

The Necklace

by Guy de Maupassant

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: calamity, contrasted, despair, distinguished, ecstasy, impoverished, privations, prospect, rapture, ruinous

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

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Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

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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. The earthquake was the worst **calamity** the region had ever faced.

- A. a serious accusation
- B. a harsh punishment
- C. a terrible disaster

2. The sunny weather **contrasted** sharply with her gloomy mood.

- A. blended in easily with
- B. was remarkably similar to
- C. was noticeably different from

3. Don't give in to **despair**—there is always a reason to keep trying.

- A. a sudden burst of anger
- B. a feeling of physical pain
- C. a complete loss of hope

4. The **distinguished** scientist received the honorary degree for groundbreaking research.

- A. wealthy and powerful
- B. little-known and humble
- C. respected and admired

5. The child opened her birthday present and squealed in **ecstasy**.

- A. sudden and extreme fear
- B. overwhelming happiness or delight
- C. a state of total confusion

6. The charity provides meals to **impoverished** families in the community.

- A. deeply religious
- B. recently relocated
- C. extremely poor

7. The refugees suffered terrible **privations** during the long winter.

- A. private areas set aside for use
- B. special privileges for a select few
- C. severe lack of basic necessities

8. The **prospect** of spending the whole summer at the beach filled her with excitement.

- A. a distant memory of something long past
- B. the expected possibility of something
- C. an official order from someone in charge

9. She listened to her music in a state of pure **rapture**.

- A. intense pleasure or joy
- B. overwhelming sleepiness
- C. complete boredom

10. The family took on **ruinous** debts to keep their business alive.

- A. devastating
- B. related to ancient ruins
- C. surprisingly manageable

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

dowry — in that time in France, money or property a bride's family gave at marriage

vestibule — an entrance hall or lobby

garret — a small, cramped room at the top of a house, rented cheaply

sou, louis — denominations of French money

compound interest — interest charged on both the original debt and earlier interest, so the amount owed keeps growing faster

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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

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 *"She had no dowry, no expectations, no way of being known, understood, loved, married by any rich and distinguished man; so she let herself be married to a little clerk of the Ministry of Public Instruction."*

As it is used in the excerpt, the word "distinguished" most nearly suggests that the man Mathilde dreams of is...

- A. respected and admired in society
- B. easy to tell apart from other men
- C. reserved and difficult to approach

2 *"She fastened it round her throat, outside her high-necked waist, and was lost in ecstasy at her reflection in the mirror."*

The author most likely describes Mathilde as "lost in ecstasy" in order to...

- A. suggest she is confused by her own reflection
- B. prove the necklace is the most valuable piece
- C. show how deeply the necklace satisfies her longing

3 *"She danced with rapture, with passion, intoxicated by pleasure, forgetting all in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success..."*

In the passage, Mathilde is characterized as...

- A. performing enthusiasm to impress the guests
- B. completely consumed by the joy of the evening
- C. calmly enjoying a well-deserved reward

4 *"He threw over her shoulders the wraps he had brought, the modest wraps of common life, the poverty of which contrasted with the elegance of the ball dress."*

Which choice best describes Mathilde's feelings as her wraps are placed over her shoulders?

- A. gratitude that her husband remembered to bring them
- B. shame at how different her wraps are from her dress
- C. indifference toward what the other women think

5 *"They went toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold."*

It can reasonably be inferred that "despair" suggests the Loiseles are experiencing...

- A. hopelessness beyond mere physical discomfort
- B. exhaustion after a long evening out
- C. frustration with each other for staying late

6 *"She waited all day, in the same condition of mad fear before this terrible calamity."*

Which statement is best supported by the excerpt?

- A. Mathilde is angry about an unfair accusation
- B. Mathilde is consumed by dread of a disaster
- C. Mathilde is calmly waiting for help to arrive

7 *"He gave notes, took up ruinous obligations, dealt with usurers and all the race of lenders."*

The author most likely uses the word "ruinous" in order to...

- A. stress that the debt will have severe, lasting consequences
- B. suggest that Loisel is careless with money
- C. indicate that the lenders are dishonest

8 *"... frightened by the trouble yet to come ..., by the prospect of all the physical privations and moral tortures that he was to suffer, he went to get the new necklace ..."*

The passage most strongly suggests that Loisel...

- A. is eager to resolve the situation quickly
- B. accepts future suffering to replace the necklace
- C. does not realize how much the debt will cost

9 *"... frightened by the trouble yet to come ..., by the prospect of all the physical privations and moral tortures that he was to suffer, he went to get the new necklace ..."*

As it is used in the excerpt, the word "privations" most nearly suggests that Loisel expects to endure...

- A. severe lack of basic comforts and necessities
- B. the physical pain of hard labor
- C. a loss of personal privacy

10 *"Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become the woman of impoverished households—strong and hard and rough."*

According to the passage, Mathilde has become "the woman of impoverished households," which means she now...

- A. feels emotionally drained despite financial comfort
- B. endures the harsh physical life of the extremely poor
- C. manages several different households at once

ANSWER KEY

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