, **deprecates** late-comers, etc.
 - A. persuades someone to want something (often sex or love) by tempting with something desired
 - B. expresses disapproval of
 - C. officially requests, demands, or takings of things; or the forms used to make such requests
- 7 In those days our newspapers came out twice a week— the Graver's Corners **Sentinel**—and this (Indicating furniture L. C., Xing L. of C.) is Editor Webb's house.
 - A. to concentrate, look at; or the act of concentration
 - B. a person who stands guard or looks out for something
 - C. make one's home in; or live in; or stay (in a place)
- 8 At once he starts eating sleepily, she to eat **languidly**, staring vaguely out.
 - A. in a state similar to sleep where one is unaware of anything
 - B. in a slow, relaxed manner without much energy
 - C. always; or (said in exaggeration when meaning) almost always
- 9 Emily puts her books carefully at her L., Wally opens a book and at once starts to read while both eat **ravenously**.
 - A. done while awake
 - B. in a firm manner
 - C. extremely hungry
- 10 Well, I did beat about the bush a little and said that if I got a **legacy**—that's the way I put it—I'd make him take me.
 - A. cash from a will
 - B. the act of taking something on as one's own
 - C. something that helps clarify or demonstrate
- 11 I guess we're all huntin' like everybody else for a way the **diligent** and sensible can rise to the top and the lazy and quarrelsome sink to the bottom.
 - A. impossible to find
 - B. good or beneficial
 - C. hard workers

- 12 During **preceding** scene the lights have gradually dimmed to late afternoon
- A. beginning to fight again
 - B. influencing or effecting
 - C. prior (in time or space)
- 13 Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Webb enter by their **respective** stairs
- A. in a manner of accepting something as true (without proof)
 - B. relating separately to the people or things just mentioned
 - C. lacking emission of a stream of particles in nuclear decay
- 14 (With **alacrity**, suddenly looking at George) Oh, yes!
- A. eagerness
 - B. the quality of exactness or accuracy
 - C. the gain of advantage from something
- 15 (More **perplexed** than ever)
- A. excessively excited
 - B. nervous or confused
 - C. confused or puzzled
- 16 They remain **placid** throughout the act,
- A. calm
 - B. not attractive or desirable
 - C. related to being antisocial
- 17 They get **weaned** away from earth—that's the way I put it, weaned away.
- A. adapted
 - B. changed
 - C. forgave
- 18 Emily, **ecstatic** at seeing her father, watches him from the moment he...
- A. deeply disappointed
 - B. feeling intense happiness and excitement
 - C. intensely concerned
- 19 (Finally she forces herself to speak a **banality**;) Oh, Mama, you shouldn't have.
- A. a psychologist concerned with the treatment of abnormal thinking and behavior
 - B. something uninteresting due to a lack of anything original or unusual
 - C. a stone shaped like a disk that spins and is used to grind, sharpen or polish
- 20 (With increasing **fervor**) and sleeping and waking up!— (She flings her arms wide in an ecstasy of realization) Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anyone to realize you!
- A. chaotic disorder
 - B. intensity of feeling
 - C. risky investment

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	WORD	NOTE
1	A	poignant	Used 2 times in this play.
2	C	abundant	High-utility academic word
3	A	stimulate	Used 2 times in this play.
4	A	scorn	High-utility academic word
5	B	congregation (<i>as in: the congregation voted</i>)	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this play.
6	B	deprecate	Used about once per 10 books in our high school library
7	B	sentinel	Used 4 times in this play.
8	B	languid	Used 3 times in this play.
9	C	ravenous	Used 2 times in this play.
10	A	legacy	High-utility academic word; used 3 times in this play.
11	C	diligent (<i>as in: she is diligent</i>)	High-utility academic word
12	C	precede	High-utility academic word
13	B	respective	Used 3 times in this play.
14	A	alacrity	Used about once per 10 books in our high school library
15	C	perplex	Used 2 times in this play.
16	A	placid	Used 2 times in this play.
17	A	wean	Used 2 times in this play.
18	B	ecstatic	Used 2 times in this play.
19	B	banal	Used about once per 10 books in our high school library
20	B	fervor	Used about 2 times per 10 books in our high school library.