

Tuesdays with Morrie

Chapters 1-7

by Mitch Albom

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: aphorism, commandeered, composure, contorted, in lieu of, insatiable, insidious, siren song, tension, wither

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 · Mitch reconnects with his old professor

Section 2 · Chapters 8-17 · The Tuesday lessons begin

Section 3 · Chapters 18-27 · Continuing the weekly Tuesday lessons

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. She collected every **aphorism** she heard in a small notebook.

- A. a clever rhyme or poem
- B. a short, wise saying
- C. a funny personal story

2. The general **commandeered** the only truck to move his troops.

- A. loaded up with supplies
- B. seized and took control of
- C. borrowed for a short while

3. She kept her **composure** even as the crowd booed her.

- A. calm self-control
- B. polite silence
- C. cheerful confidence

4. The dancer **contorted** her body in surprising ways.

- A. twisted out of shape
- B. stretched and balanced
- C. spun around quickly

5. The team chose a quiet dinner **in lieu of** a big party.

- A. as part of
- B. in addition to
- C. in place of

6. He has an **insatiable** hunger for fame.

- A. impossible to satisfy
- B. quiet and well hidden
- C. sudden but short-lived

7. The **insidious** influence of the gang spread through the neighborhood.

- A. appealing in a bold, showy way
- B. harmful in a fast, open way
- C. harmful in a slow, hidden way

8. The **siren song** of fame drew many young actors to the city.

- A. a tempting pull that leads one astray
- B. a hard test that drives people off
- C. a fair reward that brings honor

9. There was a constant **tension** between her wish to travel and her need to save money.

- A. a firm, clear decision
- B. a pull between opposing forces
- C. a calm, settled balance

10. Without rain, the flowers began to **wither** in the heat.

- A. to lean toward the sun
- B. to give off a strong scent
- C. to shrivel and fade

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

Morrie as a bridge — a metaphor for his position between life and death, which allows others to learn from his experience of dying

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	B
2	B
3	A
4	A
5	C
6	A
7	C
8	A
9	B
10	C

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 “A funeral was held in lieu of graduation.”

As it is used in the passage, “in lieu of” most nearly means...

- A. in place of
- B. in honor of
- C. in addition to

6 “After a while, he had more than fifty of these “aphorisms,” which he shared with his friends.”

According to the passage, Morrie’s “aphorisms” were...

- A. notes from his doctors
- B. brief sayings about how to live
- C. long essays on his illness

2 “Then he commandeered the floor, shooting back and forth like some hot Latin lover.”

The author most likely describes Morrie commandeering the dance floor in order to...

- A. show his bold, commanding spirit
- B. show his failing coordination
- C. show his dislike of crowds

7 “I decided I’m going to live—or at least try to live—the way I want, with dignity, with courage, with humor, with composure.”

Which choice best describes the attitude with which Morrie resolves to face his dying?

- A. calm, dignified self-possession
- B. cheerful denial of the truth
- C. bitter, defeated resignation

3 “Do I wither up and disappear, or do I make the best of my time left?”

It can reasonably be inferred that the two paths Morrie weighs are to...

- A. fade away or live fully to the end
- B. keep teaching or retire quietly
- C. seek a cure or accept treatment

8 “What, Koppel asked, did Morrie dread the most about his slow, insidious decay?”

Calling the decay “slow, insidious” primarily functions to stress that the disease...

- A. strikes suddenly and visibly
- B. can be reversed with care
- C. advances gradually and unnoticed

4 “... doubled over at the dinner table, pressing on his stomach, his eyes shut, his mouth contorted in pain.”

The passage most strongly suggests that the narrator’s uncle was...

- A. resting peacefully
- B. gripped by severe pain
- C. faking his discomfort

9 “I had become too wrapped up in the siren song of my own life.”

The passage most strongly suggests that the “siren song” of Mitch’s life was...

- A. a duty he could not avoid
- B. a talent he was proud of
- C. an alluring pull that led him astray

5 “The sports appetite in that city was insatiable—they had professional teams in football, basketball, baseball, and hockey—and it matched my ambition.”

Which statement about the city is best supported by the passage?

- A. Its teams rarely won titles
- B. Its demand for sports never let up
- C. Its fans preferred quiet hobbies

10 “A tension of opposites, like a pull on a rubber band. And most of us live somewhere in the middle.”

Which choice best describes how the “tension of opposites” functions in the text as a whole?

- A. a warning against making choices
- B. a rule for winning arguments
- C. a model for life’s competing pulls

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	A	
3	A	Event comprehension.
4	B	
5	B	
6	B	
7	A	Character comprehension.
8	C	
9	C	Character comprehension. 'Siren song' alludes to the Sirens of Greek myth, whose singing lured sailors to their deaths — alluring but destructive.
10	C	

Teacher Context: Chapters 1–7

Frames the book: Mitch recalls his college graduation and his promise to stay in touch with his sociology professor, Morrie Schwartz, then narrates how years later he saw Morrie interviewed on Nightline after a diagnosis of ALS and reconnected with him. These chapters establish Morrie's decline and the origin of their weekly Tuesday visits. Section ends before the first Tuesday lesson, where the book's central structure begins.