

The Monkey's Paw

by W. W. Jacobs

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: aghast, compensation, dubiously, expired, groped, resignation, resounded, senseless, started, wail

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.



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Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. She stood **aghast** when she saw the wrecked car.
 - A. annoyed and impatient
 - B. confused and unsure
 - C. shocked and horrified
2. The company offered her **compensation** for the damage to her car.
 - A. payment to make up for a loss
 - B. a formal apology for the trouble
 - C. a promise to do better next time
3. She eyed the strange-looking food **dubiously** before taking a bite.
 - A. in a curious, interested way
 - B. in a doubtful, unsure way
 - C. in a bored, tired way
4. The last flame of the campfire slowly **expired** in the night.
 - A. went out and died away
 - B. flickered and danced
 - C. crackled and popped
5. In the pitch-dark basement, he **groped** for the light switch.
 - A. searched with the eyes
 - B. felt about with the hands
 - C. grabbed all at once
6. He gave a sigh of **resignation** and began the long walk home.
 - A. relief that the worst was behind him
 - B. frustration at how things turned out
 - C. acceptance of what cannot be changed
7. The referee's whistle **resounded** across the crowded stadium.
 - A. was suddenly cut short
 - B. was lost in the noise
 - C. echoed loudly through the air
8. The boxer fell **senseless** to the mat after the heavy blow.
 - A. unconscious and unaware
 - B. weak and trembling
 - C. dead and lifeless
9. He **started** when the balloon suddenly popped behind him.
 - A. jumped in surprise
 - B. covered his ears
 - C. spun around to look
10. A **wail** echoed down the hospital hallway.
 - A. a low, murmured whisper
 - B. a long, mournful cry
 - C. a harsh, angry shout

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

rubicund — having a red or flushed complexion

fakirs — Hindu or Muslim holy men; wandering ascetics

wont — accustomed; in the habit of

antimacassar — cloth draped over a chair-back to keep it clean

betokened — showed; was a sign of

fusillade — rapid burst, like a spray of gunfire

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	C
2	A
3	B
4	A
5	B
6	C
7	C
8	A
9	A
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 "Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. 'I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact,' he said, slowly."

As it is used in the passage, the word 'dubiously' most nearly suggests that Mr. White...

- A. half doubted the paw's power
- B. was eager to test its magic
- C. was afraid to keep holding it

2 "Outside, the wind was higher than ever, and the old man started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs."

It can reasonably be inferred from the way the old man 'started' that he...

- A. was getting up to shut the door
- B. was angry about the noise upstairs
- C. was jumpy and on edge

3 "They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son's services, they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation."

According to the passage, the 'certain sum' is being offered in order to...

- A. make up for the family's loss
- B. honor a promise made to the son
- C. pay wages still owed to the son

4 "Unconscious of his wife's shriek, the old man smiled faintly, put out his hands like a sightless man, and dropped, a senseless heap, to the floor."

As used in the passage, the word 'senseless' most nearly means...

- A. unconscious
- B. foolish
- C. lifeless

5 "But the days passed, and expectation gave place to resignation—the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes miscalled, apathy."

The author most likely adds that this resignation is 'sometimes miscalled' apathy in order to...

- A. suggest the couple no longer grieve
- B. show it is not mere indifference
- C. suggest their sorrow will soon fade

6 "“Good God, you are mad!” he cried, aghast.”"

As used in the passage, the word 'aghast' most nearly means...

- A. filled with horror
- B. shaking with anger
- C. wild with excitement

7 "His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way round the table, and groped along the wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand."

It can reasonably be inferred that he 'groped' along the wall because he...

- A. was trying to move without a sound
- B. needed the wall to hold himself up
- C. could see nothing in the darkness

8 "The candle-end, which had burned below the rim of the china candlestick, was throwing pulsating shadows on the ceiling and walls, until, with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired."

It can reasonably be inferred that after the candle 'expired,' the room...

- A. glowed with a steadier light
- B. was left in total darkness
- C. was covered in leaping shadows

9 "A loud knock resounded through the house."

As used in the passage, the word 'resounded' most nearly means...

- A. was repeated many times
- B. shook the heavy door
- C. echoed loudly

10 "A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond."

The passage most strongly suggests that the 'wail of disappointment and misery' meant...

- A. she had been hurt by the cold wind
- B. no one was outside the open door
- C. the one she longed for had returned

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	C	Here 'started' means flinched — gave a sudden involuntary jump — not 'began'; the getting-up distractor catches that misreading.
3	A	
4	A	Not the everyday 'foolish' sense: here 'senseless' means fainted dead away. 'Unconscious' earlier in the sentence is a different sense — 'unaware of' — doing different work.
5	B	'Resignation' vs 'apathy' is the point of the aside: the Whites still feel their grief but expect nothing; apathy would mean the feeling itself is gone.
6	A	
7	C	
8	B	
9	C	
10	B	