

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

Chapters 1–4

by Elizabeth George Speare

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: aloof, anguish, exasperation, forbidding, furtively, haughty, impulse, incredulous, shrewd, tedious

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 1–4 • Kit's voyage from Barbados

Section 2 • Chapters 5–9 • Kit's first Sabbath in Wethersfield

Section 3 • Chapters 10–13 • Kit's secret visits to Blackbird Pond

Section 4 • Chapters 14–17 • Autumn comes to Wethersfield

Section 5 • Chapters 18–21 • Kit and her uncle grow closer

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



verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview
The Witch of Blackbird Pond
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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. The new student stayed aloof during the party.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. calm and relaxedB. distant and reservedC. tired and bored <p>2. She cried out in anguish when she heard the news.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. deep sufferingB. great surpriseC. sudden confusion <p>3. He sighed in exasperation at the endless delays.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. growing boredomB. intense frustrationC. sudden sadness <p>4. The forbidding cliffs rose above the gray sea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. huge and ancientB. grim and unwelcomingC. wet and slippery <p>5. He furtively glanced over his shoulder.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. secretly and quietlyB. slowly and carefullyC. quickly and nervously | <p>6. The haughty princess refused to greet the crowd.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. shy and timidB. tired and unwellC. proud and scornful <p>7. Acting on impulse, he blurted out the answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. a sudden urge to actB. a moment of confusionC. a quick flash of anger <p>8. She gave an incredulous stare at his excuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. amused and entertainedB. calm and unbotheredC. unwilling to believe <p>9. The shrewd old farmer struck a good bargain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. calm and patientB. kind and gentleC. sharp and clever <p>10. Weeding the garden is tedious work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. dull and tiresomeB. messy and difficultC. hard and dirty |
|---|--|

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

becalmed — (of a ship) left unable to move for lack of wind

wraith — a pale, thin, ghostlike figure

frippery — showy, useless finery or ornament

ANSWER KEY
Vocabulary Preview
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#	KEY
1	B
2	A
3	B
4	B
5	A
6	C
7	A
8	C
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 "... the summer trips are tedious, just back and forth up and down the river."

As it is used in the passage, the word "tedious" most nearly suggests that the summer trips are...

- A. dull and tiresome
- B. busy and exciting
- C. calm and relaxing

2 "Kit glanced again at the forbidding shore."

According to the passage, how does the shore appear to Kit?

- A. harsh and unwelcoming
- B. green and inviting
- C. busy and crowded

3 "They were halfway across the harbor when a wail of anguish broke from the child."

According to the passage, the child's wail of anguish shows that she is...

- A. filled with joy
- B. in deep distress
- C. bored and sleepy

4 "Once or twice she had seen the father furtively slip the child an extra morsel from his plate ..."

It can reasonably be inferred that the father slips the child food...

- A. carelessly, without a thought
- B. proudly, to show his kindness
- C. secretly, to avoid being seen

5 "Nat remained aloof, absorbed in a totally male world of rigging and canvas."

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Nat is too shy to approach Kit.
- B. Nat keeps his distance from Kit.
- C. Nat treats Kit warmly and openly.

6 "... the soft pink skin aging on his fine cheekbones, the thin aristocratic nose, the eyes, so shrewd and yet so loving."

As it is used in the passage, the word "shrewd" most nearly means...

- A. tired and aging
- B. gentle and kind
- C. sharp and clever

7 "What sort of books?" John's voice was incredulous."

The passage most strongly suggests that John reacts to Kit's reading with...

- A. disbelief
- B. boredom
- C. admiration

8 "I am entirely responsible for my own coming,' she assured him haughtily."

The passage most strongly suggests that Kit answers the captain with...

- A. nervous, apologetic worry
- B. warm, grateful politeness
- C. proud, superior confidence

9 "You mean that, just on an impulse, you left your rightful home and sailed halfway across the world?"

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Kit left only after careful thought.
- B. Kit left home on a sudden urge.
- C. Kit left to search for her grandfather.

10 "Her stirring became more and more halfhearted till Judith snatched the stick in exasperation."

It can reasonably be inferred that Judith snatched the stick because she felt...

- A. sharp frustration with Kit
- B. warm amusement at Kit
- C. tender concern for Kit

ANSWER KEY
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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	A	
3	B	
4	C	
5	B	Character comprehension. Nat's easy, confident manner elsewhere rules out shyness.
6	C	The 'yet' sets shrewdness against warmth, so the word names his cleverness, not his affection.
7	A	
8	C	
9	B	Event comprehension. Her grandfather has died, so the search choice is impossible.
10	A	Character comprehension. Judith resents Kit and gives her the hard chores, not gentle care.

Teacher Context: Chapters 1–4

Sixteen-year-old Kit Tyler sails from Barbados to Puritan Connecticut after her grandfather's death, befriendng Nat Eaton and little Prudence aboard the Dolphin and startling the other passengers by diving in to retrieve a dropped doll. She arrives at her aunt and uncle's plain Wethersfield household and feels at once the gulf between her bright former life and their strict ways. The section ends before Kit's first Sabbath, grouping the voyage and arrival as one unit before colony life proper begins.