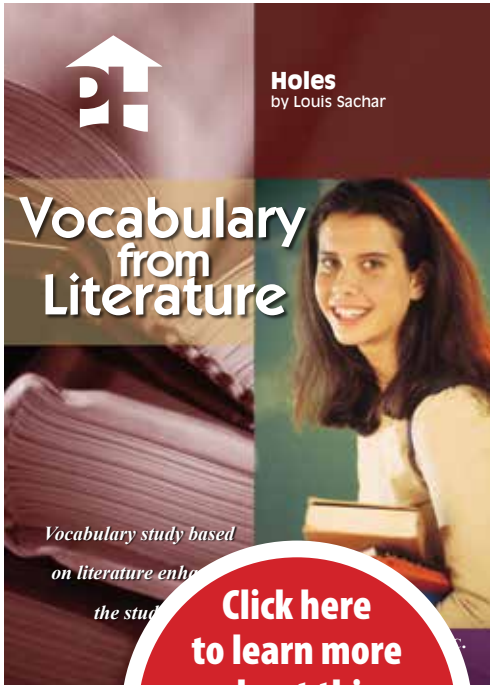




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Vocabulary From Literature

Holes

by Louis Sachar

Written by Christa Miles

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ISBN 978-1-58049-211-9

Item No. 201046

Vocabulary From Literature

Information for Instructors

The activities in this Unit are designed to help students increase their vocabulary by studying the meanings of words selected from Louis Sachar's novel *Holes*. All definitions provided in these activities are based on the contexts in which the vocabulary words appear, which may not always convey the words' conventional usage.

It is the goal of this Unit to familiarize students with vocabulary words that they will re-encounter in life and other readings. The words are carefully selected to meet this goal. Many unfamiliar words not covered by the Unit are defined in a Glossary following the Activities section; the Glossary also contains slang expressions and proper nouns.

Rather than matching *Holes* chapter-for-chapter, we have divided the book into segments depending on the number of vocabulary words from each chapter. While all of the activities may be completed by students individually, we have had the best results when students worked on them in pairs or small groups. The following activities are provided for each segment.

While the words in this reproducible do represent those necessary for a better understanding of the text, our primary concern is that we select words not only pertinent to the literature, but also useful in other aspects of the students' lives.

All page references come from the Yearling Newbery edition of *Holes*, copyright 1998.

Activity I

Objective: Finding and interpreting definitions

Activity II

Objective: Deciphering the meaning of vocabulary words using context clues
Replacing the vocabulary word with appropriate synonym(s) and definition(s)

Activity III

Objective: Writing definitions, synonyms, and sentences based on context clues

Vocabulary From Literature

Activity I
Matching Definitions
Chapters 1-7

Directions: Match each of the words below with its definition based on the context in which the word appears in the book. Use the page numbers in parentheses to locate the word. Then, look up the word in the dictionary and change any answers that are not correct.

stifling (6)
gruff (8)
desolate (11)

vast (8)
perseverance (8)
penal code (12)

descendants (8)
barren (11)
burlap (12)

1. _____ empty; without productivity; lacking vegetation
2. _____ set of laws for punishing crimes
3. _____ fabric made from coarse fibers
4. _____ deserted; lacking activity
5. _____ harsh; rough
6. _____ lacking air; smothering
7. _____ great in size; expansive
8. _____ offspring; family members
9. _____ resolve; determination; follow-through

hastily (14)
society (18)
prospect (22)

counselor (16)
sanitary (19)
testified (23)

wearily (17)
scarcity (21)
despicable (25)

10. _____ hateful; worthy of disgust
11. _____ inadequate supply; not enough
12. _____ spoke under oath; gave evidence
13. _____ something expected or anticipated
14. _____ people in a community; culture
15. _____ clean; healthy
16. _____ tiredly; showing exhaustion
17. _____ advisor
18. _____ quickly; hurriedly; with great speed

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8. Using all his **might**, he brought the shovel back down onto the dry lake bed. The force stung his hands but made no **impression** on the earth. He wondered if he had a **defective** shovel. He glanced at Zero, about fifteen feet away, who scooped out a shovelful of dirt and dumped it on a pile that was already almost a foot tall. (Pg. 26)

Synonym for **might**

- A. wisdom
- B. possibility
- C. height
- D. tremor
- E. strength

Synonym for **impression**:

- A. belief
- B. indentation
- C. appearance
- D. covering
- E. shine

Synonym for **defective**:

- A. bent
- B. raspy
- C. ugly
- D. bleak
- E. faulty

9. After leaving Myra's house, Elya wandered **aimlessly** through the town, until he found himself down by the wharf. He sat on the edge of a pier and stared down into the cold, black water. (Pg. 36)

Synonym for **aimlessly**:

- A. without purpose
- B. directly
- C. angrily
- D. with plenty of food
- E. shyly

10. Not one dirt **clod** more than necessary had been removed from the earth. (Pg. 37)

Synonym for **clod**:

- A. lump
- B. stupid person
- C. coal
- D. insect
- E. shingle

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Activity III
Writing Definitions and Sentences
from Context Clues
Chapters 1-7

Directions: For each highlighted word, write a definition that fits the context of the passage. Then, check your answers by looking the words up in the dictionary. Finally, write a sentence using each word. The first one is done for you as an example.

Example: There is no lake at Camp Green Lake. There once was a very large lake here, the largest lake in Texas. That was over a hundred years ago. Now it is just a dry, flat wasteland. (Pg. 1)

Definition for **wasteland**: country marked by lack of cultivation; unused, untended earth

Sentence: The settlers had no choice but to keep moving; there were no signs of life on the deserted wasteland.

1. On his last day of school, his math teacher, Mrs. Bell, taught **ratios**. As an example, she chose the heaviest kid in the class and the lightest kid in the class, and had them weigh themselves. Stanley weighed three times as much as the other boy. Mrs. Bell wrote the **ratio** on the board, 3:1, unaware of how much embarrassment she had caused both of them. (Pg. 7)

Definition for **ratio**:

Sentence for **ratio**: _____

2. At such times she neglected to mention the bad luck that **befell** the first Stanley Yelnats. He lost his entire fortune when he was moving from New York to California. (Pg. 9)

Definition for **befell**:

Sentence for **befell**: _____

Vocabulary From Literature

Activity IV
Completing Sentences
Chapters 1-7

Directions: The following sentences each contain a vocabulary word from the text. Complete each sentence in a way that shows you understand the meaning of the highlighted vocabulary word. You may use a dictionary or thesaurus to help with the meaning.

Example

Sentence starter containing vocabulary word:

It may be a coincidence that the twins both gave birth to twins in the Twin Mountain Lodge on 2/2/02.

1. The **forlorn** look on Billy's face meant he _____
_____.
2. The **prospect** of playing on the team _____
_____.
3. Sandra's smile through the pain gave Doctor Ben an idea about her **character**.
He thought she _____
_____.
4. The baseball team needed a good hitter who could **deftly** _____
_____.
5. The coach for the home team **grimaced** when _____
_____.
6. Following the theft of the library books, a new rule was put into place. **Thereafter,** _____
_____.

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Activity V
Roots and Prefixes
Chapters 1-7

- A. The Latin *solus* means “alone.” The words below are all from the *solus* root. Define each one and give a synonym for it.

WORD	DEFINITION	SYNONYM
1. desolate		
2. solitary		
3. sole		
4. solitude		
5. solo		
6. soliloquy		

- B. All the words below come from the Latin *pressi*, meaning “press.” From the definition of each word, try to figure out the meaning of its prefix. If you need help, consult a dictionary.

WORD	DEFINITION	PREFIX	MEANING
1. impression	mark in something; indentation	<i>im / in</i>	
2. repress	to press back	<i>re</i>	
3. express	to bring out; to say or show	<i>ex</i>	
4. oppress	to use unfair power against	<i>op</i>	
5. compress	to squeeze together	<i>com</i>	
6. suppress	to press under	<i>sup / sub</i>	