

To Kill a Mockingbird

Chapters 8–11

by Harper Lee

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: analogous, antagonized, attributes, caricatures, grave, heartened, legislature, nauseating, oppressive, unfathomable

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. The teacher said the human brain is **analogous** to a powerful computer.

- A. equal or identical
- B. connected or linked
- C. similar or comparable

2. He **antagonized** the referee by arguing every call.

- A. questioned or doubted
- B. provoked or irritated
- C. distracted or interrupted

3. Patience and honesty are two **attributes** employers value most.

- A. qualities or characteristics
- B. goals or ambitions
- C. duties or obligations

4. The street artist sold **caricatures** of tourists for five dollars each.

- A. quick pencil sketches
- B. mocking, exaggerated drawings
- C. framed color photographs

5. The doctor's face grew **grave** as she studied the results.

- A. serious and solemn
- B. puzzled and uncertain
- C. pale and sickly

6. The runners were **heartened** by the crowd lining the final mile.

- A. startled and confused
- B. encouraged and cheered
- C. annoyed and distracted

7. The state **legislature** met to vote on the new budget.

- A. the court that settles disputes
- B. the office that collects taxes
- C. the body that makes laws

8. A **nauseating** smell drifted up from the clogged drain.

- A. sickening and revolting
- B. damp and musty
- C. sharp and chemical

9. By noon the **oppressive** heat had emptied the streets.

- A. dry and dusty
- B. sudden and brief
- C. heavy and stifling

10. To the experts who studied it, the ancient code was **unfathomable**.

- A. impossible to understand
- B. impossible to replace
- C. impossible to reach

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

licked before you begin — certain to lose (here, a worthwhile fight)

killing a mockingbird — harming something innocent and harmless

mad dog — a dangerous dog infected with rabies; not merely an angry or wild dog

when the chips are down — when circumstances become difficult

Let this cup pass from you — to be spared a dreaded duty; here, to be let off the Robinson case

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	C
2	B
3	A
4	B
5	A
6	B
7	C
8	A
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 “For reasons unfathomable to the most experienced prophets in Maycomb County, autumn turned to winter that year.”

As used in the passage, the word “unfathomable” most nearly means...

- A. long overdue
- B. impossible to explain
- C. deeply unwelcome

2 “‘I don’t care what you do, so long as you do something,’ said Atticus. ‘You can’t go around making caricatures of the neighbors.’ ‘Ain’t a characterture,’ said Jem. ‘It looks just like him.’”

It can reasonably be inferred that Jem’s snowman...

- A. resembles no one in town
- B. ridicules a real neighbor
- C. flatters a real neighbor

3 “Atticus said, ‘Whoa, son,’ so gently that I was greatly heartened.”

It can reasonably be inferred that, just before Atticus spoke, Scout felt...

- A. calm and assured
- B. bored and uninterested
- C. uneasy and tense

4 “The main one is, if I didn’t I couldn’t hold up my head in town, I couldn’t represent this county in the legislature, I couldn’t even tell you or Jem not to do something again.”

According to the passage, refusing the case would cost Atticus the standing to...

- A. make the county’s laws
- B. judge the county’s cases
- C. enforce the county’s laws

5 “... Aunt Alexandra would have been analogous to Mount Everest: throughout my early life, she was cold and there.”

As used in the passage, the word “analogous” most nearly means...

- A. opposite
- B. identical
- C. similar

6 “Besides that, he wore glasses. ... With these attributes, however, he would not remain as inconspicuous as we wished him to: that year, the school buzzed with talk about him defending Tom Robinson, none of which was complimentary.”

As used in the passage, the word “attributes” most nearly means...

- A. characteristics
- B. responsibilities
- C. accomplishments

7 “In a fog, Jem and I watched our father take the gun and walk out into the middle of the street. He walked quickly, but I thought he moved like an underwater swimmer: time had slowed to a nauseating crawl.”

The passage most strongly suggests that, as she watched, Scout felt...

- A. eager and thrilled
- B. calm and unmoved
- C. sick with dread

8 “Of course Jem antagonized me sometimes until I could kill him, but when it came down to it he was all I had.”

By granting that Jem “antagonized” her, the narrator mainly...

- A. strengthens her claim of loyalty
- B. accuses Jem of real cruelty
- C. condemns his tickling her

9 “An oppressive odor met us when we crossed the threshold, an odor I had met many times in rain-rotted gray houses where there are coal-oil lamps, water dippers, and unbleached domestic sheets.”

In context, the word “oppressive” most nearly suggests that the house was...

- A. cheerful and inviting
- B. grim and hard to endure
- C. clean and orderly

10 “Atticus’s face was grave. ‘Has somebody been calling you that?’”

In the passage, Atticus is characterized as...

- A. serious and concerned
- B. bored and distracted
- C. amused and teasing

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	B	'Caricature' carries mockery, not mere resemblance—which is why Atticus objects even though the snowman 'looks just like him.'
3	C	
4	A	A legislature makes laws; students often blur it with courts (judging) or police (enforcing)—the distractors target that confusion.
5	C	
6	A	
7	C	'Nauseating' is figurative here—the agonizing slow motion feels sickening; nothing literally causes illness.
8	A	
9	B	
10	A	Here 'grave' means serious or solemn—not a burial place; it is a homograph students often trip on.

Teacher Context: Chapters 8–11

An unseasonable winter brings snow and the fire at Miss Maudie's house; Atticus shoots the mad dog, and Jem's forced reading to the dying Mrs. Dubose shows him what real courage looks like. These chapters close Part One and turn the children toward the adult world.