

The Alchemist

Part Two and Epilogue

by Paulo Coelho

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: capricious, defiance, exultant, incredulous, luminous, melancholy, monotony, poised, solemn, suffused

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. The actress was known for her **capricious** moods.
A. unpredictable and impulsive
B. proud and demanding
C. fiery and passionate
2. She raised her chin in **defiance** and stared back.
A. bold resistance
B. cold disdain
C. quiet pride
3. The **exultant** fans poured onto the field after the win.
A. tense and anxious
B. loud and unruly
C. joyful and triumphant
4. He gave me an **incredulous** look at my claim.
A. impressed and admiring
B. unable to believe it
C. confused and unsure
5. The **luminous** moon hung over the quiet harbor.
A. pale and partly hidden
B. huge and looming overhead
C. glowing with light
6. She grew **melancholy** packing up her old home.
A. a bitter resentment
B. a lingering sadness
C. a restless boredom
7. The long highway drive was pure **monotony**.
A. dull, unvarying sameness
B. growing, restless impatience
C. steady, exhausting effort
8. The diver stood **poised** at the edge of the high board.
A. proud and confident
B. frozen with fear
C. balanced and ready
9. The judge spoke in a **solemn** voice.
A. soft and trembling
B. deeply serious and grave
C. loud and commanding
10. At dawn, the sky was **suffused** with soft pink light.
A. spread through or over
B. dotted in a few spots
C. streaked in thin lines

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

Maktub — Arabic for “It is written”; in the novel, the idea that events unfold as part of destiny

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

levanter — a strong easterly Mediterranean wind

sacristy — a room in a church where sacred vessels and robes are kept

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	A
2	A
3	C
4	B
5	C
6	B
7	A
8	C
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 “The desert is a capricious lady, and sometimes she drives men crazy.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “capricious” most nearly suggests that the desert is...

- A. vast and lifeless
- B. unpredictable and changeable
- C. harsh but dependable

2 “They traveled, spoke with wise men, performed miracles for the incredulous, and owned the Philosopher’s Stone and the Elixir of Life.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the people called “the incredulous”...

- A. doubted what they were told
- B. had studied alchemy themselves
- C. were amazed by the miracles

3 “But the Englishman was exultant. They were on the right track.”

Which choice best describes the Englishman’s mood as the search progresses?

- A. nervous and impatient
- B. triumphant and hopeful
- C. weary and discouraged

4 “When he looked into her dark eyes, and saw that her lips were poised between a laugh and silence, he learned the most important part of the language that all the world spoke—the language that everyone on earth was capable of understanding in their heart. It was love.”

In context, the word “poised” emphasizes that Fatima’s expression is...

- A. held between two states
- B. tense and guarded
- C. calm and self-assured

5 “The atmosphere was suffused with the sweet scent of smoke.”

The detail that the tent was suffused with the scent of smoke mainly serves to...

- A. fill the scene with atmosphere
- B. mark the passage of time
- C. warn of approaching danger

6 “His heart was heavy, and he had been melancholy since the previous night.”

Which choice best describes the boy’s mood in the passage?

- A. a simmering anger
- B. a restless boredom
- C. a deep, lingering sadness

7 “The desert, with its endless monotony, put him to dreaming.”

The author describes the desert’s “endless monotony” in order to...

- A. show his fear of the journey
- B. stress the desert’s dangers
- C. explain why his mind wandered

8 “When I have been truly searching for my treasure, every day has been luminous, because I’ve known that every hour was a part of the dream that I would find it.”

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Bright weather lifted his mood.
- B. Searching gave his days meaning.
- C. His treasure hunt felt tedious.

9 “For generations thereafter, the Arabs recounted the legend of a boy who had turned himself into the wind, almost destroying a military camp, in defiance of the most powerful chief in the desert.”

The passage most strongly suggests that the boy’s transformation was...

- A. a desperate plea for mercy
- B. a planned tribal ritual
- C. an act of open resistance

10 “There, illuminated by the light of the moon and the brightness of the desert, stood the solemn and majestic Pyramids of Egypt.”

Which choice best describes the mood as the boy sees the Pyramids?

- A. grave, dignified awe
- B. uneasy dread
- C. lighthearted delight

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	A	
3	B	Character comprehension.
4	A	The everyday sense of 'poised' (composed, self-assured) is the distractor; here it means suspended between two states – 'between a laugh and silence.'
5	A	
6	C	
7	C	
8	B	
9	C	Event comprehension.
10	A	

Teacher Context: Part Two and Epilogue

Having saved enough working for the crystal merchant, the boy joins a caravan crossing the Sahara, meeting the Englishman, the alchemist, and Fatima, and learns to read the omens and the Soul of the World. He reaches the Pyramids and discovers where his treasure truly lies; the Epilogue closes the novel back in Spain. Section runs to the end of the novel.