

To Kill a Mockingbird

Chapters 1-7

by Harper Lee

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: contradict, diction, disturbance, ethical, inquisitive, maintained, phenomena, reinforce, respiration, subsequent

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 1-7 · The Finch children and the Radley place

Section 2 · Chapters 8-11 · An unusual winter comes to Maycomb

Section 3 · Chapters 12-15 · Calpurnia's church and Aunt Alexandra's arrival

Section 4 · Chapters 16-21 · The trial of Tom Robinson begins

Section 5 · Chapters 22-31 · Maycomb in the months after the trial

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. Don't **contradict** the coach in front of the whole team.

- A. to say the opposite of
- B. to mimic for laughs
- C. to cut off mid-sentence

2. His formal **diction** made him sound stiff and distant.

- A. word choice
- B. tone of voice
- C. rate of speech

3. Police were called about a **disturbance** at the corner store.

- A. a burst water pipe
- B. an upheaval breaking the peace
- C. a sudden power outage

4. Every new doctor takes an **ethical** oath.

- A. about laws and courts
- B. about health and safety
- C. about right and wrong

5. The **inquisitive** neighbor asked about our weekend plans again.

- A. openly friendly
- B. very talkative
- C. overly curious

6. He **maintained** that the recipe needed no salt.

- A. hinted
- B. guessed
- C. insisted

7. The northern lights are one of nature's great **phenomena**.

- A. hidden dangers
- B. observable happenings
- C. unsolved mysteries

8. Sandbags **reinforce** the levee before the storm.

- A. to strengthen
- B. to replace
- C. to surround

9. After the long climb, his **respiration** returned to normal.

- A. sweating
- B. breathing
- C. trembling

10. Her **subsequent** visits were much shorter.

- A. coming afterward
- B. occurring rarely
- C. happening yearly

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

run the Creeks up the creek — defeated the Creek people and forced them from much of their land; also a pun on *up the creek*

Mr. Radley's word was his bond — His promise was as binding as a signed contract.

making people into ghosts — erasing them from town life while they're still alive.

entailment — A legal restriction that locks land to a fixed line of heirs, so it cannot be sold or willed freely.

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	A
2	A
3	B
4	C
5	C
6	C
7	B
8	A
9	B
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 "Simon would have regarded with impotent fury the disturbance between the North and the South, as it left his descendants stripped of everything but their land ..."

As used in the passage, the word 'disturbance' most nearly means...

- A. a violent upheaval
- B. a sudden business failure
- C. a drawn-out legal dispute

2 "If I could have explained these things to Miss Caroline, I would have saved myself some inconvenience and Miss Caroline subsequent mortification, but it was beyond my ability to explain things as well as Atticus ..."

It can reasonably be inferred that because Scout could not explain well, Miss Caroline...

- A. was embarrassed afterward
- B. grew angry rather than ashamed
- C. had been embarrassed earlier

3 "'There's some folks who don't eat like us,' she whispered fiercely, 'but you ain't called on to contradict 'em at the table when they don't.'"

It can reasonably be inferred that Scout had just...

- A. taken food from another's plate
- B. criticized someone's way of eating
- C. refused to eat what was served

4 "He waited in amiable silence, and I sought to reinforce my position: 'You never went to school and you do all right, so I'll just stay home too.'"

As it is used in the passage, 'reinforce' most nearly suggests that Scout's position...

- A. was quietly being abandoned
- B. had already been laid out
- C. was appearing for the first time

5 "Jem and I were accustomed to our father's last-will-and-testament diction, and we were at all times free to interrupt Atticus for a translation when it was beyond our understanding."

According to the passage, when Atticus's formal diction confused the children, they...

- A. asked him what he meant
- B. looked the words up alone
- C. pretended to understand him

6 "Plucking an occasional camellia, getting a squirt of hot milk from Miss Maudie Atkinson's cow on a summer day, helping ourselves to someone's scuppernongs was part of our ethical culture, but money was different."

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. condemn their petty stealing
- B. celebrate summer's small treats
- C. lay out the children's moral code

7 "I was fairly sure Boo Radley was inside that house, but I couldn't prove it, and felt it best to keep my mouth shut or I would be accused of believing in Hot Steams, phenomena I was immune to in the daytime."

In describing Hot Steams as 'phenomena' she was 'immune to' by day, the narrator sounds...

- A. wryly amused at her younger self
- B. scornful of the town's legends
- C. still frightened of Hot Steams

8 "He still maintained, however, that Atticus hadn't said we couldn't, therefore we could; and if Atticus ever said we couldn't, Jem had thought of a way around it ..."

In the passage, Jem is characterized as...

- A. careless about being caught
- B. openly defiant of his father
- C. bent on finding loopholes

9 "If he wanted to stay inside his own house he had the right to stay inside free from the attentions of inquisitive children, which was a mild term for the likes of us."

It can reasonably be inferred that the children's attentions to the man were...

- A. mildly curious and nothing more
- B. company he secretly welcomed
- C. worse than ordinary nosiness

10 "We ran across the schoolyard, crawled under the fence to Deer's Pasture behind our house, climbed our back fence and were at the back steps before Jem would let us pause to rest. Respiration normal, the three of us strolled as casually as we could to the front yard."

The author most likely includes the detail 'Respiration normal' in order to...

- A. show how fit the children were
- B. show them hiding their flight
- C. confirm no one had been hurt

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	Calling the Civil War 'the disturbance' is dry understatement; the question asks only the word's standard sense, which the context supports.
2	A	
3	B	
4	B	
5	A	
6	C	
7	A	The child half-believed at night — 'immune to in the daytime' is the adult narrator's joke at her own expense; the question asks about the telling, not the child's fear.
8	C	
9	C	
10	B	

Teacher Context: Chapters 1-7

Scout narrates the Finch family's Maycomb roots, her first year at school, and the summers when she, Jem, and Dill grow obsessed with drawing the reclusive Boo Radley out of his house. The section ends with the raid on the Radley yard and the gifts appearing in the knothole. Chapters 1-7 are grouped because they form the self-contained Boo Radley arc before the novel's focus widens.