The novels in *The Series of Unfortunate Events* were written by Lemony Snicket. This series will intrigue the young reader to quickly devour each novel. It is a sure way to increase the reading comprehension skills for a third-through-sixth grader. The vocabulary used in the series will help the young student with other reading materials. The first book in the series, *The Bad Beginning*, introduces the three orphaned children. These poor children are pitted against an evil distant relative. Their additional harrowing adventures with this evil relative are continued in the rest of the novels that follow.

*Please note:* The first number in parenthesis following a vocabulary word indicates the approximate grade level at which the student should know the definition of the word while the following number indicates the page on which the word was found. (Word grade placement is per *EDL Core Vocabularies in Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, 1989.*)

The page number of a vocabulary word or the range of page numbers may not correspond to the published text of the book you are using. If that is the case, you will find the vocabulary word and/or the basis for the comprehension questions and answers on pages that are approximately the same as those used in creating this study guide.

The answers to the comprehension questions are not always written in complete sentences. Sometimes they have been written into shortened phrases. This makes the answers easier to find as well as limiting the space needed to give the answers.
Chapter One  

Preparatory Set: Read the back cover to the group.  
Prediction: How did the note on the back cover note affect you?  

Vocabulary List with Definitions (grade appropriate #, page where word is found)  

facial (8, 1) having to do with the face  
rife (13, 1) frequently occurring  
knack (_, 3) an ability to do something  

Comprehension Questions  

1. What kind of a story does the author say this story will be?  P. 1  
   It will have no happy beginning, few happy middle parts, and no happy ending.  

2. Why did the three Baudelaire children like to go to the beach on gray and cloudy days?  P. 2  
   Few people go to the beach on days like this.  

3. Who has a knack for inventing devices?  P. 3  
   Violet  

4. What characteristics does Klaus have?  P. 3  
   Klaus is intelligent and is a great reader.  

5. Describe Sunny.  P. 4  
   She is an infant who has sharp teeth. She likes to bite things.  

6. Who was walking toward the three children on the beach?  Pp. 5-6  
   A tall figure was striding toward them. The figure was the size of an adult with a tall, square head. Mr. Poe was the figure and a friend of the family. His top hat made his head look large and square in the fog.  

7. What news did Mr. Poe bring the three unlucky children?  Pp. 7-8  
   Their parents had died in a terrible fire. It had destroyed the entire house.  

8. What else did Mr. Poe tell the children?  Pp. 9-10  
   He was to be the executor of their parents’ estate. The children’s parents had left an enormous fortune to them.
Chapter Two  Pp. 11-25

Prediction: From the way the author writes about Mr. Poe, do you think he is honest and trustworthy, or will he be an enemy of the children?

Vocabulary List with Definitions (grade appropriate #, page where word is found)

gears (5, 12) devices in which motion of one is passed on to another
fused (6, 12) to unite as if by melting together
recuperate (10, 13) recover; to get well again
grotesque (10, 13) ridiculous; absurd; ludicrously eccentric
obnoxious (10, 13) very unpleasant; objectionable
blanched (_, 13) boiled
glumly (_, 16) gloomy, sullenly, morose, depressed
siblings (_, 19) brothers and sisters
dilapidated (11, 20) in need of repair; shabby and neglected

Comprehension Questions

1.  In addition to losing their parents, what else did the orphans lose? Pp. 11-12 Their home was destroyed by a fire.

2.  Where were the orphans being sent to live? Pp. 13-14 They were placed in the care of a distant relative, Count Olaf, who lived on the other side of the town.

3.  How did Mr. Poe act about the orphans leaving his home? Pp. 15-16 He and his family were glad the three children were leaving.

4.  Where was Count Olaf’s house located? Pp. 17-18 It was located down a narrow alley lined with houses made of pale brick.

5.  What was Olaf’s house like compared to Justice Strauss’s house? Pp. 19-20 The Justice’s house looked well-scrubbed. It had an assortment of well-groomed plants and a shiny brass doorknob. Olaf’s house had bricks stained with soot and grime. It had two small windows and a dirty tower tilted slightly to the left. The front door needed repainting. There was a carved eye in middle of door. The entire building sagged like a crooked tooth.

6.  Count Olaf’s told the children to wipe their feet so they wouldn’t bring dirt into his house. Why was that ridiculous? Pp. 21-22 They stepped into the dirtiest room they had ever seen.

7.  How did Olaf plan to use the children’s fortune? Pp. 23-25 He wanted to fix his house, but he couldn’t use the money because the will said it couldn’t be used until Violet was of age.

8.  What made the children think Olaf would always be watching them? P. 25 He had an eye tattooed on his ankle which matched the eye on the front door.
Student’s Guide
Chapter One  

Vocabulary

facial (1)
ripe (1)
knack 3)

Comprehension Questions

1. What kind of a story does the author say this story will be?  P. 1

2. Why did the three Baudelaire children like to go to the beach on gray and cloudy days?  P. 2

3. Who has a knack for inventing devices?  P. 3

4. What characteristics does Klaus have?  P. 3

5. Describe Sunny.  P. 4

6. Who was walking toward the three children on the beach?  Pp. 5-6

7. What news did Mr. Poe bring the three unlucky children?  Pp. 7-8

8. What else did Mr. Poe tell the children?  Pp. 9-10
Chapter Two  Pp. 11-25

Vocabulary

gears (12)
fused (12)
recuperate (13)
grotesque (13)
obnoxious (13)
blanched (13)
glumly (16)
siblings (19)
dilapidated (20)

Comprehension Questions

1. In addition to losing their parents, what else did the orphans lose?  
   Pp. 11-12

2. Where were the orphans being sent to live?  Pp. 13-14

3. How did Mr. Poe act about the orphans leaving his home?  Pp. 15-16

4. Where was Count Olaf’s house located?  Pp. 17-18

5. What was Olaf’s house like compared to Justice Strauss’s house?  Pp. 19-20

6. Count Olaf’s told the children to wipe their feet so they wouldn’t bring dirt into his house. Why was that ridiculous?  Pp. 21-22


8. What made the children think Olaf would always be watching them?  P. 25
Chapter One  Pp. 1-10

Vocabulary

facial (1) __________________________________________________________

rife (1) __________________________________________________________

knack (3) __________________________________________________________

Comprehension Questions

1. What kind of a story does the author say this story will be? P. 1
   ________________________________________________________________

2. Who has a knack for inventing devices? P. 3
   ________________________________________________________________

3. What characteristics does Klaus have? P. 3
   ________________________________________________________________

4. Describe Sunny. P. 4
   ________________________________________________________________

5. Who was walking toward the three children on the beach? Pp. 5-6
   ________________________________________________________________

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   ________________________________________________________________

7. What else did Mr. Poe tell the children? Pp. 9-10
   ________________________________________________________________
Chapter Two     Pp. 11-25

Vocabulary

recuperate (13)


grotesque (13)


obnoxious (13)


dilapidated (20)

Comprehension Questions

1. In addition to losing their parents, what else did the orphans lose? Pp. 11-12


2. Where were the orphans being sent to live? Pp. 13-14


3. How did Mr. Poe act about the orphans leaving his home? Pp. 15-16


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Workbook Answer Key

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Chapter One  Pp. 1-10

Vocabulary List with Definitions (grade appropriate #, page where word is found)

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rife (13, 1)  frequently occurring
knack ( _, 3)  an ability to do something

Comprehension Questions

1. What kind of a story does the author say this story will be?  P. 1  It will have no  
   happy beginning, few happy middle parts, and no happy ending.

2. Who has a knack for inventing devices?  P. 3  Violet

3. What characteristics does Klaus have?  P. 3  Klaus is intelligent and is a great  
   reader.

4. Describe Sunny.  P. 4  She is an infant who has sharp teeth. She likes to bite  
   things.

5. Who was walking toward the three children on the beach?  Pp. 5-6  A tall figure  
   was striding toward them. The figure was the size of an adult with a tall, square head.  
   Mr. Poe was the figure and a friend of the family. His top hat made his head look  
   large and square in the fog.

6. What news did Mr. Poe bring the three unlucky children?  Pp. 7-8  Their parents  
   had died in a terrible fire. It had destroyed the entire house.

7. What else did Mr. Poe tell the children?  Pp. 9-10  He was to be the executor of  
   their parents’ estate. The children’s parents had left an enormous fortune to them.
Chapter Two     Pp. 11-25

Vocabulary List with Definitions (grade appropriate #, page where word is found)

recuperate (10, 13) recover; to get well again

grotesque (10, 13) ridiculous; absurd; ludicrously eccentric

obnoxious (10, 13) very unpleasant; objectionable

dilapidated (11, 20) in need of repair; shabby and neglected

Comprehension Questions

1. In addition to losing their parents, what else did the orphans lose? Pp. 11-12 Their home was destroyed by a fire.

2. Where were the orphans being sent to live? Pp. 13-14 They were placed in the care of a distant relative, Count Olaf, who lived on the other side of the town.

3. How did Mr. Poe act about the orphans leaving his home? Pp. 15-16 He and his family were glad the three children were leaving.

4. Where was Count Olaf's house located? Pp. 17-18 It was located down a narrow alley lined with houses made of pale brick.

5. What was Olaf's house like compared to Justice Strauss's house? Pp. 19-20 The Justice’s house looked well-scrubbed while Count Olaf’s was crooked and dilapidated.

6. Count Olaf's told the children to wipe their feet so they wouldn’t bring dirt into his house. Why was that ridiculous? Pp. 21-22 They stepped into the dirtiest room they had ever seen.

7. How did Olaf plan to use the children’s fortune? Pp. 23-25 He wanted to fix his house, but he couldn’t use the money because the will said it couldn’t be used until Violet was of age.

8. What made the children think Olaf would always be watching them? P. 25 He had an eye tattooed on his ankle which matched the eye on the front door.
Key Questions
Key Questions

Answer these questions in complete sentences. Name ____________________________

1. Name one characteristic about Violet and one about Klaus (Pp. 3) ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

2. Pages 19-20 Compare Olaf’s house to Justice Strauss’s house (Pp. 19-20) ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

3. Their father had always said to “keep your chin up.” Why did Klaus say this was difficult? (Pp. 31-32)

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

4. Why did the three orphans cry quietly all night long? (Pp. 53-55) ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

5. What did Mr. Poe tell the children about living with Count Olaf? (Pp. 65-66) ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________
Key Questions Answer Key
Key Questions

Answer these questions in complete sentences.  

Name __________________________________________

1. Name one characteristic about Violet and one about Klaus (Pp. 3)

   Violet had a knack for inventing devices, and Klaus was intelligent and a great reader.

2. Compare Olaf’s house to Justice Strauss’s house (Pp. 19-20)

   Justice Strauss’s house was well-, had well groomed plants, and had a shiny brass doorknob. Olaf’s had soot and grime stained bricks, two small windows, a dirty tower tilted slightly, the front door needed painting, and a carved eye in the middle of the door. The building sagged.

3. Their father had always said to “keep your chin up.” Why did Klaus say this was difficult? (Pp. 31-32)

   It is difficult to keep one’s chin up when Count Olaf keeps shoving it down.

4. Why did the three orphans cry quietly all night long? (Pp. 53-55)

   Count Olaf struck Klaus across the face. The theater troupe applauded. The rage at the terrible situation made the three cry.

5. What did Mr. Poe tell the children about living with Count Olaf? (Pp. 65-66)

   Mr. Poe told the children to give yourselves time to adjust to your new home. Olaf is acting in loco parentis which means he is acting as a parent.
Vocabulary Worksheet

Name

Use the following blanks to list and define vocabulary words chosen from the included word list.

1. ___________________Meaning: ______________________________________________________

2. ___________________Meaning: ______________________________________________________

3. ___________________Meaning: ______________________________________________________

4. ___________________Meaning: ______________________________________________________

5. ___________________Meaning: ______________________________________________________

6. ___________________Meaning: ______________________________________________________

7. ___________________Meaning: ______________________________________________________

8. ___________________Meaning: ______________________________________________________

9. ___________________Meaning: ______________________________________________________

10.______________________Meaning: ________________________________________________
Comprehension Worksheet

Name______________________________

Answer five comprehension questions in complete sentences.

1.________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

2.________________________________________________________________________
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4.________________________________________________________________________
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   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

5.________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
Vocabulary and Comprehension Worksheet

Use the following blanks to list and define vocabulary words chosen from the word list.

1. ___________________ Meaning:____________________________________________________

2. ___________________ Meaning:____________________________________________________

3. ___________________ Meaning:____________________________________________________

Answer three comprehension questions in complete sentences.

1.______________________________________________________________________________

2.______________________________________________________________________________

3.______________________________________________________________________________