

The Rocking-Horse Winner

by D. H. Lawrence

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: arrested, critical, divulged, heed, place, pursed, reiterated, smart, thrust upon, uncanny

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. The dancer held an **arrested** pose at the edge of the stage.
 - A. stopped in mid-motion
 - B. gracefully extended
 - C. carefully rehearsed
2. The next few hours will be **critical** for the patient.
 - A. under close observation
 - B. spent waiting for results
 - C. at a decisive turning point
3. He never **divulged** where the money was hidden.
 - A. made known
 - B. wrote down
 - C. found out
4. He gave no **heed** to his friends' warnings.
 - A. thanks or credit
 - B. answer or reply
 - C. attention or notice
5. He stared at the stranger, trying to **place** him.
 - A. impress or charm
 - B. identify or recognize
 - C. seat or position
6. She **pursed** her lips and waited.
 - A. bit down on nervously
 - B. drew into a tight pucker
 - C. curled into a small smile
7. The coach **reiterated** the plan before the final quarter.
 - A. made simpler
 - B. said again
 - C. put in writing
8. She wore a **smart** navy coat to the interview.
 - A. warm and well-lined
 - B. loose and comfortable
 - C. stylish and fashionable
9. The extra chores were **thrust upon** him at the last minute.
 - A. forced on an unwilling person
 - B. assigned in a fair rotation
 - C. left for someone to finish
10. The old house had an **uncanny** silence about it.
 - A. strange and unsettling
 - B. sudden and brief
 - C. thick and heavy

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

turf — the world of horse racing and betting

Nat Gould — a famous writer and tipster on horse racing; the uncle is calling Paul a racing expert

writs — court orders demanding payment of a debt — a sign creditors are closing in

as right as a trivet — in perfectly sound shape — an old idiom for steady and well

to the good — in profit by that amount; its opposite, to the bad, is what he has lost

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	A
2	C
3	A
4	C
5	B
6	B
7	B
8	C
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 bonny children, yet she felt they had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them."*

As used in the passage, the phrase 'thrust upon' most nearly means...

- A. forced on her unwillingly
- B. entrusted to her care
- C. expected of her by others

2 *"They heard it at Christmas, when the expensive and splendid toys filled the nursery. Behind the shining modern rocking-horse, behind the smart doll's house, a voice would start whispering: 'There must be more money!'"*

The author most likely includes the phrase 'the smart doll's house' in order to...

- A. suggest the toys were shabby
- B. hint the children were clever
- C. stress the toys' costly style

3 *"Absorbed, taking no heed of other people, he went about with a sort of stealth, seeking inwardly for luck. He wanted luck, he wanted it, he wanted it."*

In the passage, taking 'no heed' of other people characterizes him as...

- A. shut off from those around him
- B. eager for others' company
- C. openly resentful of others

4 *"The child had never been to a race-meeting before, and his eyes were blue fire. He pursed his mouth tight and watched."*

It can reasonably be inferred that, in pursing his mouth, the child was...

- A. holding in his excitement
- B. puzzled by the scene
- C. about to shout aloud

5 *"'You might stop it,' added the uncle. The boy watched him with big blue eyes, that had an uncanny cold fire in them, and he said never a word."*

The boy's 'uncanny cold fire' characterizes him as...

- A. timid and easily cowed
- B. coldly and eerily intent
- C. hot-tempered and defiant

6 *"'I've got to know for the Derby! I've got to know for the Derby!' the child reiterated, his big blue eyes blazing with a sort of madness."*

In context, the word 'reiterated' emphasizes...

- A. how relentlessly he pressed his need
- B. how calmly he stated his case
- C. how suddenly his need arose

7 *"He gazed at her without speaking. He had a secret within a secret, something he had not divulged, even to Bassett or to his Uncle Oscar."*

According to the passage, he had told no one – not even Bassett or his uncle – about...

- A. his fear of the house
- B. the money he had won
- C. a second, deeper secret

8 *"So the horse, rather shabby, stood in an arrested prance in the boy's bedroom. The Derby was drawing near, and the boy grew more and more tense."*

The author most likely includes the phrase 'arrested prance' in order to...

- A. show the horse still rocking
- B. stress how worn the horse is
- C. show the horse frozen mid-leap

9 *"She felt that she knew the noise. She knew what it was. Yet she could not place it. She couldn't say what it was."*

The excerpt's insistence that she could not 'place' the noise functions mainly to...

- A. prove the noise was new to her
- B. keep recognition out of reach
- C. leave the noise's location vague

10 *"The third day of the illness was critical: they were waiting for a change. The boy, with his rather long, curly hair, was tossing ceaselessly on the pillow."*

The third day is called 'critical'; it can be inferred that the boy's recovery was...

- A. no longer thought possible
- B. still hanging in the balance
- C. already well under way

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	C	'Smart' here is the older British sense – stylish, fashionable – not 'clever.' Worth naming aloud, since students meet this sense often in period fiction and almost never in speech.
3	A	
4	A	
5	B	
6	A	
7	C	
8	C	'Arrested' carries its older sense here – halted mid-motion, not taken into custody. The image is worth pausing on: a shape built for galloping, stopped dead.
9	B	To 'place' something means to identify it, not to locate it – an idiom students use in speech but often cannot define, which is exactly why the second distractor tempts.
10	B	