

# The Contender

by Robert Lipsyte

## Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

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### Contents & Printing Notes

Unlike our most popular resources, this one's auto-selected.  
Review before use, or edit the DOCX from 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.

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#### 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:** congregation, contend, contract, gaunt, listless, mock, paralysis, perpetual, positive, principal, probation, probe, quiver, righteous, serene, sullen, swagger, synagogue, twilight, unanimous



#### More Vocabulary Printables

verbalworkout.com

*(all resources free)*

# ANSWER KEY

## Vocabulary Preview

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

# Vocabulary Preview

## The Contender

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

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

1. The **congregation** voted to approve appointment of the new minister.
  - A. people who agree
  - B. people who worship together
  - C. people who meet periodically
2. The teams are in fierce **contention** for first place.
  - A. surrender
  - B. confidence
  - C. competition
3. A lot of people get into trouble by signing **contracts** they don't understand.
  - A. written agreement with much small print
  - B. written agreements that is enforceable by law
  - C. written agreements with terms that are not specified
4. Don Quixote looked **gaunt** and tired.
  - A. very worried
  - B. very thin
  - C. very bored
5. She accepted her fate with listless resignation.
  - A. unenergetic
  - B. frustrated
  - C. lonely
6. American's have a hard time understanding that to mock Islam is to invite violence.
  - A. discriminate against
  - B. not believe in
  - C. make fun of
7. She is **paralyzed** from the waist down.
  - A. feeling a painful tingling
  - B. having muscle spasms
  - C. unable to move the body
8. He has a **perpetual** fear of forgetting important deadlines.
  - A. joyful
  - B. constant
  - C. secret
9. Volunteering had a **positive** impact on the whole neighborhood.
  - A. good or beneficial
  - B. harmful or damaging
  - C. minor and unnoticed
10. The **principal** reason for the delay was bad weather.
  - A. final
  - B. main
  - C. stated
11. She didn't adjust to college freedoms and now must pass academic **probation** or be expelled in the Fall.
  - A. period of supervision
  - B. honors recognition
  - C. scholarship offer
12. The committee will **probe** the cause of the failure.
  - A. investigate
  - B. make better
  - C. make worse

13. Her hands began to quiver as she opened the envelope.
- A. slightly shake
  - B. tightly grip
  - C. quickly move
14. Our cause is righteous.
- A. morally correct
  - B. logically correct
  - C. emotionally pleasing
15. She remained serene even when he was yelling at her.
- A. unmoved
  - B. calm
  - C. aggressive
16. A sullen crowd watched the execution.
- A. excited
  - B. unhappy
  - C. celebrating
17. The cowboy swaggered into the saloon with his holster unstrapped.
- A. limped with difficulty
  - B. walked confidently
  - C. snuck
18. In his speech at the synagogue, the President repeated that the United States will support Israel.
- A. Jewish school
  - B. Jewish house of worship
  - C. universal religious building
19. I awakened to a twilight sky but did not know if the sun was setting or rising.
- A. the light from the sky just before sunrise
  - B. the light from the sky just after sunset
  - C. the light from the sky between daylight and darkness
20. The jury reached a unanimous decision after just two hours of deliberation.
- A. agreed on by all
  - B. made by just one juror
  - C. split nearly evenly

## Vocabulary in Context

### The Contender

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_ / 20

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

- 1 He waited on the stoop until **twilight**, pretending to watch the sun melt into the dirty gray Harlem sky.
  - A. the time of day just before the sun rises
  - B. the time of day when the stars are brightest
  - C. the time of day between daylight and darkness
- 2 Major **swaggered** across the room, the metal tips on his pointed shoes clicking on the concrete floor.
  - A. held together (connected or united) or wrapped
  - B. walked or behaved in a highly confident manner
  - C. considered (for affect on a result or outcome)
- 3 They close early on Friday to go to **synagogue**.
  - A. a particular way of seeing or thinking about things
  - B. a place of worship for a people of the Jewish faith
  - C. collection of star systems held together by gravity
- 4 Henry limped down into the clubroom, dragging his crippled left leg, the **perpetual** grin spread across his skinny face.
  - A. having the characteristics of a *monk* (often inclined toward self-denial)
  - B. occurring so frequently it seems continual (always there)
  - C. about things beyond the physical world, such as existence, reality, or the soul
- 5 He would be Mrs. McCormick, their public school **principal**, pressing his lips together until they almost disappeared, fluttering his eyelids.
  - A. serving to help explain or demonstrate something
  - B. most important; or person that is most important
  - C. the state or degree of criticism or disagreement
- 6 It's not easy trying to become a **contender**.
  - A. someone who takes great pleasure from
  - B. someone who becomes aware of something
  - C. contestant (competitor) for a prize
- 7 The nationalist on the stepladder, his quick hands slashing through the air, was whipping his growing audience out of its morning **listlessness**.
  - A. lack of energy and normal enthusiasm
  - B. lacking a reason for doing something
  - C. inconspicuousness or trustworthiness
- 8 The **serene** look on Aunt Pearl's face calmed him at first, then made him angrier. Sometimes you'd think she was deaf, dumb, and blind, he thought.
  - A. not straightforward
  - B. calm and untroubled
  - C. not done on purpose
- 9 The other members of the **congregation** turned to watch her, as they always did, and most of them were smiling.
  - A. the act, process, or instance of telling a story
  - B. people who worship together in the same building
  - C. a general feeling of not being as good as others
- 10 The scrawny body came up very slowly, **quivering** with the strain, folding over until the face and the knees were almost touching.
  - A. to shake or tremble slightly
  - B. not working or not operating
  - C. calculates or judges too low
- 11 Bud's **gaunt** face seemed to get blacker.
  - A. not having the characteristic of or relating to bouncing back light/heat/sound...
  - B. very thin and bony
  - C. able to qualify for regular payments that permit having an income without working

- 12 *Has Alfred strayed from the path of **righteousness**?*  
A. morally correct behavior  
B. social event or ceremony  
C. Islamic religious leader
- 13 *Willie Streeter came back to the gym, **sullen and overweight**.*  
A. exactness or accuracy  
B. unhappy and withdrawn  
C. not easily identified
- 14 *Angel's face, framed in the headguard, bobbed up, **mocking him**.*  
A. concentrating  
B. bouncing back  
C. making fun of
- 15 *The ice ball exploded, spraying his entire body with freezing, **paralyzing** streams of water, weighing down his arms, deadening his legs, squeezing his heart.*  
A. changing the direction of a light wave (or other wave) by passing an opaque edge or narrow opening  
B. interfering (in another's affairs or business); or handling (something that shouldn't be handled)  
C. making unable to move
- 16 *Fingers **probed**.*  
A. pushed against or into to investigate  
B. concentrated  
C. bounced back
- 17 *Couldn't sign a **contract** because I was underage, and my momma, your grandma, wouldn't sign for me.*  
A. suntanned; or reddish-brown or yellowish-brown in color  
B. a written agreement that is enforceable by law  
C. view in a certain way so as to form a belief or opinion
- 18 *Now if I really want to do something **positive**, I can do it right here in this country.*  
A. good or beneficial  
B. not representative  
C. impossible to find
- 19 *The bell rang, but neither of them heard it, grunting, straining, slugging, and then everyone was in the ring pulling them apart, grabbing their gloves....by **unanimous decision** ....Elston Hubbard.*  
A. with everyone in agreement  
B. able to meet and talk with  
C. the quality of disagreeing
- 20 *I'm on **probation**, they'll send me away this time.*  
A. a period during which a criminal does not have to be in prison as long as they demonstrate good behavior and obey special restrictions  
B. wrongly understands  
C. wrong understanding

# ANSWER KEY

## Vocabulary in Context

### The Contender

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| #  | KEY | WORD   | NOTE   |
|----|-----|--|--|
| 1  | C   | twilight ( <i>as in: pink clouds in a twilight sky</i> )   | Used 2 times in this book.                                   |
| 2  | B   | swagger  | Used 8 times in this book.                                   |
| 3  | B   | synagogue  | Used 2 times in this book.                                   |
| 4  | B   | perpetual  | High-utility academic word                                   |
| 5  | B   | principal  | Used about 20 times per 10 books in our high school library. |
| 6  | C   | contend ( <i>as in: She contended for the gold medal</i> ) | High-utility academic word; used 10 times in this book.      |
| 7  | A   | listless   | Used about 3 times per 10 books in our high school library.  |
| 8  | B   | serene   | Used 2 times in this book.                                   |
| 9  | B   | congregation ( <i>as in: the congregation voted</i> )      | High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this book.       |
| 10 | A   | quiver   | Used 11 times in this book.                                  |
| 11 | B   | gaunt  | Used about 5 times per 10 books in our high school library.  |
| 12 | A   | righteous ( <i>as in: a righteous cause</i> )              | Used about 6 times per 10 books in our high school library.  |
| 13 | B   | sullen ( <i>as in: a sullen mood</i> )                     | Used about 8 times per 10 books in our high school library.  |
| 14 | C   | mock ( <i>as in: don't mock me</i> )                       | High-utility academic word                                   |
| 15 | C   | paralysis  | Used about 11 times per 10 books in our high school library. |
| 16 | A   | probe  | Used about 10 times per 10 books in our high school library. |
| 17 | B   | contract ( <i>as in: legal contract</i> )                  | High-utility academic word                                   |
| 18 | A   | positive ( <i>as in: had a positive effect</i> )           | High-utility academic word                                   |
| 19 | A   | unanimous  | Used about 2 times per 10 books in our high school library.  |
| 20 | A   | probation  | Used 2 times in this book.                                   |