

The Pit and the Pendulum

by Edgar Allan Poe

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 via "View / Print / Edit Web
Quiz" on the Resources menu.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Answer Key — Preview	2	teacher use / self-check only
Vocabulary Preview	3	

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context	5	
Answer Key — In Context	7	teacher use only

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: abyss, agony, comprehend, deduce, despair, earnest, enable, endeavor, hideous, moreover, notwithstanding, pendulum, perceptible, perish, pervasive, ponder, prostrate, resolve, sufficient, tumult



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ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. Our foot is stuck on the accelerator, and we are headed towards an **abyss**.
 - A. turning point
 - B. dangerous situation
 - C. major opportunity
2. She cried out in **agony**.
 - A. sudden surprise
 - B. intense anger
 - C. intense suffering
3. Washington fails to **comprehend** the change in China's strategy.
 - A. fully understand
 - B. regard respectfully
 - C. respond adequately to
4. She trusts only what she can measure or can **deduce** from measurement.
 - A. describe in detail
 - B. conclude by reasoning
 - C. find in a book
5. She rescued me from **despair**.
 - A. fear
 - B. poverty
 - C. hopelessness
6. She has a casual, go-with-the-flow personality and doesn't appreciate his **earnestness**.
 - A. frivolous attitude
 - B. seriousness
 - C. falseness
7. Modern smartphones **enable** people to work from almost anywhere.
 - A. require
 - B. allow
 - C. remind
8. I will **endeavor** to finish by Friday.
 - A. not be able
 - B. promise
 - C. try
9. He had a **hideous** scar running from his forehead to his jaw.
 - A. barely noticeable
 - B. extremely ugly
 - C. perfectly healed
10. Many graduates have high college debt. **Moreover**, too many of them haven't found good-paying jobs.
 - A. in contrast to that
 - B. in addition to that
 - C. as a result of that
11. The budget was approved, **notwithstanding** the loud protests from the opposition.
 - A. in spite of
 - B. as a result of
 - C. in addition to
12. The clock's **pendulum** swung steadily from side to side.
 - A. fixed support
 - B. swinging weight
 - C. measuring mark

13. She's walking with a barely perceptible limp.
A. painful
B. new
C. noticeable
14. We can work together or perish separately.
A. work
B. die
C. fail
15. It is a country where corruption pervades their government at every level.
A. is stopped by
B. is spread in
C. is remembered by
16. We pondered our fate.
A. thought about
B. feared for
C. actively changed
17. He lay prostrate on the floor after collapsing from exhaustion.
A. curled up tightly
B. sitting upright
C. lying face-down
18. I resolved to never drink again.
A. was forced
B. was encouraged
C. firmly decided
19. Is there sufficient cause for a search warrant?
A. adequate (enough)
B. clear or obvious
C. dangerous
20. I couldn't hear her over the tumult.
A. loud disorderly noise
B. loud unpleasant music
C. loud machinery

Vocabulary in Context
The Pit and the Pendulum
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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 20

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

- 1 ... and much **earnestness** of endeavor have enabled me vaguely to recall.
A. the state of being awake
B. sincerity or seriousness
C. able to take on or adopt
- 2 Then entire forgetfulness of all that followed; of all that a later day and much earnestness of endeavor have **enabled** me vaguely to recall.
A. got closer to
B. made possible
C. not satisfied
- 3 I brought to mind the inquisitorial proceedings, and attempted from that point to **deduce** my real condition.
A. almost, but not exact
B. conclude by reasoning
C. decrease in intensity
- 4 **Moreover**, my dungeon, as well as all the condemned cells at Toledo, had stone floors, and light was not altogether excluded.
A. despite that (used to connect contrasting ideas)
B. in addition to what has just been said
C. even though -- used to connect contrasting ideas
- 5 It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, the most **hideous** of fates.
A. the characteristic of demonstrating something
B. extremely ugly, offensive, and/or frightening
C. the quality of not being sensible and careful
- 6 My excessive fatigue induced me to remain **prostrate**; and sleep soon overtook me as I lay.
A. spend time with; or someone with whom a person spends a lot of time
B. an overwhelming amount; or to overwhelm -- especially said of water
C. lying down -- typically face downward on the ground as in submission
- 7 Groping about the masonry just below the margin, I succeeded in dislodging a small fragment, and let it fall into the **abyss**.
A. of the American Indian civilization of Yucatan and Belize and Guatemala that reached its peak between AD 300 and 900
B. a hole or dropoff so deep the bottom cannot be seen -- often used figuratively to imply a frightening bottomless pit
C. removal and examination of tissues or liquids from the living body to determine the existence or cause of a disease
- 8 Shaking in every limb, I groped my way back to the wall; **resolving** there to perish rather than risk the terrors of the wells,
A. fighting
B. changing
C. deciding
- 9 Shaking in every limb, I groped my way back to the wall; resolving there to **perish** rather than risk the terrors of the wells,
A. move into position to work; or start
B. die
C. to spread to other parts of the body
- 10 But what mainly disturbed me was the idea that had **perceptibly** descended.
A. in a manner that is not sensible and careful
B. with feelings of deep respect and admiration
C. in a manner that is capable of being noticed

- 11 **Notwithstanding** *terrifically wide sweep (some thirty feet or more) and the its hissing vigor of its descent, sufficient to sunder these very walls of iron, still the fraying of my robe would be all that, for several minutes, it would accomplish.*
- A. despite
 - B. in keeping with or in agreement with what was just stated
 - C. therefore (for that reason)
- 12 I forced myself to **ponder** *upon the sound of the crescent as it should pass across the garment...*
- A. think deeply or carefully
 - B. stop (something from happening)
 - C. fulfill one's highest potential
- 13 I saw that some ten or twelve vibrations would bring the steel in actual contact with my robe, and with this observation there suddenly came over my spirit all the keen, collected calmness of **despair**.
- A. adjusts a lens to make an image clear
 - B. not creating disagreement or struggle
 - C. distressed (at not knowing how to improve a bad situation)
- 14 The measured movement of the **pendulum** *disturbed them not at all.*
- A. an inhabitant of Assyria -- an ancient kingdom centered in northern Mesopotamia which is in present-day Iraq; or their language
 - B. a weight hanging from a fixed location so that the weight swings freely back and forth under the influence of gravity -- such as is seen in some mechanical clocks
 - C. artist who belonged to an early 20th century art movement that expressed inner feelings through distorted renditions of reality
- 15 At a wave of my hand my deliverers hurried **tumultuously** away.
- A. in a noisy disorderly manner
 - B. of a guitar or other musical instrument: not using electricity to amplify sound
 - C. done so as to not represent or imitate external reality or the objects of nature
- 16 I had but escaped death in one form of **agony**, to be delivered unto worse than death in some other.
- A. size or dimension
 - B. circular movement
 - C. intense suffering
- 17 I have observed that, although the outlines of the figures upon the walls were **sufficiently** distinct, yet the colors seemed blurred and indefinite.
- A. adequately (in a manner that provides enough -- often without being more than is needed)
 - B. done in a rude or unfriendly manner because of using too few words or moving too quickly
 - C. in a manner that relates to questions that cannot be answered with the scientific method
- 18 A suffocating odour **pervaded** the prison!
- A. not concentrated
 - B. filled
 - C. stopped fighting
- 19 Yet, for a wild moment, did my spirit refuse to **comprehend** the meaning of what I saw.
- A. understand
 - B. to concentrate, look at; or the act of concentration
 - C. rug-like artwork -- often hung on a wall for display
- 20 ...endeavoured to appreciate or understand what was taking place.
- A. decided in advance
 - B. not disagreed with
 - C. tried or attempted

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	WORD	NOTE
1	B	earnest	High-utility academic word; used 3 times in this story.
2	B	enable	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this story.
3	B	deduce	Used 2 times in this story.
4	B	moreover	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this story.
5	B	hideous	Used 4 times in this story.
6	C	prostrate	Used 2 times in this story.
7	B	abyss	Used 4 times in this story.
8	C	resolve (<i>as in: I resolved to stop drinking.</i>)	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this story.
9	B	perish	High-utility academic word; used 4 times in this story.
10	C	perceptible	Used 2 times in this story.
11	A	notwithstanding	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this story.
12	A	ponder	Used 3 times in this story.
13	C	despair (<i>as in: she felt despair</i>)	High-utility academic word; used 4 times in this story.
14	B	pendulum	Used 9 times in this story.
15	A	tumult (<i>as in: couldn't hear over the tumult</i>)	Used 2 times in this story.
16	C	agony	Used 8 times in this story.
17	A	sufficient	High-utility academic word; used 3 times in this story.
18	B	pervasive	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this story.
19	A	comprehend	High-utility academic word; used 2 times in this story.
20	C	endeavor	Used 7 times in this story.