

The Hobbit

Chapters 5–8

by J. R. R. Tolkien

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: abominable, betterment, clamour, devour, lofty, pinnacle, plight, precipice, subterranean, wretched

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 1–4 · Bilbo's unexpected party and the road out

Section 2 · Chapters 5–8 · Bilbo alone in the goblin tunnels

Section 3 · Chapters 9–12 · In the halls of the Wood-elves

Section 4 · Chapters 13–15 · Inside the Lonely Mountain

Section 5 · Chapters 16–19 · Under siege at the Lonely Mountain

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

The Hobbit

Chapters 5–8

by J. R. R. Tolkien

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. The kitchen gave off an **abominable** stench.

- A. sharp and smoky
- B. vaguely familiar
- C. thoroughly disgusting

2. She took night classes, hoping for the **betterment** of her career.

- A. recognition
- B. protection
- C. improvement

3. A **clamour** spread through the crowded stadium.

- A. a quick, darting movement
- B. a loud, noisy uproar
- C. a tense, uneasy feeling

4. The raging wildfire **devoured** everything in its path.

- A. lightly scorch the surface
- B. consume or destroy completely
- C. race quickly past

5. The eagles built their nests in **lofty** treetops.

- A. thick and leafy
- B. safe and sheltered
- C. very high up

6. A lone hawk perched on the rocky **pinnacle**.

- A. a tall, pointed peak
- B. a smooth, round stone
- C. a low, flat boulder

7. Neighbors gathered to help the family in their **plight**.

- A. a difficult situation
- B. a long, hard journey
- C. a bitter, ongoing feud

8. Hikers paused at the edge of the **precipice**.

- A. a very steep cliff
- B. a thick pine forest
- C. a fast-moving river

9. Workers explored the **subterranean** tunnels for hours.

- A. cramped and winding
- B. located underground
- C. long abandoned

10. He offered only a **wretched** handful of coins for the painting.

- A. paltry; of little worth
- B. shiny and freshly minted
- C. crumpled and dirty

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

enchantment — magic, especially a spell or magical power placed on someone or something

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

The Hobbit

Chapters 5-8

by J. R. R. Tolkien

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

Vocabulary in Context

The Hobbit

Chapters 5–8

by J. R. R. Tolkien

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 “... the edge of an underground stream that crossed the passage, or the brink of a deep dark subterranean lake.”

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

- A. unusually deep and cold
- B. hidden in total darkness
- C. located beneath the ground

2 “This thing all things devours:
Birds, beasts, trees, flowers;
Gnaws iron, bites steel;
Grinds hard stones to meal;
Slays king, ruins town,
And beats high mountain down.”

The passage most strongly suggests that, in this riddle, “devours” means to...

- A. eat food very hungrily
- B. chew and swallow whole
- C. destroy things completely

3 “... in his hiding-place he kept a few wretched oddments, and one very beautiful thing ...”

In context, the word “wretched” emphasizes that Gollum’s oddments are...

- A. worn out and broken
- B. of very little worth
- C. in a sad, sorry state

4 “... a glimpse of endless unmarked days without light or hope of betterment, hard stone, cold fish, sneaking and whispering.”

It can reasonably be inferred that Gollum’s life holds no hope of...

- A. improving in any way
- B. ending any time soon
- C. company or friendship

5 “... those abominable tunnels to look for him, then drat him, I say.”

Which detail from the section best supports the dwarf’s calling the goblin tunnels “abominable”?

- A. the tunnels had many side-passages
- B. the tunnels sloped steadily down
- C. the company was nearly killed there

6 “... their dreadful clamour almost made the hobbit fall out of his pine-tree.”

According to the passage, the Wargs’ clamour was loud enough to...

- A. nearly shake Bilbo from his tree
- B. drown out Gandalf’s voice
- C. echo through the tunnels

7 “He was sitting, black in the moonlight, on the top of a lonely pinnacle of rock ...”

Which statement about the Lord of the Eagles is best supported by the passage?

- A. He nested low among the trees
- B. He perched atop a tall rock peak
- C. He stood in the wolves’ glade

8 “... could not reach their lofty seats, or drive them from the mountains.”

According to the passage, the goblins could not reach the eagles because the eagles’ seats were...

- A. very high up
- B. hidden from view
- C. heavily guarded

9 “... no path down off it except by jumping over a precipice.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the only way to leave the rock shelf was to...

- A. follow a sloping path
- B. leap off a sheer drop
- C. climb down a stairway

10 “Probably I can help you out of your present plight, and I need a little help myself.”

The passage most strongly suggests that, here, “plight” means a...

- A. difficult, troubling situation
- B. solemn promise or pledge
- C. long and tiring journey

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

The Hobbit
Chapters 5–8
by J. R. R. Tolkien

#	KEY	NOTE
1	C	
2	C	
3	B	Here 'wretched' means 'paltry, of little worth,' not the more familiar 'miserable'; the contrast with Gollum's one treasured ring points to value, not sorrow.
4	A	
5	C	Event comprehension. The key rests on recalling the company's capture and narrow escape in the goblin tunnels, which is what makes them hateful rather than merely a maze.
6	A	
7	B	
8	A	
9	B	
10	A	The 'promise' choice draws on the unrelated archaic sense of 'plight' ('plight one's troth'); here it means a predicament.

Teacher Context: Chapters 5–8

Lost in the goblin tunnels, Bilbo finds a magic ring and wins a riddle-contest with Gollum. The company then escapes over the mountains with the eagles' help, shelters with Beorn, and enters the forest of Mirkwood, where giant spiders attack. Ends before 'Barrels Out of Bond' so the Wood-elves' captivity opens the next section.