

The Kite Runner

Chapters 20–23

by Khaled Hosseini

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: absolve, destitute, epiphany, grotesque, menial, prudence, remorse, sanctity, splendor, unadulterated

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 1–6 · Amir and Hassan's boyhood in Kabul

Section 2 · Chapters 7–9 · The day of the kite tournament

Section 3 · Chapters 10–13 · Amir and Baba flee Afghanistan

Section 4 · Chapters 14–19 · A call from Rahim Khan

Section 5 · Chapters 20–23 · Amir's return to a changed Kabul

Section 6 · Chapters 24–25 · Trying to bring Sohrab home

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. After a long confession, the priest agreed to **absolve** the young man.

- A. to clear of blame
- B. to take pity on
- C. to pray with

2. The long war left thousands of refugees **destitute**.

- A. deeply homesick
- B. deeply weary
- C. utterly poor

3. During the long drive home, he had an **epiphany**.

- A. a wave of doubt
- B. a sudden realization
- C. a restless mood

4. The old gargoyle's **grotesque** features stared down from the roof.

- A. ugly and distorted
- B. worn and faded
- C. blank and lifeless

5. He took a series of **menial** jobs to pay for college.

- A. lowly and unskilled
- B. temporary and part-time
- C. tiring and physical

6. She managed her savings with great **prudence**.

- A. caution and good sense
- B. secrecy and distrust
- C. energy and ambition

7. He felt **remorse** for the way he had treated his friend.

- A. simple embarrassment
- B. anger at himself
- C. regret for wrongdoing

8. Visitors spoke softly to respect the **sanctity** of the temple.

- A. deep quiet
- B. sacred quality
- C. great age

9. Guests marveled at the **splendor** of the royal ballroom.

- A. sheer size
- B. lively energy
- C. grand magnificence

10. Winning the prize filled her with **unadulterated** joy.

- A. barely hidden
- B. pure and complete
- C. calm and quiet

ANSWER KEY

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

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 “Returning to Kabul was like running into an old, forgotten friend and seeing that life hadn’t been good to him, that he’d become homeless and destitute.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “destitute” most nearly suggests that the old friend has been...

- A. left with nothing at all
- B. grown cold and unfriendly
- C. made hard to recognize

2 “But here I was now, less than fifty feet from them, telling myself that the sudden taste in my mouth wasn’t unadulterated, naked fear.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the fear Amir feels is...

- A. complete, though he denies it
- B. only a passing flicker
- C. mixed with excitement

3 “Like so much else in Kabul, my father’s house was the picture of fallen splendor.”

The author most likely includes the phrase “fallen splendor” in order to...

- A. contrast its grand past with ruin
- B. show it was always plain
- C. praise its present beauty

4 “How shall we punish those who dishonor the sanctity of marriage?”

The passage most strongly suggests that the cleric regards marriage as...

- A. a private personal matter
- B. a minor social custom
- C. sacred and not to be violated

5 “Nothing wrong with cowardice as long as it comes with prudence.”

Which choice best describes the narrator’s attitude toward his own cowardice?

- A. ashamed of his recklessness
- B. excused when joined to caution
- C. proud of his boldness

6 “But one day I had an epiphany. I had it in jail.”

The ironic use of the word “epiphany” most strongly suggests that Assef’s realization was...

- A. a twisted excuse for cruelty
- B. a turn away from faith
- C. a true moral awakening

7 “I know it doesn’t absolve anyone of anything, but the Kabul we lived in in those days was a strange world ...”

According to the letter, telling the truth about the past...

- A. blames Amir alone
- B. clears no one of blame
- C. fully excuses the lies

8 “And this is what I want you to understand, that good, real good, was born out of your father’s remorse.”

Rahim Khan links Baba’s good deeds to his “remorse” in order to...

- A. praise Baba’s wealth
- B. prove Baba did no wrong
- C. show good can grow from guilt

9 “Selling junk for petty cash, our menial jobs, our grimy apartment—the American version of a hut ...”

According to the passage, the family’s life in America is best described as...

- A. glamorous but lonely
- B. comfortable and secure
- C. lowly work and poor surroundings

10 “The worst of it was my mouth, a grotesque blob of purple and red, all bruise and stitches.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “grotesque” most nearly suggests that Amir’s mouth looked...

- A. merely swollen
- B. repulsively misshapen
- C. oddly comical

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	A	Here 'unadulterated' means total or pure, not its usual food or purity sense.
3	A	
4	C	
5	B	
6	A	Character comprehension. Assef's 'epiphany' is a grotesque parody of genuine insight, justifying his violence.
7	B	
8	C	Theme comprehension. Baba's remorse traces to fathering Hassan in secret; his charity was his redemption.
9	C	
10	B	

Teacher Context: Chapters 20–23

Amir reaches a Kabul devastated by war and the Taliban as he searches for the boy he was sent to find. The search leads to a dangerous confrontation and a desperate rescue. The section carries the climax of Amir's mission through its immediate aftermath, breaking before the final chapters in which he tries to bring the boy home.