

The Secret Life of Bees

Chapters 4–6

by Sue Monk Kidd

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: billows, bristled, corrugated, deliverance, exalted, indignation, outlandish, solace, unassuming, veneer

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.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · Chapters 1–3 · Lily's life on the peach farm

Section 2 · Chapters 4–6 · A new home in Tiburon

Section 3 · Chapters 7–9 · Summer life at the pink house

Section 4 · Chapters 10–12 · Trouble reaches the pink house

Section 5 · Chapters 13–14 · Learning about Lily's mother

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. **Billows** of gray smoke spread across the evening sky.

- A. small drifting flecks
- B. thin scattered wisps
- C. rolling clouds or masses

2. She **bristled** when her brother mocked her new haircut.

- A. reacted with irritation
- B. froze in sudden fear
- C. sighed in tired boredom

3. Rain drummed loudly on the **corrugated** tin roof of the shed.

- A. rusted and flaking
- B. ridged and grooved
- C. thin and bendable

4. The trapped miners prayed all night for **deliverance**.

- A. strength to endure
- B. forgiveness for sins
- C. rescue from danger

5. The grateful nation **exalted** the soldiers who had saved it.

- A. lifted high in rank
- B. remembered with sorrow
- C. repaid with riches

6. She felt **indignation** when she saw the bully shoving smaller kids.

- A. sadness and pity
- B. anger at injustice
- C. fear of getting hurt

7. Her **outlandish** costume drew stares from everyone at the party.

- A. strikingly strange
- B. old and shabby
- C. bright and flashy

8. After the funeral, she found **solace** in her old friends.

- A. honest, blunt advice
- B. lively entertainment
- C. comfort in sorrow

9. Despite his fame, the actor stayed **unassuming** and kind to everyone.

- A. calm and patient
- B. modest and humble
- C. shy and nervous

10. A **veneer** of polish made the worn shoes look brand new.

- A. a thin coating
- B. a tough outer shell
- C. a glossy bright color

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

ambrosia — the food of the gods; something extraordinarily delicious

bona fide — genuine; real or authentic

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	C
2	A
3	B
4	C
5	A
6	B
7	A
8	C
9	B
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 *“Twice she disappeared in the fogged billows, then gradually reemerged like a dream rising up from the bottom of the night.”*

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘billows’ most nearly suggests that August is...

- A. swallowed up in rolling smoke
- B. drenched by a sudden rain
- C. blinded by bright sunlight

2 *“... her face corrugated with a thousand caramel wrinkles and her hair looking flour dusted ...”*

The author most likely describes August’s face as ‘corrugated’ in order to...

- A. stress how round and youthful it is
- B. stress how pale and sickly it is
- C. stress how deeply lined it is

3 *“... a thin veneer of honey lay across everything.”*

It can reasonably be inferred that the surfaces in the honey house are...

- A. buried under thick dust
- B. scrubbed perfectly clean
- C. covered by a sticky film

4 *“I mean she was naive and unassuming, a grown-up and a child at the same time ...”*

In the passage, May is characterized as...

- A. proud and showy
- B. modest and unpretentious
- C. harsh and demanding

5 *“I could tell she was still bristled at the idea of me and Rosaleen staying ...”*

Which choice best describes June’s attitude toward Lily and Rosaleen staying?

- A. irritated and resentful
- B. calm and indifferent
- C. warm and welcoming

6 *“Jesus had righteous indignation when he turned over the tables in the temple and drove out the thieving moneychangers.”*

Which detail best supports the idea that ‘indignation’ is anger at injustice?

- A. teaching the crowds in the temple
- B. driving out the thieving moneychangers
- C. praying quietly among the tables

7 *“That was too outlandish even for the Catholics.”*

In context, the word ‘outlandish’ emphasizes that Lily finds the idea...

- A. wildly far-fetched
- B. mildly amusing
- C. perfectly sensible

8 *“He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.”*

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. The lowly are raised in rank.
- B. The lowly are sent far away.
- C. The lowly are given great wealth.

9 *“... they prayed every day and every night for deliverance.”*

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. show the slaves losing their faith
- B. convey the slaves’ longing for freedom
- C. describe the slaves’ daily labor

10 *“... wanting to grab on to the solace in her heart.”*

The passage most strongly suggests that the people touch the statue’s chest to find...

- A. protection from illness
- B. wealth and good fortune
- C. comfort in their suffering

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	Here 'billows' names rolling clouds of smoke or fog, not waves of water.
2	C	
3	C	
4	B	
5	A	
6	B	
7	A	
8	A	The key turns on the older sense of 'exalted,' raised in rank, not praised; 'from their seats' points to it.
9	B	Theme comprehension. 'Deliverance' anchors the Our Lady of Chains story, the section's image of rescue from bondage.
10	C	Event comprehension.

Teacher Context: Chapters 4–6

Lily and Rosaleen are taken in by the Boatwright sisters – August, June, and May – at their pink house, where August keeps bees and sells Black Madonna honey. Lily learns the rhythms of beekeeping and meets the Daughters of Mary, who gather around a carved figure of Black Mary. Grouped to cover the settling-in period; the break before Chapter 7 marks where Lily's relationships, especially with Zach, begin to deepen.