

The Cask of Amontillado

by Edgar Allan Poe

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: accosted, endeavored, explicit, fettered, immolation, impunity, obstinate, precluded, recoiling, succession

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.



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Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. The reporter **accosted** the politician as she left the building, bombarding her with questions about the recent scandal.

- A. approached aggressively
- B. approached timidly
- C. approached politely

2. I **endeavored** to get both sides to agree to a compromise.

- A. promised or guaranteed
- B. tried or attempted
- C. refused or declined

3. We need to be more **explicit** so this will not be misunderstood.

- A. demanding and forceful
- B. clear and specific
- C. understanding and patient

4. The prisoner was **fettered** with heavy iron chains that made it impossible to move.

- A. released without warning
- B. threatened with punishment
- C. bound with chains or shackles

5. The ancient ritual of **immolation** involved offering sacrifices to appease the gods.

- A. forgiveness of a wrongdoing
- B. destruction as a sacrifice
- C. celebration in someone's honor

6. We cannot allow powerful individuals to commit crimes with **impunity**.

- A. government accomplices
- B. permission from superiors
- C. exemption from punishment

7. She is an **obstinate** child who will not follow the family rules.

- A. painfully shy and withdrawn
- B. eagerly willing to participate
- C. stubbornly refusing to cooperate

8. The heavy snowfall **precluded** any possibility of traveling to the coast that weekend.

- A. briefly delayed
- B. prevented or made impossible
- C. increased the likelihood of

9. **Recoiling** from the snake on the path, she stumbled backward into the bushes.

- A. lunging forward quickly
- B. pulling back suddenly
- C. glancing away briefly

10. She survived a **succession** of catastrophes.

- A. unexpected combination
- B. dramatic worsening
- C. series, one after another

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

Amontillado — a type of fine Spanish sherry wine

catacombs — underground tunnels used as burial places

nitre — white mineral crust found on damp stone walls

motley — the multicolored costume of a court jester

roquelaire — a type of knee-length cloak

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	A
2	B
3	B
4	C
5	B
6	C
7	C
8	B
9	B
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 *"I would be avenged; this was a point definitively settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved, precluded the idea of risk."*

As it is used in the excerpt, the word "precluded" most nearly suggests that...

- A. the possibility of risk was carefully weighed
- B. the danger of risk was suddenly increased
- C. the idea of risk was entirely ruled out

2 *"I must not only punish, but punish with impunity."*

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to show that the narrator...

- A. seeks public recognition for his act of revenge
- B. wants to punish without being punished in return
- C. is unsure whether his punishment is justified

3 *"I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation."*

Which choice best describes the narrator's attitude toward Fortunato in the excerpt?

- A. deeply conflicted, struggling to hide feelings of remorse
- B. outwardly hostile, making his hatred clear to Fortunato
- C. coldly calculating, savoring Fortunato's coming destruction

4 *"He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much."*

It can reasonably be inferred that Fortunato's greeting was...

- A. cautious and restrained despite his drinking
- B. bold and overly familiar due to intoxication
- C. threatening and hostile toward the narrator

5 *"I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance..."*

The ironic detail about the narrator's "explicit" orders most likely serves to...

- A. reveal his frustration with disobedient servants
- B. demonstrate his concern for the servants' safety
- C. show his cunning in ensuring no witnesses would be present

6 *"'You jest,' he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces."*

The passage most strongly suggests that Fortunato's reacts with...

- A. strong anger
- B. sudden surprise
- C. genuine amusement

7 *"It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depths of the recess."*

According to the passage, Fortunato's effort to see into the recess was...

- A. unsuccessful because the torch was too dim
- B. unnecessary because the narrator described what lay inside
- C. interrupted when the narrator called him back

8 *"A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite."*

Which choice best describes how the excerpt functions in the text?

- A. It describes a struggle between the two characters
- B. It reveals the moment the narrator physically traps Fortunato
- C. It describes Fortunato's attempt to struggle free

9 *"There was then a long and obstinate silence."*

In the passage, Fortunato is characterized as...

- A. defiantly silent, refusing to react
- B. too confused to understand what is happening
- C. quietly accepting of his fate

10 *"A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back."*

It can reasonably be inferred that Fortunato's screams suggest...

- A. an attempt to scare the narrator
- B. rapid outbursts of terror
- C. a short-lived outburst

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	TEACHER NOTE
1	C	
2	B	
3	C	"As was my wont" means "as was my habit," so the smile is a practiced mask — ruling out B (he hides his intent) and C (no remorse is implied; he savors the thought).
4	B	
5	C	The irony is that giving clear orders to stay guaranteed the servants would do the opposite and leave. The narrator counts on their defiance.
6	B	"recoiling a few paces" shows an immediate startled reaction
7	A	
8	B	
9	A	"Obstinate" attributes willfulness to the silence — it is stubborn and defiant, not passive or bewildered.
10	B	