

The Ransom of Red Chief

by O. Henry

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

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OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

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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: apparition, Buffalo Bill, collaborate, comply, contiguous, emit, Esquire, external, fraud, impudent, ineffable, martyr, mortgage, peremptory, pervasive, predominant, proclivity, subjugate, therefore, treachery



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ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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

Vocabulary Preview
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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. She saw an **apparition** of the dead man.
 - A. written diary
 - B. video picture
 - C. ghostlike figure
2. **Buffalo Bill's** real name was William Frederick Cody.
 - A. U.S. showman famous for his Wild West Show (1846–1917)
 - B. famous American football player who quarterback who played for the Buffalo Bills in the 1970s
 - C. American chef who specialized in preparing dishes using buffalo meat
3. The two authors **collaborate** on a new novel every other year.
 - A. argue bitterly
 - B. work together
 - C. compete fiercely
4. She refused to **comply** with their unreasonable demands.
 - A. ignore
 - B. obey
 - C. resist
5. France and Germany are **contiguous**, sharing a border along the Rhine.
 - A. isolated
 - B. ancient
 - C. adjacent
6. The plant **emits** a noxious odor.
 - A. produces (sends out)
 - B. questions
 - C. hates or detests
7. She passed the bar and now puts **Esquire** after her name on legal papers.
 - A. judge's title
 - B. lawyer's title
 - C. soldier's rank
8. **External** pressure from competitors forced the company to lower its prices.
 - A. located inside
 - B. coming from outside
 - C. happening before
9. The company was shut down after investigators uncovered a massive tax **fraud** scheme.
 - A. deception to get something illegally
 - B. foolish
 - C. unsuccessful
10. Her **impudent** reply to the manager shocked everyone in the meeting.
 - A. thoughtfully kind
 - B. disrespectfully bold
 - C. extremely quiet
11. The effect of music is **ineffable** because we can't understand how it resonates within us.
 - A. not important
 - B. indescribable
 - C. forgettable
12. Although ruthless, they did not want to create a **martyr**, so rather than execute her, they imprisoned her.
 - A. news story
 - B. deceased hero
 - C. bad example

13. The site has a **mortgage** payment calculator that calculates the loan payment based on the interest rate and length of the loan.
- A. unsecured loan
 - B. real estate loan
 - C. credit card loan
14. Her tone was **peremptory**, preventing argument or disagreement.
- A. not allowing contradiction or refusal
 - B. not in line with her usual manner
 - C. more rushed than usual
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. The Kurds are **predominantly** Sunni Muslim.
- A. most commonly
 - B. always
 - C. seldom
17. Her natural **proclivity** is to spend rather than to save.
- A. inclination
 - B. reluctance
 - C. obligation
18. The Taliban wants total **subjugation** to their religious law.
- A. body temperature that is dangerously low
 - B. forced submission
 - C. gullibility (being too willing to believe)
19. We reduced locations where mosquito eggs can mature and **therefore** reduced the number of mosquitoes.
- A. in addition
 - B. in spite of that
 - C. for that reason
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 It was, as Bill afterward expressed it, "during a moment of temporary mental **apparition**"; but we didn't find that out till later.
 - A. lacking experience or sophistication
 - B. a Muslim religious teacher or leader
 - C. a ghostlike figure or its appearance
- 2 Bill and me had a joint capital of about six hundred dollars, and we needed just two thousand dollars more to pull off a **fraudulent** town-lot scheme in Western Illinois with.
 - A. dishonest
 - B. thoughtlessly foolish
 - C. carelessly unsuccessful
- 3 Philoprogenitiveness, says we, is strong in semi-rural communities; **therefore** and for other reasons, a kidnapping project ought to do better there than in the radius of newspapers that send reporters out in plain clothes to stir up talk about such things.
 - A. despite that (used to connect contrasting ideas)
 - B. even though -- used to connect contrasting ideas
 - C. for that reason
- 4 The father was respectable and tight, a **mortgage** fancier and a stern, upright collection-plate passer and forecloser.
 - A. to concentrate, look at; or the act of concentration
 - B. a real estate loan; or pledging something for a loan
 - C. enter another's property without right or permission
- 5 We're making Buffalo Bill's show look like magic-lantern views of Palestine in the town hall.
 - A. U.S. showman famous for his Wild West Show (1846-1917)
 - B. arguably the greatest pop band of all time (1962-1970)
 - C. influential Irish writer famous for modernist fiction
- 6 They weren't yells, or howls, or shouts, or whoops, or yawps, such as you'd expect from a manly set of vocal organs—they were simply indecent, terrifying, humiliating screams, such as women **emit** when they see ghosts or caterpillars.
 - A. send out
 - B. disagree
 - C. subtract
- 7 I went up on the peak of the little mountain and ran my eye over the **contiguous** vicinity.
 - A. eastern
 - B. northern
 - C. with a common boundary; or very close in space or time
- 8 There was a sylvan attitude of somnolent sleepiness **pervading** that section of the external outward surface of Alabama that lay exposed to my view.
 - A. working or operating
 - B. spreading or filling
 - C. happening repeatedly
- 9 There was a sylvan attitude of somnolent sleepiness pervading that section of the **external** outward surface of Alabama that lay exposed to my view.
 - A. certain
 - B. outside
 - C. various
- 10 Also, I thought it best to send a **peremptory** letter to old man Dorset that day, demanding the ransom and dictating how it should be paid.
 - A. not allowing contradiction or refusal
 - B. not bouncing back light/heat/sound...
 - C. able to be restored to good condition

- 11 So, to relieve Bill, I acceded, and we **collaborated** a letter that ran this way: Ebenezer Dorset, Esq.: We have your boy concealed in a place far from Summit.
- A. said indirectly
 - B. worked together
 - C. became aware of
- 12 So, to relieve Bill, I acceded, and we collaborated a letter that ran this way: Ebenezer Dorset, Esq.: We have your boy concealed in a place far from Summit.
- A. of the theological system of John Calvin and his followers emphasizing omnipotence of God and salvation by grace alone
 - B. United States: a lawyer -- typically abbreviated (Esq.) after the name
- United Kingdom: a title of respect for a man
- C. Johann Sebastian Bach -- German baroque composer generally considered one of the masters of classical music (1685-1750)
- 13 If you attempt any **treachery** or fail to comply with our demand as stated, you will never see your boy again.
- A. reporter
 - B. betrayal
 - C. disorder
- 14 If you attempt any treachery or fail to **comply** with our demand as stated, you will never see your boy again.
- A. did not find a condition or substance to be present
 - B. to act in agreement with a rule, request, or demand
 - C. to begin communication with someone about something
- 15 I'm a grown person with masculine **proclivities** and habits of self-defense, but there is a time when all systems of egotism and predominance fail.
- A. tendencies
 - B. main roads
 - C. sympathies
- 16 I'm a grown person with masculine proclivities and habits of self-defense, but there is a time when all systems of egotism and **predominance** fail.
- A. power or influence
 - B. one-sided information that is purposefully spread to influence opinions
 - C. a psychological disorder characterized by excessive distrust of others
- 17 There was **martyrs** in old times," goes on Bill, "that suffered death rather than give up the particular graft they enjoyed.
- A. pauses to change how something is done -- often while reducing the use of resources
 - B. dies or suffers due to upholding principle; or people who have suffered such a fate
 - C. speaks in an ambiguous manner that does not clearly express an opinion or decision
- 18 None of 'em ever was **subjugated** to such supernatural tortures as I have been.
- A. not roughly calculated
 - B. forced to submit
 - C. influenced or effected
- 19 Bill is puffing and blowing, but there is a look of **ineffable** peace and growing content on his rose-pink features.
- A. working against psychosis (any severe mental disorder in which contact with reality is lost or highly distorted)
 - B. something that cannot be adequately described with words--perhaps something too wonderful or intense to describe
 - C. relating to an economic system that abolishes private ownership of property with the goal of a classless society
- 20 "Great pirates of Penzance!" says I; "of all the **impudent**—" But I glanced at Bill, and hesitated.
- A. alternative medicine using extremely diluted doses of a substance to treat the same symptoms larger doses cause
 - B. improperly bold or disrespectful -- especially toward someone who is older or considered to be of higher status
 - C. working against psychosis (any severe mental disorder in which contact with reality is lost or highly distorted)

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	WORD	NOTE
1	C	apparition (<i>as in: a headless apparition</i>)	Used about 3 times per 10 books in our high school library.
2	A	fraud	Used about 5 times per 10 books in our high school library.
3	C	therefore	High-utility academic word
4	B	mortgage	Used about 4 times per 10 books in our high school library.
5	A	Buffalo Bill	
6	A	emit	Used 2 times in this story.
7	C	contiguous	
8	B	pervasive	High-utility academic word
9	B	external	Used about 5 times per 10 books in our high school library.
10	A	peremptory	Used about once per 10 books in our high school library
11	B	collaborate	Used about 3 times per 10 books in our high school library.
12	B	Esquire	Used about once per 10 books in our high school library
13	B	treachery	Used about 3 times per 10 books in our high school library.
14	B	comply	Used about 6 times per 10 books in our high school library.
15	A	proclivity	
16	A	predominant	Used about 3 times per 10 books in our high school library.
17	B	martyr	Used about 5 times per 10 books in our high school library.
18	B	subjugate	Used about once per 10 books in our high school library
19	B	ineffable	
20	B	impudent	Used about 2 times per 10 books in our high school library.