

The Miserable Mill

by Lemony Snicket

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 from the Resources menu.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

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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: acquire, askew, coincidence, convey, cunning, daunt, despise, diligent, dismay, endeavor, entwined, foreman, fraud, imperative, inordinate, nevertheless, optimistic, ostentatious, paltry, treachery



More Vocabulary Printables

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ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. They are working to **acquire** nuclear weapons.
 - A. obtain (get)
 - B. eliminate (get rid of)
 - C. disguise or hide
2. The earthquake left our pictures hanging **askew**.
 - A. crooked
 - B. alone
 - C. covered in dust
3. It was a fortunate **coincidence** that we ran into each other at Starbucks.
 - A. unlikely event
 - B. plan
 - C. likely event
4. Please **convey** my gratitude for her hospitality.
 - A. express
 - B. accept
 - C. understand
5. The worst mix -- **greedy, cunning,** and without morals.
 - A. stupid and impatient
 - B. clever and deceitful
 - C. strong and cruel
6. Obstacles don't **daunt** her.
 - A. anger
 - B. distract
 - C. discourage
7. She **despises** his lifestyle.
 - A. admires
 - B. wants
 - C. hates
8. A **diligent** detective investigates all clues.
 - A. lazy and careless
 - B. rude and dishonest
 - C. careful and hardworking
9. Hope was replaced by **dismay**.
 - A. satisfaction
 - B. faith
 - C. sorrow
10. I will **endeavor** to finish by Friday.
 - A. not be able
 - B. promise
 - C. try
11. The economies are thoroughly **entwined**.
 - A. connected
 - B. strong
 - C. weak
12. If you want to leave early, you have to ask the **foreman**.
 - A. supervisor
 - B. owner
 - C. customer

13. The company was shut down after investigators uncovered a massive tax fraud scheme.
- A. deception to get something illegally
 - B. foolish
 - C. unsuccessful
14. It's becoming imperative that we get that national deficit under control.
- A. essential and urgent
 - B. a popular belief
 - C. an excuse for ignoring other problems
15. She spent an inordinate amount of time choosing a font.
- A. careful
 - B. ordinary
 - C. excessive
16. She loves him. Nevertheless, she is determined to stop seeing him unless he stops drinking.
- A. also
 - B. despite that
 - C. in addition
17. She keeps telling me her chances of dying in a car accident are 1 in 150, but I keep telling her that's too optimistic if she drives after drinking.
- A. hopeful
 - B. gloomy
 - C. simplistic
18. She arrived in an ostentatious stretch limo.
- A. expensive
 - B. long
 - C. showy
19. They offered her a paltry amount for the rare book, hoping she didn't know its real value.
- A. insignificant
 - B. unfair
 - C. confusing
20. The general's treachery put the whole army in danger.
- A. bravery
 - B. betrayal
 - C. confusion

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 20

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

- 1 For instance, a book that began with the sentence "Once upon a time there was a family of **cunning** little chipmunks who lived in a hollow tree" would probably contain a story full of talking animals who get into all sorts of mischief.
 - 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
- 2 Try as they might, they just couldn't believe it was a **coincidence** that the town in which they were to live had a building that looked just like the tattoo of Count Olaf.
 - A. a situation where things happened at the same time by chance even though it was unlikely
 - B. a person who studies DNA sequences or units of heredity that influence biological traits
 - C. baseball: a pitch thrown with little spin (so that it moves in an unpredictable manner)
- 3 "'Assiduous' and '**diligent**' both mean the same thing," said Klaus, who knew lots of impressive words from all the books he had read.
 - A. impossible to find
 - B. good or beneficial
 - C. hard work and care
- 4 And I know because I have written down all the details in order to **convey** to you, the reader, just how miserable their experience was.
 - A. communicate or express
 - B. create dramatic change
 - C. mirror back (an image)
- 5 The children could tell, from Phil's statement about everything and everybody having a good side, that he was an **optimist**.
 - A. someone who expects the best; or who focuses on the good part of things
 - B. someone who expects the worst; or who focuses on the bad part of things
 - C. someone who joins with others in a public protest or display of support
- 6 Foreman Flacutono threw his pots on the floor, walked over to the tiny green boxes, and grabbed one.
 - A. a person chosen to lead and speak for a group, especially at work or in a courtroom
 - B. someone who roughly calculates or guesses a value, quantity, or extent of something
 - C. someone responsible for making a judgment after thinking carefully about something
- 7 Klaus's glasses were hanging **askew**, a phrase which here means "tilted to one side from leaning over logs the entire morning."
 - A. not straight; or not right
 - B. opposed to "globalization"
 - C. rain, snow, hail, or sleet
- 8 The **dismayed** orphans looked at their reflections, and their dismayed reflections looked back at them.
 - A. (verb) created, started, settled, or set in a place OR (adjective) existing, or familiar
 - B. persuaded someone to want something (often sex or love) by tempting with something desired
 - C. to feel sadness, disappointment, or worry -- typically in response to something surprising
- 9 Without money, of course, it was difficult to **acquire** any books, but I did have three books donated.
 - A. obtain (come into the possession of something)
 - B. something that is necessary for something else
 - C. a slight amount; or to contain a slight amount
- 10 Violet knew, of course, that her parents had never guessed, when they told her this, that the sort of trouble her siblings would get into would be so **ostentatiously**—a word which here means "really, really"—horrendous, but still she felt as if she had let her parents down.
 - A. in a manner that is supposed (rather than known to be so)
 - B. not in a manner that is able to be promised or guaranteed
 - C. in a manner intended to attract notice and impress others

- 11 *The cage part of the string machine was split open like an egg, and the string had become completely **entwined** and entangled.*
- interconnected (not easily separated) or twisted together
 - viewed in a certain way so as to form a belief or opinion
 - promised, guaranteed, or indicated certainty of something
- 12 *The first sentence was "This tome will endeavor to scrutinize, in quasi-inclusive breadth, the epistemology of ophthalmologically contrived appraisals of ocular systems and the subsequent and requisite exertions **imperative** for expugnation of injurious states," and as Violet read it out loud to her sister, both children felt the dread that comes when you begin a very boring and difficult book.*
- essential and urgent
 - not demonstrative of
 - sincerity (realness)
- 13 *Sunny said, wondering what in the world "**endeavor**" meant.*
- a slight amount; or to contain a slight amount
 - to write or exchange written letters or emails
 - to attempt; or a project or activity attempted
- 14 *Grateful that she could skip that **daunting** first paragraph—the word "daunting" here means "full of incredibly difficult words"—she flipped through Advanced Ocular Science until she reached "Hypnosis and Mind Control."*
- gradually adding or removing
 - subsequent (happening later)
 - discouraging or intimidating
- 15 *Nevertheless, when she found a sentence that appeared to be useful, she gave Sunny a waking nudge and read the sentence out loud.*
- in keeping with or in agreement with what was just stated
 - despite that (used to connect contrasting ideas)
 - therefore (for that reason)
- 16 *After so many narrow escapes from Count Olaf's **treachery**, this seemed to be the moment of his—or in this case, her—terrible triumph.*
- reporter
 - betrayal
 - disorder
- 17 *She only had her four sharp teeth, and, looking Dr. Orwell right in the eye, she opened her mouth and pointed all four at this **despicable** person.*
- not easily influenced or harmed OR not capable of being treated in a particular way
 - someone who consumes more than they should -- especially eating and drinking too much
 - terrible (vile; disgusting) -- worthy of being strongly disliked and looked down upon
- 18 *You, Count Olaf, are under arrest for various murders and attempted murders, various **frauds** and...*
- illegal deceptions for financial gain
 - instances of using the same consonant at the beginning of each stressed syllable -- such as "rapidly rising river"
 - removals and examination of tissues or liquids from the living body to determine the existence or cause of diseases
- 19 *But their experience at the lumbermill had been so very dreadful that they didn't care much that they were leaving **Paltry**•ville.*
- insignificant in amount or quality
 - degree to which things are related
 - able to be understood or explained
- 20 *The Baudelaire orphans were alive, and it seemed that maybe they had an **inordinate** amount of luck after all.*
- mental activity of which one is not self-aware
 - with the involvement of other people or things
 - excessive or more than is reasonable or normal

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	WORD	NOTE
1	B	cunning (<i>as in: a cunning thief</i>)	Used 2 times in this book.
2	A	coincidence	Used 4 times in this book.
3	C	diligent (<i>as in: she is diligent</i>)	High-utility academic word; used 3 times in this book.
4	A	convey (<i>as in: convey her thoughts</i>)	High-utility academic word
5	A	optimistic	High-utility academic word; used 9 times in this book.
6	A	foreman	Used 117 times in this book.
7	A	askew	Used about once per 10 books in our high school library
8	C	dismay	Used 6 times in this book.
9	A	acquire	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this book.
10	C	ostentatious	High-utility academic word
11	A	entwined	Used about 3 times per 10 books in our high school library.
12	A	imperative	Used about 2 times per 10 books in our high school library.
13	C	endeavor	Used 2 times in this book.
14	C	daunt	Used 2 times in this book.
15	B	nevertheless	High-utility academic word
16	B	treachery	Used 2 times in this book.
17	C	despise	Used 5 times in this book.
18	A	fraud	Used 2 times in this book.
19	A	paltry	Used about 2 times per 10 books in our high school library.
20	C	inordinate	Used 9 times in this book.