

The War of the Worlds

Book 1, Chapters 14–17

by H. G. Wells

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: antagonist, composition, conveyed, deliberately, diminishing, magnitude, margin, ominous, projected, rendered

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. She faced her longtime **antagonist** in the final match.

- A. an opponent in a struggle
- B. a judge who scores the match
- C. a coach who trains a fighter

2. The **composition** of the soil surprised the gardener.

- A. the depth and spread of it
- B. the smell and color of it
- C. what something is made up of

3. Her letter **conveyed** more than she intended.

- A. promised or guaranteed
- B. communicated or made known
- C. questioned or challenged

4. He **deliberately** set each tool back in its case.

- A. in an unhurried, purposeful way
- B. in a quick, practiced way
- C. in a rough, noisy way

5. He watched his **diminishing** stack of firewood.

- A. growing steadily smaller
- B. left out in the weather
- C. stored in an untidy pile

6. No one grasped the **magnitude** of the flood at first.

- A. exact cause or source
- B. likely path or course
- C. great size or extent

7. Wildflowers grew along the **margin** of the field.

- A. the outer edge
- B. the shaded side
- C. the far corner

8. **ominous** clouds gathered above the picnic.

- A. unusually large and heavy
- B. strangely still and quiet
- C. warning of something bad

9. A narrow ledge **projected** from the cliff face.

- A. broke loose and fell away
- B. stuck out or extended outward
- C. curved gently inward

10. The heavy snow **rendered** the mountain roads impassable.

- A. declared them to be
- B. caused them to become
- C. discovered them to be

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

ejaculating — blurting out; in Wells's day the ordinary word for a sudden exclamation

investment — not money — the ringing of a place by besieging troops

a greater Moscow — a city its own people burn to deny an invader — as Moscow was burned against Napoleon in 1812

kopjes — small steep hills standing alone on a plain (a word brought back from South Africa)

prosecuting — not legal prosecution — carrying something through to the end

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	A
2	C
3	B
4	A
5	A
6	C
7	A
8	C
9	B
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 “Those who did took some time to realise all that the hastily worded telegrams in the Sunday papers conveyed.”

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

- A. communicated or made known
- B. shortened for quick sending
- C. carried from place to place

2 “He was now very anxious on my account, and disturbed at the evident magnitude of the trouble.”

According to the passage, what disturbed him about the trouble was...

- A. how long it had lasted
- B. how large it had grown
- C. how near it had come

3 “They laid their guns as deliberately as if they had been on parade, and fired at about a thousand yards’ range.”

It can reasonably be inferred that those who laid the guns were...

- A. panicked into firing early
- B. well-drilled and unrattled
- C. inexperienced with artillery

4 “One of the men desisted and turned towards him, and my brother, realising from his antagonist’s face that a fight was unavoidable, and being an expert boxer, went into him forthwith and sent him down against the wheel of the chaise.”

The author most likely includes his antagonist’s face in order to...

- A. signal that his opponent meant to fight
- B. suggest the man was frightened off
- C. show that a stranger had come to help

5 “Along the margin came those who were on foot threatened by the wheels, stumbling in the ditches, blundering into one another.”

The passage most strongly suggests that those on foot...

- A. were moving faster than the carts
- B. were being let through by drivers
- C. had been pushed off the roadway

6 “But varied as its composition was, certain things all that host had in common. There were fear and pain on their faces, and fear behind them.”

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

- A. a written account of it
- B. the mood shared within it
- C. the mix of people in it

7 “My brother supposes they must have filled outside London, for at that time the furious terror of the people had rendered the central termini impossible.”

The author most likely mentions the people’s terror in order to...

- A. account for the unusable stations
- B. show how far the refugees walked
- C. blame the railway for poor planning

8 “In spite of the throbbing exertions of the engines of the little paddle-boat, and the pouring foam that her wheels flung behind her, she receded with terrifying slowness from this ominous advance.”

Which choice best describes the narrator’s attitude toward the advance?

- A. wonder at an unfamiliar sight
- B. dread of an approaching threat
- C. impatience with a slow pursuit

9 “Big iron upperworks rose out of this headlong structure, and from that twin funnels projected and spat a smoking blast shot with fire.”

According to the passage, the twin funnels that spat smoke and fire...

- A. rose up out of the ironwork
- B. were bolted flat to the hull
- C. lay hidden beneath the deck

10 “She was steaming at such a pace that in a minute she seemed halfway between the steamboat and the Martians—a diminishing black bulk against the receding horizontal expanse of the Essex coast.”

It can reasonably be inferred that, as she steamed on, she...

- A. was slowing as she neared them
- B. was breaking apart under fire
- C. drew rapidly farther away

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	B	
3	B	A target-grade student will usually read 'deliberately' as 'on purpose.' The sense here is 'without hurry' – the men take their time under fire, which is what makes the parade comparison land.
4	A	
5	C	
6	C	A familiar word applied to a crowd rather than to a substance: the host's 'composition' is who it is made up of. Worth naming, since the school sense of a composition as an essay usually comes to mind first.
7	A	
8	B	
9	A	The physical sense – 'stuck out' – is less familiar to a target-grade student than the sense of 'planned' or 'estimated.' Here the funnels jut up from the ship's ironwork.
10	C	

Teacher Context: Book 1, Chapters 14–17

The narrative shifts to the narrator's younger brother in London, following the spreading panic and the mass exodus from the city. It closes with the ram Thunder Child's stand against the Martians. Break follows the shift in point of view.