

Context Clues

For each vocabulary word, there are two sentences below. The first sentence is from "The Monkey's Paw." Decide which one-word meaning best fits the word's usage in **both** sentences.

Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly by the fire.

The firemen knew that his life was in peril every time he entered a burning building.

The placid water of the lake sat undisturbed.

1. perils a. danger b. security c. adventure

2. placidly a. quietly b. gently c. violently

I suppose because only two houses in the road are let, they think it doesn't matter.

According to the apartment manager, there is only one room available to be let.

3. let a. abandoned b. rented c. remaining

...followed by a tall, burly man, beady of eye and rubicund of visage.

The old man stormed out of the room, angry and rubicund of visage.

4. rubicund of visage a. gray-haired b. red-faced c. pale-skinned

... as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of wild scenes and doughty deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

The doughty soldier glanced up, saw the enemy approaching, and lurched forward, prepared for battle.

5. doughty a. boring b. unusual c. brave

The soldier regarded him in the way that middle age is wont to regard presumptuous youth.

It was very presumptuous of him to assume he'd gotten the job.

6. presumptuous a. overconfident b. preppy c. modest

"If you could have another three wishes," said the old man, eyeing him keenly, "would you have them?"

She wanted keenly to help the child but somehow managed to hold herself back.

7. keenly a. angrily b. casually c. intensely

Short Story of the Month

Vocabulary

"The Monkey's Paw" by W. W. Jacobs

Focus: Using Context Clues

Her husband drew the talisman from pocket, and then all three burst into laughter...

The rabbit's foot hung from his mirror, a talisman that he believed could bring him luck.

8. talisman a. charm b. voodoo doll c. jewels

His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman...

The sick boy's mother was full of credulity, knowing fiercely that the medicine would work.

9. credulity a. belief b. ignorance c. foolishness

There was an air of prosaic wholesomeness about the room which it had lacked on the previous night.

He had nothing new to say, and I was tired of the same old prosaic ideas.

10. prosaic a. ordinary b. exciting c. creative

"I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you.

The avaricious women climbed over each other trying to grab the merchandise for themselves.

11. avaricious a. greedy b. eager c. cheap

Her husband interposed. "There, there, mother," he said, hastily.

The neighbor, seeing his opportunity, interposed and suggested they calm down before continuing.

12. interposed a. interrupted b. pointed c. avoided

"They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son's services, they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation.

Although the house sustained damage in the fire, his insurance provided adequate compensation.

13. compensation a. penalty b. handout c. payment

...and a minute or two afterward the old woman came silently and apathetically beside him.

Not caring who the mayor would be, the woman cast her vote apathetically.

14. apathetically a. unemotionally b. interestingly c. knowingly

A perfect fusillade of knocks reverberated through the house...

She knew who was behind it when a fusillade of rocks came flying towards her.

15. fusillade a. fire b. outburst c. harmony