

Ulysses

Episodes 1–3 (Telemachus, Nestor, Proteus)

by James Joyce

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: crone, demagogue, embargo, ineluctable, intone, jejune, mummer, postprandial, uncouth, wheedle

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 · Episodes 1–3 (Telemachus, Nestor, Proteus) · Stephen Dedalus on a Dublin morning

Section 2 · Episodes 4–6 (Calypso, Lotus Eaters, Hades) · Leopold Bloom begins his day

Section 3 · Episodes 7–9 (Aeolus, Lestrygonians, Scylla and Charybdis) · The newspaper office at midday

Section 4 · Episodes 10–12 (Wandering Rocks, Sirens, Cyclops) · Across Dublin in the afternoon

Section 5 · Episodes 13–15 (Nausicaa, Oxen of the Sun, Circe) · Evening on the Dublin shore

Section 6 · Episodes 16–18 (Eumaeus, Ithaca, Penelope) · Bloom and Stephen, late at night

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. In the fairy tale, a **crone** lived deep in the forest.
 - A. a poor wandering beggar
 - B. a withered old woman
 - C. a gentle forest spirit
2. The **demagogue** rose quickly to national power.
 - A. a leader who exploits emotion
 - B. a leader backed by old wealth
 - C. a leader famed for bold reforms
3. The government placed an **embargo** on foreign oil.
 - A. a tax on imports
 - B. a ban on trade
 - C. a cap on production
4. Aging is an **ineluctable** part of life.
 - A. harsh and widely dreaded
 - B. slow and barely noticed
 - C. impossible to escape
5. The priest began to **intone** the evening prayer.
 - A. to mutter softly to oneself
 - B. to announce in a loud, brisk tone
 - C. to chant in a solemn voice
6. Her **jejeune** opinions annoyed the older students.
 - A. naive and immature
 - B. harsh and overly critical
 - C. loud and attention-seeking
7. A traveling **mummer** entertained the holiday crowd.
 - A. a costumed actor
 - B. a street musician
 - C. a circus acrobat
8. Grandfather always took a **postprandial** stroll.
 - A. after a nap
 - B. before sunrise
 - C. after a meal
9. The travelers crossed an **uncouth** and trackless land.
 - A. harsh and unforgiving
 - B. strange and unfamiliar
 - C. vast and overgrown
10. She tried to **wheedle** an extra day off from her boss.
 - A. to coax with flattery
 - B. to plead with desperation
 - C. to persuade with logic

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

the cracked looking-glass of a servant — Stephen's bitter image of Irish art as a damaged reflection shaped by Ireland's subjection to British rule

omphalos — Greek for "navel" or "belly button"; also a sacred center, especially the stone at Delphi believed to mark the center of the world; used first as a mock-grand name for the Martello tower and later for the human navel

history is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake — Stephen imagines the past as an oppressive dream that still traps the present and that he is struggling to escape

ANSWER KEY

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

Vocabulary in Context

Ulysses

Episodes 1–3 (Telemachus, Nestor, Proteus)

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 “Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. ... He held the bowl aloft and intoned ...”

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘intoned’ most nearly suggests that Mulligan...

- A. mutters half to himself
- B. snaps out a brisk command
- C. chants in a solemn, holy voice

2 “Will he come? The jejune jesuit!”

By calling Stephen ‘the jejune jesuit,’ Mulligan characterizes him as...

- A. naive and immature
- B. solemn and devout
- C. vain and self-important

3 “But a lovely mummer! he murmured to himself. Kinch, the loveliest mummer of them all!”

It can reasonably be inferred that Mulligan’s calling Stephen ‘the loveliest mummer’ is...

- A. open contempt with no warmth
- B. fond teasing edged with real mockery
- C. sincere praise of Stephen’s talent

4 “Buck Mulligan, hewing thick slices from the loaf, said in an old woman’s wheedling voice ...”

Joyce most likely describes Mulligan’s voice as ‘wheedling’ in order to...

- A. stress his blunt, abrupt manner
- B. reveal his growing irritation
- C. convey his coaxing, flattering tone

5 “A wandering crone, lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror and her gay betrayer ...”

The passage most strongly suggests that the old milkwoman appears to Stephen as...

- A. an aged, withered woman
- B. a sly, scheming trickster
- C. a hearty woman in her prime

6 “... before the prelates of your communion denounced him as a demagogue?”

According to the passage, the prelates who ‘denounced him as a demagogue’ accused O’Connell of...

- A. secretly siding with the English crown
- B. rousing the mob through raw emotion
- C. growing rich from public office

7 “You will see at the next outbreak they will put an embargo on Irish cattle.”

Which outcome of a fresh outbreak does Deasy’s warning most support?

- A. a ban on trading Irish cattle
- B. a new tax on Irish cattle
- C. a permanent, irreversible cattle ban

8 “Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot.”

In context, the word ‘Ineluctable’ emphasizes that the visible world is...

- A. impossible to shut out or escape
- B. dense with hidden meaning
- C. endlessly shifting and unstable

9 “Your postprandial, do you know that word? Postprandial. There was a fellow I knew once in Barcelona, queer fellow, used to call it his postprandial.”

The repetition of ‘postprandial’ and the aside ‘do you know that word?’ primarily functions to...

- A. complain of a heavy, sluggish meal
- B. show off a fancy after-dinner word
- C. confess uncertainty about the word

10 “... in violet night walking beneath a reign of uncouth stars.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the ‘uncouth stars’ strike Stephen as...

- A. faint and far away
- B. crude and ill-mannered
- C. strange and unfamiliar

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	C	
2	A	
3	B	Character comprehension. Mulligan mixes mockery with genuine fondness — 'It's not fair to tease you like that, Kinch... you have more spirit than any of them.'
4	C	
5	A	The milkwoman is Stephen's emblem of a servile Ireland — 'silk of the kine and poor old woman' — serving her conqueror and her betrayer.
6	B	
7	A	Event comprehension. Deasy stresses the disease is curable ('it can be cured. It is cured'), so he treats any ban as avoidable, not permanent.
8	A	The famous opening of the 'Proteus' episode: walking the strand, Stephen reflects that sight is inescapable — he cannot help but see.
9	B	
10	C	Here 'uncouth' carries its older sense, 'strange, unfamiliar,' not 'ill-mannered' — Stephen imagines himself under alien stars.

Teacher Context: Episodes 1–3 (Telemachus, Nestor, Proteus)

The three opening episodes follow Stephen Dedalus: at the Martello tower with Buck Mulligan, teaching a history class, and walking Sandymount strand lost in thought. This is the 'Telemachiad,' Joyce's prelude centered on Stephen before Leopold Bloom enters. The break follows Joyce's own three-part structure, so this section is the complete first part.