

The Call of the Wild

Chapters 4–5

by Jack London

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: callous, convulsed, coveted, formidable, obdurate, potent, resiliency, salient, superfluous, terse

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 · Chapters 1–3 · Buck's comfortable life in California

Section 2 · Chapters 4–5 · Buck and the sled team

Section 3 · Chapters 6–7 · Buck and John Thornton

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 **callous** landlord ignored the family's pleas for heat in winter.

- A. greedy and selfish
- B. unfeeling and uncaring
- C. busy and distracted

2. He was so **convulsed** with sobs that he could not speak.

- A. completely exhausted
- B. quietly embarrassed
- C. violently shaken

3. Every athlete in the league **coveted** the championship trophy.

- A. deeply admired
- B. closely guarded
- C. greatly desired

4. The team faced a **formidable** opponent in the championship final.

- A. powerful and intimidating
- B. skilled and experienced
- C. famous and well-known

5. Despite hours of pleading, the **obdurate** old man only crossed his arms.

- A. proud and boastful
- B. stubborn and unyielding
- C. weary and impatient

6. The chef added a **potent** spice to the simple stew.

- A. strong and powerful
- B. rare and unusual
- C. sweet and fragrant

7. The young athlete showed great **resiliency** after every hard fall.

- A. springy ability to recover
- B. raw strength and power
- C. steady, calm patience

8. The bright red door was the most **salient** feature of the house.

- A. solid and sturdy
- B. noticeable and prominent
- C. attractive and stylish

9. Before the trip, he removed every **superfluous** item from his overstuffed bag.

- A. extra and unnecessary
- B. heavy and bulky
- C. old and worn out

10. She gave a **terse** answer and walked away.

- A. vague and confusing
- B. rude and insulting
- C. brief and to the point

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

trace and trail — working in harness and traveling the sled trail; a trace is one of the straps connecting a dog to the sled

unbreakable — here, impossible to defeat or force into submission

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	B
2	C
3	C
4	A
5	B
6	A
7	A
8	B
9	A
10	C

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 “Buck trotted up to the place Spitz would have occupied as leader; but Francois, not noticing him, brought Sol-leks to the coveted position.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “coveted” most nearly suggests that the lead spot was...

- A. avoided by the dogs
- B. handed out by chance
- C. desired by many dogs

2 “Francois was obdurate, but when he turned his back Buck again displaced Sol-leks, who was not at all unwilling to go.”

It can reasonably be inferred that Francois kept putting Sol-leks back in the lead because he...

- A. was afraid of Sol-leks
- B. had changed his plan
- C. refused to give in to Buck

3 “Far more potent were the memories of his heredity that gave things he had never seen before a seeming familiarity”

According to the passage, the memories of Buck’s heredity were “potent” because they...

- A. came from his Sunland home
- B. strongly shaped how he saw things
- C. were fading from his mind

4 “About his body there was a peculiar springiness, or resiliency, almost catlike, and a quick alertness as of one who lived in perpetual fear of things seen and unseen.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “resiliency” most nearly describes the hairy man’s...

- A. supple, springy quickness
- B. calm, restful stillness
- C. heavy, clumsy strength

5 “This belt was the most salient thing about him.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “salient” most nearly suggests that the belt was...

- A. the most useful thing he owned
- B. the least important detail
- C. the most noticeable thing about him

6 “And so it went, the inexorable elimination of the superfluous.”

According to the passage, the “superfluous” things being eliminated were the items that were...

- A. too heavy to lift
- B. more than the trip needed
- C. broken and useless

7 “This accomplished, the outfit, though cut in half, was still a formidable bulk.”

According to the passage, calling the halved outfit a “formidable” bulk shows that it was still...

- A. large and hard to manage
- B. light and easy to haul
- C. neat and well organized

8 “In the excess of their own misery they were callous to the suffering of their animals.”

Which statement about the three people is best supported by the passage?

- A. They worked to ease the dogs’ pain.
- B. They ignored the dogs’ suffering.
- C. They no longer felt their own misery.

9 “He whittled and listened, gave monosyllabic replies, and, when it was asked, terse advice.”

The passage most strongly suggests that Thornton’s “terse” advice reflects a man who...

- A. speaks briefly and plainly
- B. talks at great length
- C. refuses to speak at all

10 “John Thornton stood over Buck, struggling to control himself, too convulsed with rage to speak. ‘If you strike that dog again, I’ll kill you,’ he at last managed to say in a choking voice.”

It can reasonably be inferred that Thornton was “convulsed with rage” because he...

- A. was overwhelmed by furious emotion
- B. had nothing he wished to say
- C. was calmly thinking it over

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	C	
2	C	Event comprehension.
3	B	
4	A	
5	C	
6	B	Event comprehension.
7	A	
8	B	Character comprehension.
9	A	
10	A	Event comprehension.

Teacher Context: Chapters 4–5

Buck wins leadership of the team and drives it to record runs carrying the mail, but the exhausted dogs are then sold to a trio of inexperienced gold-seekers whose mismanagement nearly destroys them on the trail. The section ends as John Thornton intervenes to save Buck from the doomed party. The break before Chapter 6 keeps Thornton's bond with Buck as the opening of the final section.