

To Kill a Mockingbird

Chapters 12–15

by Harper Lee

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: civil, consent, criterion, customary, defendant, defiance, diligent, persevere, resilient, tentative

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. Even during the argument, she stayed **civil** and never raised her voice.

- A. cheerful and talkative
- B. quiet and withdrawn
- C. polite and courteous

2. The doctor needed the patient's **consent** before the surgery.

- A. a full medical history
- B. payment in full
- C. permission to proceed

3. Neatness was one **criterion** the judges used to score the contest.

- A. a standard for judging
- B. a prize for the winner
- C. a rule about entering

4. In their family it was **customary** to remove your shoes at the door.

- A. a strict requirement
- B. the usual practice
- C. an old superstition

5. The **defendant** sat quietly as the judge entered the courtroom.

- A. the lawyer who accuses
- B. the judge's assistant
- C. the accused person

6. She crossed her arms in **defiance** and refused to leave.

- A. bold resistance
- B. sudden embarrassment
- C. quiet confusion

7. The **diligent** student reviewed her notes every single night.

- A. hardworking and careful
- B. cheerful and outgoing
- C. nervous and worried

8. Even after failing twice, she chose to **persevere** with the project.

- A. to keep on despite difficulty
- B. to start over from scratch
- C. to ask others for help

9. The **resilient** mattress barely dented under his weight.

- A. smooth and cool
- B. springy and elastic
- C. firm and heavy

10. He took a **tentative** step onto the frozen pond.

- A. slow and heavy
- B. hesitant and cautious
- C. clumsy and awkward

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

sit-down strikes — protests in which workers occupy the workplace and refuse to work or leave

the Quarters — Maycomb's segregated Black neighborhood outside the town limits

shinny — homemade moonshine whiskey

according to her lights

privy — an outhouse; an outdoor toilet

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	C
2	C
3	A
4	B
5	C
6	A
7	A
8	A
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 “It showed Atticus barefooted and in short pants, chained to a desk: he was diligently writing on a slate while some frivolous-looking girls yelled, ‘Yoo-hoo!’ at him.”

As used in the passage, the word ‘diligently’ most nearly means—

- A. with careless haste
- B. in a slow, unwilling way
- C. in a hardworking way

2 “It was customary for field Negroes with tiny children to deposit them in whatever shade there was while their parents worked— usually the babies sat in the shade between two rows of cotton.”

According to the passage, leaving small children in the shade while parents worked was—

- A. a long-standing practice
- B. a landowner’s requirement
- C. a recent, desperate measure

3 “Atticus persevered in spite of us: ‘She asked me to tell you you must try to behave like the little lady and gentleman that you are.’”

It can reasonably be inferred that, as Atticus spoke, the children—

- A. were resisting his message
- B. had asked for the talk
- C. were eager to obey him

4 “He sighed, and said rape was carnal knowledge of a female by force and without consent.”

As used in the passage, the word ‘consent’ most nearly means—

- A. objection
- B. awareness
- C. permission

5 “As I passed the bed I stepped on something warm, resilient, and rather smooth. It was not quite like hard rubber, and I had the sensation that it was alive.”

The word resilient suggests that when the narrator stepped on the object, it—

- A. stayed hard and did not give
- B. sprang back under his foot
- C. crumbled and broke apart

6 “Jem made a tentative swipe under the bed. I looked over the foot to see if a snake would come out. None did. Jem made a deeper swipe.”

The author most likely follows the ‘tentative swipe’ with a ‘deeper swipe’ to—

- A. show Jem’s caution fading
- B. reveal a snake under the bed
- C. show Jem losing patience

7 “Since things appeared to have worked out pretty well, Dill and I decided to be civil to Jem. Besides, Dill had to sleep with him so we might as well speak to him.”

It can reasonably be inferred that, before this, the children had—

- A. been looking after Jem
- B. not been speaking to Jem
- C. been playing games with Jem

8 “After many telephone calls, much pleading on behalf of the defendant, and a long forgiving letter from his mother, it was decided that Dill could stay.”

The author most likely calls Dill ‘the defendant’ in order to—

- A. show the adults were angry
- B. suggest Dill had broken a law
- C. frame his fate as a mock trial

9 “The Levy family met all criteria for being Fine Folks: they did the best they could with the sense they had, and they had been living on the same plot of ground in Maycomb for five generations.”

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to—

- A. trace their family’s long history
- B. spell out the standards they met
- C. mock the idea of ‘Fine Folks’

10 “As Atticus’s fists went to his hips, so did Jem’s, and as they faced each other ... Mutual defiance made them alike.”

In the passage, Jem is characterized as—

- A. unwilling to back down
- B. frightened of the crowd
- C. eager to please his father

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	C	
2	A	
3	A	Here 'persevered' means pressing on with an unwelcome speech despite the children's silent resistance, not enduring physical hardship.
4	C	
5	B	
6	A	
7	B	
8	C	The legal term is used playfully — Dill faces no charge, but the pleading 'on his behalf' and the verdict that he 'could stay' cast the decision as a mock trial.
9	B	'Criteria' is the plural of 'criterion'; here it names the community's standards for who counts as respectable.
10	A	

Teacher Context: Chapters 12–15

Part Two opens with Calpurnia taking Jem and Scout to her church, followed by Aunt Alexandra's arrival to make a lady of Scout. The section builds to the night Atticus faces the mob at the jail and Scout unwittingly breaks it up. The break lands just before the trial opens.