

The Secret Life of Bees

Chapters 7–9

by Sue Monk Kidd

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: adrift, affliction, ascribed, cloister, convulsions, deciduous, despicable, incessantly, limbo, minuscule

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. The empty boat was left **adrift** on the open sea.
 - A. rocking gently in place
 - B. sailing at full speed
 - C. floating without control
2. Arthritis is a common **affliction** among older people.
 - A. a source of suffering
 - B. a form of treatment
 - C. a mark of respect
3. She **ascribed** her success to luck.
 - A. attributed to a cause
 - B. added to a total
 - C. compared to something
4. The monks lived in a **cloister** beside the old chapel.
 - A. a tall stone tower
 - B. a secluded religious place
 - C. a busy market square
5. The high fever sent the child into **convulsions**.
 - A. a heavy sweat
 - B. a fit of coughing
 - C. uncontrollable body spasms
6. Oaks and maples are **deciduous** trees found across the region.
 - A. staying green all year
 - B. growing very slowly
 - C. shedding leaves each year
7. Cheating a blind man out of his money is a **despicable** act.
 - A. rather foolish
 - B. deeply shameful
 - C. highly unusual
8. The baby cried **incessantly** through the long night.
 - A. without stopping
 - B. loudly and harshly
 - C. softly and weakly
9. After graduation, his plans hung in **limbo** for months.
 - A. an uncertain in-between state
 - B. a place of safe rest
 - C. a state of total panic
10. A **minuscule** crack ran along the edge of the glass.
 - A. deep and jagged
 - B. extremely small
 - C. long and winding

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

riptide — a strong pulling ocean current; here, a figurative rushing pull of activity

hearth — the floor of a fireplace; here, a warm, sustaining fire one can draw close to

ANSWER KEY

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

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 “A hive suggests cloister more than bordello.”

As used in the epigraph, the word “cloister” most nearly suggests that a hive resembles...

- A. a quiet, chaste retreat
- B. a noisy public market
- C. a den of wild indulgence

2 “He had patches of honey on his shirt, which were attracting a horde of flies and causing him to swat incessantly.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the honey on Zach’s shirt forced him to...

- A. swat only once or twice
- B. give up and ignore the flies
- C. swat at flies without stopping

3 “She is only a world-famous writer who wrote three Pulitzer Prize books about the deciduous trees of South Carolina.”

Which statement about Willifred Marchant’s books is best supported by the passage?

- A. Trees that bear no leaves at all
- B. Trees that stay green all winter
- C. Trees that drop their leaves yearly

4 “... it washed over me for the first time in my life just how much importance the world had ascribed to skin pigment ...”

The passage most strongly suggests that, in Lily’s new realization, the world had...

- A. paid little mind to skin color
- B. attached great weight to skin color
- C. just begun to notice skin color

5 “... there is no greater affliction for the southern mind than people up north coming down to fix our way of life.”

The narrator calls northern interference an “affliction” mainly in order to...

- A. mock how bitterly the South resented it
- B. praise the South’s gracious patience
- C. warn the North of real danger

6 “I have always wanted to say to you that was DESPICABLE.”

Which choice best describes Lily’s attitude toward T. Ray in this line?

- A. forgiving and warm
- B. playful and teasing
- C. scornful and deeply wounded

7 “The sting shot pain all the way to my elbow, causing me to marvel at how much punishment a minuscule creature can inflict.”

In context, the word “minuscule” emphasizes the contrast between the bee’s...

- A. tiny size but big pain
- B. gentleness and loud buzz
- C. bright color and quick flight

8 “She let go and sprawled back on the grass in convulsions of laughter.”

The excerpt primarily functions to show that June has...

- A. grown too tired to play on
- B. completely dropped her hostility
- C. hurt herself in the fight

9 “I wanted to know, and I didn’t want to know. I was all hung up in limbo.”

It can reasonably be inferred that Lily felt...

- A. certain of her next step
- B. stuck between two impulses
- C. bored with the whole matter

10 “I felt like we were all adrift in the world, and all we had was the wet fire in August’s eyes.”

Which choice best describes how Lily feels the group is faring after Zach’s arrest?

- A. lost but held by August’s strength
- B. eager for quick revenge
- C. cheerful and carefree

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	'Cloister' carries a monastic, celibate connotation; the epigraph sets it against 'bordello.'
2	C	
3	C	
4	B	
5	A	Lily's tone is sardonic; she exaggerates the southern attitude rather than sharing it.
6	C	
7	A	
8	B	Character comprehension. 'Convulsions' is figurative here – fits of laughter, not a medical seizure.
9	B	
10	A	Event comprehension. The revenge option fits Rosaleen's fire later, not the comfort of August's.

Teacher Context: Chapters 7–9

Lily grows closer to Zach, August's young helper, and becomes more at home among the bees even as she hides the truth about why she came. Racial tensions in the town rise, and the section ends as Zach is arrested. The break before Chapter 10 keeps the consequences of that arrest as the opening of the next section.