

The Alchemist

Part One

by Paulo Coelho

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: abashed, conspires, entrusted, inexhaustible, lamenting, omen, recurrent, teeming, trajectory, zenith

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 · A shepherd boy in southern Spain

Section 2 · Part Two and Epilogue · Working at the crystal shop in Tangier

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. He felt **abashed** when the teacher praised him in front of everyone.

- A. surprised and confused
- B. embarrassed and uneasy
- C. annoyed and impatient

2. Sometimes life **conspires** to bring old friends back together.

- A. arranges it by chance
- B. hints it might happen
- C. works to make it happen

3. She **entrusted** her house keys to a neighbor.

- A. lent for a short while
- B. placed in someone's care
- C. gave away for good

4. The volunteers seemed to have an **inexhaustible** supply of energy.

- A. kept in reserve
- B. hard to replace
- C. impossible to use up

5. He kept **lamenting** the team's defeat all week.

- A. grieving over
- B. thinking back on
- C. worrying about

6. A black cat crossing the road is often seen as a bad **omen**.

- A. a sign of things to come
- B. a foolish old belief
- C. a piece of bad luck

7. Her **recurrent** headaches finally forced her to see a doctor.

- A. repeated and frequent
- B. sudden and severe
- C. mild but lasting

8. By noon the market was **teeming** with shoppers.

- A. crowded and full
- B. noisy and chaotic
- C. bright and colorful

9. The coach studied the **trajectory** of the baseball as it flew.

- A. the speed it travels
- B. the spin it carries
- C. the curving path it follows

10. Winning the gold medal was the **zenith** of her career.

- A. a major turning point
- B. the highest point
- C. the earliest stage

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

controlled by fate — ruled by forces beyond one's own choices; the king calls the belief that people lose control of their lives "the world's greatest lie"

Personal Legend — the book's term for the dream or life purpose a person most deeply wants to pursue and fulfill

see all the marvels of the world, and never forget the drops of oil — in the parable, a reminder to experience life's wonders while still attending to one's responsibilities

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	B
2	C
3	B
4	C
5	A
6	A
7	A
8	A
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 "He knew that a few hours from now, with the sun at its zenith, the heat would be so great that he would not be able to lead his flock across the fields."

In context, the word 'zenith' emphasizes...

- A. the sun's highest, hottest point
- B. the sun's fading evening light
- C. the sun's slow morning climb

2 "The world was huge and inexhaustible; he had only to allow his sheep to set the route for a while, and he would discover other interesting things."

The passage most strongly suggests that, to the boy, the world...

- A. is smaller than he once thought
- B. offers endless things to discover
- C. holds only a few new sights

3 "He thought for a moment that it would be better to pay her fee and leave without learning a thing, that he was giving too much importance to his recurrent dream."

According to the passage, the boy's 'recurrent' dream is one that...

- A. keeps coming back to him
- B. comes to him for the first time
- C. he has nearly forgotten

4 "To realize one's Personal Legend is a person's only real obligation. All things are one. And, when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it."

As it is used in the passage, the word 'conspires' most nearly suggests that the universe...

- A. secretly plots against you
- B. ignores what you want
- C. works together to help you

5 "He remembered something his grandfather had once told him: that butterflies were a good omen."

It can reasonably be inferred that, seeing the butterfly, the boy...

- A. expects good fortune to come
- B. recalls a happy childhood
- C. admires the butterfly's beauty

6 "His only concern had been not to spill the oil that the wise man had entrusted to him."

The detail that the wise man had 'entrusted' the oil to the boy mainly serves to...

- A. show the wise man's doubt in him
- B. show the boy's duty to guard it
- C. show the oil was a gift to keep

7 "He looked to the skies, feeling a bit abashed ..."

In the passage, the old king is characterized as...

- A. proud of his lasting fame
- B. bitter that he must leave
- C. embarrassed at his own vanity

8 "The boy watched it through its trajectory for some time, until it was hidden behind the white houses surrounding the plaza."

Which statement about the sun is best supported by the passage?

- A. It follows an arc across the sky
- B. It blazes hottest at midday
- C. It drops straight behind the plaza

9 "He was feeling sorry for himself, and lamenting the fact that his life could have changed so suddenly and so drastically."

Which choice best describes the boy's attitude as he sits in the empty marketplace?

- A. irritation at being misled
- B. sorrowful regret over his loss
- C. dread of what comes next

10 "... he had already seen it when it was teeming with life, and he would never forget it."

The author most likely describes the marketplace as 'teeming with life' in order to...

- A. hint that danger was nearby
- B. show how quiet it had become
- C. stress how full and lively it was

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	B	
3	A	
4	C	Here 'conspires' carries its older sense of working together to help, not plotting harm; 'plots against' is the everyday but wrong sense.
5	A	
6	B	
7	C	Character comprehension. He does take pride, so 'proud' tempts; 'abashed' marks the embarrassment he feels about it, and the section shows he is benevolent, not bitter.
8	A	
9	B	
10	C	

Teacher Context: Part One

Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy, has a recurring dream of treasure at the Egyptian pyramids and meets Melchizedek, the king of Salem, who urges him to pursue his Personal Legend. He sells his sheep and crosses to Tangier in Africa, where he is robbed of his money and, with nothing left, takes work cleaning crystal for a shop owner.