

The Catbird Seat

by James Thurber

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 via "View / Print / Edit Web
Quiz" on 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: appalling, attain, bewilder, blatant, competent, constant, contradict, cunning, delude, derive, edifice, elated, ornate, persecution, persistent, phenomenon, poise, red herring, relevant, resent



More Vocabulary Printables

verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

The Catbird Seat

by James Thurber

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

Vocabulary Preview

The Catbird Seat

by James Thurber

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. She has scheduled a news conference to respond to the **appalling** accusations.
 - A. false
 - B. horrible
 - C. foolish
2. They hope to **attain** effective law and order in the region before withdrawing troops.
 - A. openly oppose
 - B. carefully describe
 - C. successfully gain
3. I am trying to understand her, but I am **bewildered**.
 - A. confused
 - B. bored
 - C. distracted
4. They showed **blatant** disregard for international law.
 - A. evil
 - B. obvious
 - C. ignorant
5. She is **competent** on both violin and piano.
 - A. below average
 - B. sufficiently capable
 - C. outstanding
6. Her **constant** tapping on the desk made it hard to concentrate during the meeting.
 - A. occasional
 - B. intermittent
 - C. never-ending
7. Does the sentence **contradict** what is said in the previous paragraph?
 - A. disagree with
 - B. reinforce
 - C. expand upon
8. The worst mix -- **greedy, cunning**, and without morals.
 - A. stupid and impatient
 - B. clever and deceitful
 - C. strong and cruel
9. Do not **delude** yourself into thinking one late apology fixes everything.
 - A. praise
 - B. protect
 - C. deceive
10. I **derive** pleasure from my work.
 - A. refuse
 - B. obtain
 - C. ignore
11. Their offices are housed in an imposing **edifice**.
 - A. building
 - B. neighborhood
 - C. color
12. The **elated** winner couldn't stop smiling.
 - A. extremely happy
 - B. newly created
 - C. exhausted or tired

13. It was the most ornate building I've ever seen.
A. ancient
B. boring
C. decorated
14. In that country people who are gay are persecuted by law.
A. forced to leave
B. ignored
C. treated badly
15. The persistent rain finally stopped after flooding streets for a full week.
A. quickly ending
B. continuing steadily
C. suddenly starting
16. The phenomenon was first noticed by Marie Curie.
A. thing of interest
B. thing that is growing
C. thing that is hidden
17. The once self-conscious girl is now a woman with considerable poise.
A. style
B. education
C. composure
18. I think she raised the issue as a red herring.
A. complaint
B. diversion
C. main argument
19. It is easier to learn things that seem relevant to your life.
A. understandable
B. repeated
C. important
20. As the war dragged on, the Thai population came to resent the Japanese presence.
A. appreciate
B. dislike
C. request

Vocabulary in Context

The Catbird Seat

by James Thurber

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 20

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

- 1 For the hundredth time he **resented** the element of imprecision, the margin of guesswork that entered into the business.
 - A. to break a close association between two organizations or people
 - B. felt angry or unhappy about having to accept something not liked
 - C. wandered from a direct or straight course -- especially verbally
- 2 And therein lay the **cunning** of his scheme.
 - A. related to the natural world (life, air, water, land...)
 - B. good at achieving goals through cleverness and deception
 - C. relating to logical examination to improve understanding
- 3 The woman had **appalled** Mr. Martin instantly, but he hadn't shown it.
 - A. with an unadjusted lens so the image isn't clear
 - B. shocked by how terrible or horrible something is
 - C. gave an opinion of what was wrong with something
- 4 In the halls, in the elevator, even in his own office, into which she romped now and then like a circus horse, she was **constantly** shouting these silly questions at him.
 - A. in a manner that is crosswise (at a right angle to the long axis)
 - B. with too much concern for formal rules, details, or book learning
 - C. in a manner that is unchanging, continuous, or happens repeatedly
- 5 Mrs. Ulgine Barrows stood charged with willful, **blatant**, and persistent attempts to destroy the efficiency and system of F & S. It was competent, material, and relevant to review her advent and rise to power.
 - A. certain
 - B. obvious
 - C. outside
- 6 Mrs. Ulgine Barrows stood charged with willful, blatant, and **persistent** attempts to destroy the efficiency and system of F & S. It was competent, material, and relevant to review her advent and rise to power.
 - A. tendency to be direct in a disagreeable, insensitive manner
 - B. continuing -- especially despite difficulties or opposition
 - C. the degree or quality of being exactly vertical or straight
- 7 Mrs. Ulgine Barrows stood charged with willful, blatant, and persistent attempts to destroy the efficiency and system of F & S. It was **competent**, material, and relevant to review her advent and rise to power.
 - A. sincerity (realness)
 - B. sufficiently capable
 - C. sensible and careful
- 8 Mrs. Ulgine Barrows stood charged with willful, blatant, and persistent attempts to destroy the efficiency and system of F & S. It was competent, material, and **relevant** to review her advent and rise to power.
 - A. having the ability to change for different situations
 - B. not concerned with what others might think of oneself
 - C. relating in a meaningful way to the issue in question
- 9 The aging gentleman had jumped to the conclusion there and then that this was a woman of singular **attainments**, equipped to bring out the best in him and in the firm.
 - A. interactions or interests
 - B. things easily set on fire
 - C. things gained with effort

- 10 *She had begun chipping at the cornices of the firm's **edifice** and now she was swinging at the foundation stones with a pickaxe.*
 A. a building or structure -- especially a large one
- or:
- a conceptual or organizational framework
 B. something that encourages something else to happen; or the process of something being encouraged
 C. a colonnade (series of regularly spaced columns) surrounding a building or enclosing a courtyard
- 11 *Her pickaxe was on the upswing, **poised** for the first blow.*
 A. removed or suppressed something considered obscene, immoral, or politically unacceptable
 B. without a personal preference; or without any tendency to move in a particular direction
 C. calm, confident, and in control—especially in movement, behavior, or when ready to act
- 12 *It had not come yet; he had received no blue memo from the enchanted Mr. Fitweiler bearing nonsensical instructions **deriving** from the obscene woman.*
 A. drawing
 B. getting
 C. copying
- 13 *It was his idea to puff a few puffs on a Camel (after the rubbing-out), stub it out in the ashtray holding her lipstick-stained Luckies, and thus drag a small **red herring** across the trail.*
 A. the act of being in a working position; or the act of starting
 B. a diversion intended to distract attention from the main issue
 C. a judgment, rough calculation or guess of qualities or a value
- 14 *On it lay a metal paper knife with an **ornate** handle.*
 A. able to be taken on as one's own
 B. indicating approval or agreement
 C. having lots of decorative detail
- 15 *He had two glasses of milk after brushing his teeth, and he felt **elated**.*
 A. had a feeling of happiness and excitement
 B. caused great mental or physical suffering
 C. consented reluctantly; or suffered defeat
- 16 *Mr. Martin allowed less than a second for his **bewildered** pause.*
 A. confused
 B. restored
 C. collided
- 17 *It has taken the form of a **persecution** complex accompanied by distressing hallucinations.*
 A. aka analyst -- psychiatrist
 B. something taken on or adopted
 C. very bad and unfair treatment
- 18 *"Mrs. Barrows is under the **delusion**," continued Mr. Fitweiler, "that you visited her last evening and behaved yourself in an—uh—unseemly manner."*
 A. a fat compound
 B. a hoofed mamma
 C. a false belief
- 19 *This brought you, rather than anyone else, to her mind—but again that is a **phenomenon** for Dr. Fitch and not for us.*
 A. something that exists or happened -- often of special interest
 B. something that was once small, but is getting very large
 C. something important that is hard to see or sense
- 20 *She was still screaming imprecations at Mr. Martin, tangled and **contradictory** imprecations.*
 A. in disagreement
 B. relative amount
 C. dramatic change

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

The Catbird Seat

by James Thurber

#	KEY	WORD	NOTE
1	B	resent	Used about 20 times per 10 books in our high school library.
2	B	cunning (<i>as in: a cunning thief</i>)	Used about 7 times per 10 books in our high school library.
3	B	appalling	Used about 10 times per 10 books in our high school library.
4	C	constant	High-utility academic word
5	B	blatant	Used about 2 times per 10 books in our high school library.
6	B	persistent	High-utility academic word
7	B	competent	High-utility academic word
8	C	relevant	High-utility academic word
9	C	attain	High-utility academic word
10	A	edifice	Used about once per 10 books in our high school library
11	C	poise	Used about 9 times per 10 books in our high school library.
12	B	derive	High-utility academic word
13	B	red herring (<i>as in: distracted with a red herring</i>)	Used about once per 10 books in our high school library
14	C	ornate	High-utility academic word
15	A	elated	Used about 5 times per 10 books in our high school library.
16	A	bewilder	Used about 15 times per 10 books in our high school library.
17	C	persecution	Used 2 times in this story.
18	C	delude	Used about 8 times per 10 books in our high school library.
19	A	phenomenon	High-utility academic word
20	A	contradict	High-utility academic word