

The War of the Worlds

Book 1, Chapters 9–13

by H. G. Wells

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: consumed, diverted, dwindled, fluctuating, gravity, intact, intermittent, perceived, reason, the stress of the storm

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 · Book 1, Chapters 1–8 · Strange lights on the planet Mars

Section 2 · Book 1, Chapters 9–13 · A Saturday of suspense at Woking

Section 3 · Book 1, Chapters 14–17 · The narrator's brother in London

Section 4 · Book 2, Chapters 1–6 · Book Two: the narrator and the curate

Section 5 · Book 2, Chapters 7–9 and the Epilogue · A night at the inn on Putney Hill

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. He was **consumed** by worry until the phone finally rang.

- A. briefly distracted by it
- B. completely overtaken by it
- C. quietly annoyed by it

2. A loud crash **diverted** my attention from the book.

- A. confused for a moment
- B. weakened for a short time
- C. turned aside to something else

3. Our supply of firewood **dwindled** as the winter dragged on.

- A. grew steadily damper
- B. grew steadily smaller
- C. grew far more costly

4. Gas prices have been **fluctuating** all month.

- A. rising and falling unsteadily
- B. staying unusually low
- C. climbing higher and higher

5. Her quiet voice made us feel the **gravity** of the news.

- A. strangeness or oddness
- B. suddenness or surprise
- C. seriousness or danger

6. The old vase survived the move **intact**.

- A. whole and undamaged
- B. wrapped and hidden
- C. dusty and forgotten

7. The old radio gave off an **intermittent** hum.

- A. stopping and starting
- B. harsh and unpleasant
- C. faint and far off

8. I **perceived** at once that something was wrong.

- A. guessed; imagined
- B. realized; understood
- C. feared; dreaded

9. Grief and sleeplessness had nearly cost him his **reason**.

- A. the memory of past events
- B. the strength to keep going
- C. the power to think sanely

10. The old barn leaned and creaked under **the stress of the storm**.

- A. the physical force pressing on it
- B. the long night of heavy rain
- C. the flooding it left behind

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

lowering — here, 'looming darkly and threateningly', like a gathering storm — not 'making lower'

in at the death — a hunting phrase: present at the kill at the end of the chase — he wants to be there to see the Martians finished off

articulate — here, 'jointed and flexible', like a limb — not 'well-spoken'

the Potteries — the Staffordshire pottery district, where the kiln fires made the whole night sky glow for miles

patent — here, 'obvious, plain to see' — nothing to do with inventions

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	B
2	C
3	B
4	A
5	C
6	A
7	A
8	B
9	C
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 “Saturday lives in my memory as a day of suspense. It was a day of lassitude too, hot and close, with, I am told, a rapidly fluctuating barometer.”

As used in the passage, the word ‘fluctuating’ most nearly means...

- A. climbing steadily all day
- B. rising and falling unsteadily
- C. reading unusually high

2 “I ran, for I perceived that in a moment everyone upon this side of the hill would be moving.”

In the passage, the narrator is characterized as...

- A. eager to watch the Martians
- B. unwilling to leave the hill
- C. quick to see what was coming

3 “For some minutes I lay there in the rain and darkness watching, by the intermittent light, these monstrous beings of metal moving about in the distance over the hedge tops.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the narrator...

- A. followed the machines across the field
- B. watched the machines from close range
- C. saw the machines only in flashes

4 “So heavy was the stress of the storm just at this place that I had the hardest task to win my way up the hill.”

According to the passage, the narrator could barely climb the hill because...

- A. his fear had worn him down
- B. the storm pressed hard against him
- C. the road had turned to deep mud

5 “He had been consumed with thirst until he found one of the water mains near the railway arch smashed, and the water bubbling out like a spring upon the road.”

As used in the passage, the word ‘consumed’ most nearly suggests that the man...

- A. his thirst had overpowered him
- B. his thirst was mild but steady
- C. he had only just grown thirsty

6 “The fires had dwindled now. Where flames had been there were now streamers of smoke; but the countless ruins of shattered and gutted houses and blasted and blackened trees that the night had hidden stood out now gaunt and terrible in the pitiless light of dawn.”

Which detail best supports the claim that the fires had largely burned themselves out?

- A. smoke where flames had been
- B. houses shattered and gutted
- C. trees blasted and blackened

7 “The soldiers were having the greatest difficulty in making them realise the gravity of their position. We saw one shrivelled old fellow with a huge box and a score or more of flower pots containing orchids, angrily expostulating with the corporal who would leave them behind.”

The author most likely includes the old man with his orchids in order to...

- A. show how little the danger was grasped
- B. explain why the soldiers were delayed
- C. show the soldiers acting cruelly

8 “My attention was diverted from this death flurry by a furious yelling, like that of the thing called a siren in our manufacturing towns.”

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. describe the sound of a siren
- B. turn attention toward a new threat
- C. explain why the Martian was dying

9 “The nearer houses still stood intact, awaiting their fate, shadowy, faint and pallid in the steam, with the fire behind them going to and fro.”

What is the narrator’s attitude toward the houses still standing ‘intact’?

- A. puzzled that they are still standing
- B. confident that they will be spared
- C. certain their destruction is coming

10 “The tremendous tragedy in which he had been involved—it was evident he was a fugitive from Weybridge—had driven him to the very verge of his reason.”

As used in the passage, the word ‘reason’ most nearly means...

- A. the power to think sanely
- B. a cause or explanation
- C. the will to keep going

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	Students may not know a barometer measures air pressure; a quick word on the instrument keeps the question about the target word.
2	C	
3	C	
4	B	Here 'stress' means physical force, not the mental strain students expect; the same sense survives in engineering phrases like 'stress on a beam.'
5	A	'Consumed' here is figurative — taken over by a feeling, not eaten or used up. Students who carry only the literal sense often misread it.
6	A	
7	A	The orchids are the point: Wells makes the failure to grasp danger concrete, and almost comic, a moment before it turns fatal.
8	B	
9	C	Wells sets 'intact' against 'awaiting their fate': the houses are whole only until the Heat-Ray reaches them, which is the sentence's quiet menace.
10	A	'Reason' here names the sane, rational mind — an older sense students rarely meet. Driven to the verge of his reason means he was close to losing his sanity.

Teacher Context: Book 1, Chapters 9–13

The military engages the Martians, who answer with fighting-machines and the Black Smoke. The narrator flees through the storm, witnesses the destruction of Weybridge and Shepperton, and falls in with the curate. Chapters grouped to run from the first engagement to the pairing with the curate.