

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

Chapters 5–9

by Elizabeth George Speare

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: allegiance, cadence, condescension, decorum, hypocrite, pivot, pompous, recoiled, reverent, wrath

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
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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. The soldiers swore their **allegiance** to the new queen.

- A. polite respect
- B. loyal devotion
- C. honest service

2. The poem's gentle **cadence** made it pleasant to hear.

- A. a clear, exact meaning
- B. a soft, hushed volume
- C. a rhythmic rise and fall

3. She treated the new students with obvious **condescension**.

- A. a shy, timid attitude
- B. a calm, patient attitude
- C. a superior, scornful attitude

4. The students showed perfect **decorum** during the ceremony.

- A. bright, cheerful energy
- B. proper, polite behavior
- C. calm, quiet patience

5. I refuse to take advice from a **hypocrite**.

- A. a fake who pretends to be good
- B. a bully who frightens others
- C. a liar who steals from others

6. Our coach is the **pivot** of the entire program.

- A. the strict leader of a group
- B. the central figure all rely on
- C. the newest member of a group

7. Everyone found the **pompous** announcer hard to listen to.

- A. self-important and showy
- B. cheerful and talkative
- C. nervous and unsure

8. She **recoiled** when the spider crawled across the table.

- A. shouted out a warning
- B. froze without moving
- C. pulled back in disgust

9. The crowd grew **reverent** as the memorial bells began to ring.

- A. full of deep respect
- B. tense with worry
- C. loud with excitement

10. Nothing could calm the king's **wrath** after the betrayal.

- A. fierce, vengeful anger
- B. deep, lasting sorrow
- C. sudden, sharp panic

ANSWER KEY
Vocabulary Preview
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#	KEY
1	B
2	C
3	C
4	B
5	A
6	B
7	A
8	C
9	A
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 *“This was the second time this morning that her uncle’s wrath had descended on her head.”*

As it is used in the passage, the word “wrath” most nearly suggests that Kit’s uncle felt...

- A. cold, silent disappointment
- B. fierce, vengeful anger
- C. mild, passing annoyance

2 *“As they crossed the clearing Kit recoiled at the objects that stood between her and the Meeting House; a pillory, a whipping post and stocks.”*

The passage most strongly suggests that Kit reacted to the punishment devices with...

- A. fear and disgust
- B. mild curiosity
- C. open admiration

3 *“All of them however were alike in their reverent silence.”*

Which choice best describes why the worshippers stayed silent, according to the passage?

- A. boredom with the service
- B. fear of being punished
- C. deep respect and awe

4 *“But the greatest part of his condescension he had bestowed on Kit, once he had understood that her grandfather had been Sir Francis Tyler.”*

As used in the passage, “condescension” suggests that Dr. Bulkeley treated Kit with...

- A. warm, equal friendliness
- B. harsh, open dislike
- C. gracious but superior favor

5 *“‘There are some who seem to find it possible,’ remarked the minister, staring meaningfully at a ceiling beam. ‘See that you keep your allegiance.’”*

The passage most strongly suggests that the minister is warning Kit to remain...

- A. loyal to the English king
- B. humble about her wealth
- C. honest in her speech

6 *“Tonight he appeared to be a shadow, hanging on every word from this pompous opinionated man.”*

It can reasonably be inferred that Kit sees Dr. Bulkeley as a man who is...

- A. full of his own importance
- B. respected for deep wisdom
- C. stern and quick to anger

7 *“John’s voice was low-pitched but very clear, and the words fell with a musical cadence that was a delight.”*

According to the passage, what gave Kit pleasure as she listened to John read?

- A. the loudness of his voice
- B. the meaning of the verses
- C. the musical rhythm of his voice

8 *“Kit had soon discovered that Mercy was the pivot about whom the whole household moved.”*

It can reasonably be inferred that calling Mercy “the pivot” means the household...

- A. relied on her for everything
- B. quarreled because of her
- C. pitied her for her weakness

9 *“He is a hypocrite and a whited sepulcher!”*

Which statement about Bulkeley is best supported by Matthew’s words?

- A. He is foolish but truly sincere.
- B. He pretends to be holier than he is.
- C. He is openly and proudly wicked.

10 *“In a panic she fled, out the door and down the roadway, running, blind to reason or decorum ...”*

According to the passage, as Kit fled the house she gave no thought to...

- A. caution and clear thinking
- B. proper, polite behavior
- C. her kindness to Mercy

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	A	
3	C	
4	C	Here condescension carries its older sense — gracious attention from someone who feels superior — so the favorable tone is still patronizing.
5	A	Event comprehension. The minister's veiled warning is about loyalty to King James; Matthew's angry reply confirms the political tension.
6	A	
7	C	
8	A	Character comprehension. 'pivot' is figurative here — the one the family turns on; the section shows the family never treats Mercy as weak or pitied.
9	B	A 'whited sepulcher' (Matthew 23:27) is a biblical image for someone clean outside but corrupt within, reinforcing the hypocrisy charge.
10	B	

Teacher Context: Chapters 5–9

Kit struggles to fit into Puritan routine -- the Meeting House, the hard household work, William Ashby's courtship, and helping Mercy at the dame school. Fleeing in distress to the Meadows, she meets Hannah Tupper, an old Quaker woman shunned as the witch of Blackbird Pond, and finds unexpected friendship and comfort there. The section closes just after that first meeting, the hinge the rest of the book turns on.