INTRODUCTION

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Contents of this package

Worksheets
1. A blank vocabulary and reading comprehension worksheet where students can provide answers to a selection of questions from the guide.
2. A blank vocabulary worksheet where students can provide definitions to as many as 10 vocabulary words listed in the guide.
3. A blank comprehension worksheet where students can provide answers to several comprehension questions listed in the guide.

Guides
4. A teacher’s guide containing vocabulary and reading comprehension questions with answers and vocabulary grade levels.
5. A student’s guide containing vocabulary and reading comprehension questions without answers.

Workbooks
6. A set of 10 key questions covering the entire book with blank spaces for students to provide answers.
7. Some packets contain in-depth workbooks with several questions for each chapter or section and blank spaces for students to provide answers. (We plan to add these in-depth workbooks to every packet.)
8. Some packets also contain special activities.
Notes and suggestions for using the materials

The Teacher’s Guide

The Teacher’s Guide contains reading comprehension and vocabulary questions and answers that can be used during oral reading, or as part of a daily reading assignment.

This group of questions can also be used to test the comprehension of the student or students if they are assigned chapters to read silently. The questions can be asked and answered orally, or used in combination with the provided (blank) worksheets.

A Student’s Guide has been included. It contains the vocabulary words and comprehension questions, but the answers and grade levels have been removed.

The Vocabulary Words

We have chosen to include a large number of vocabulary words in order to provide words for as many grade levels as possible.

Research shows that children can, on average, learn ten new words from any new reading assignment and in many cases less than five new words. It is suggested that you discuss the meaning of the vocabulary words in advance of reading so that the children will have some idea as to the meaning of these words as they read. Students should not be expected to retain all of the word meanings once they are finished with the chapter, but by introducing the meanings, we increase the chance that they will recall the meanings when they encounter them in a new context. Over time, repeated interaction will help the students develop mastery over word meanings.

We have elected to grade the vocabulary words according to the EDL (Core Vocabularies in Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) which was published by Steck-Vaughn Company in 1989.

Grading of the selected words can be helpful. For example if you see that many of the words in the list have a grade of 6th, or higher, and your students are reading at a third grade level, you will, of course, need to choose a book that has a vocabulary more suited to your students achievements.

However, if you choose to have the students read this particular book even if vocabulary in the story is much higher than your student’s skills, you will know...
that much time will be needed to prepare the children to have success in the reading and comprehension of the story.

A blank vocabulary worksheet leaving a place for 10 words is included with the packet. It is only included as a suggestion. You may choose as few as 4 words based on your own criteria. You may use all 10 spaces for 10 new words to study. You may wish to pick more words. Or you may elect to choose none.

Other options for the use of the vocabulary list

Puzzles

Select words that would be meaningful to your group or child. Visit the following website: http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com. This site allows you to make crossword puzzles and/or other puzzles with chosen words. These choices could be made with the criteria of phonics, definitions, or other groupings such as archaic or cultural based words.

To promote retention, it is suggested that students draw a picture portraying the meaning of the word.

A Word Game

Write the words on cards or cut paper. Use at least three words per child in the group. Shuffle the cards. Go around the group asking each child to pronounce a word. (You may also require the students to define the word). If the child cannot do so go around the group until the word is correctly pronounced. The child who correctly pronounces a word gets to keep the card. The child is then asked to pronounce a second word. Again they get to keep the card if they answer correctly. If not, then continue around the group until this word is correctly decoded. If no child can decode the word then keep the word after telling the group the pronunciation. Keep going around the group giving each child a turn until the cards run out.

Now have each child chose one or two of their cards with which to quiz another student of their choice. If the chosen child can read the card the asker must give the chosen child the card, and a point. If the child cannot read the card, the asker gains one point.

After each child has had his turn everyone in the group counts the cards he has left plus each point he has earned. The one with the most cards (which are actually counted as one point) and points wins.
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
By Barbara Robinson
Scholastic
Accelerated Reader 4.0

Teacher’s Guide

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.

And the answers to the comprehension questions are not always written in complete sentences. The answers have sometimes been made in shortened phrases which make the answers easier to find as well as limiting the space needed to give the answers.

Prediction: What is a pageant? What would the greatest Christmas pageant ever be like?
Chapter 1   Pp. 1-14

Prediction: Read the first sentence of this chapter on page 1. Who will this chapter be about, and what can we expect to know about them?

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

absolutely  (6, 1) positively; ultimately; fundamentally
worst  (4, 1) evil, immoral; disagreeable; wickedest; naughtiest
took the name of the Lord in vain  (3, 1) made His name worthless
terrific  (5, 2) extraordinary; astounding
volunteer  (5, 2) person who voluntarily undertakes a service or duty
poured lighter fluid  (6, 2) liquid
disguise  (5, 3) to change the appearance of to conceal the identity of; hide
aquarium  (4, 5) a container in which living aquatic animals are kept
ordinary  (4, 7) to be expected; usual; customary; routine; normal; everyday
hysterical  (_, 7) unmanageable fear or outburst of emotion
scrunching her back up and down on the medicine cabinet  (_, 9) rubbing
contagious  (13, 9) a sickness that is transmitted by contact with an infected person
blackmailed  (7, 11) extortion by threats especially of public exposure
horrified  (4, 11) appalled; dismayed; to cause to feel horror
imitation  (6, 11) copying; counterfeiting
souvenir  (5, 11) something that serves as a reminder
pneumonia  (8, 11) an inflammatory disease of the lungs
detergent  (_, 11) a chemical product similar to soap in its cleaning ability
cooties  (_, 12) body lice
welfare  (7, 14) aid in the form of money for those in need
penitentiary  (_, 14) a state or federal prison
pageant  (6, 14) an elaborate spectacle; show; or procession

Comprehension Questions

1. How did the narrator describe the Herdman kids?  P. 1  They were described as the worst kids in the history of the world.
2. What kind of things did they do? P. 1 They lied, stole, smoked cigars, talked dirty, hit little kids, cussed teachers, took the name of the Lord in vain, and set fire to a tool shed.

3. What did the narrator think maybe the burning of the tool shed was an accident? P. 1 The narrator didn’t think they really planned to burn it down.

4. What did the Herdmans get out of the fire? P. 2 They got doughnuts meant for the firemen.

5. How did they start the fire? P. 2 They were playing with Leroy’s chemistry set which he had stolen from the hardware store.

6. How did chemistry set start the fire? P. 2 They poured all the chemicals together and poured lighter fluid on them and set the mixture on fire.

7. Why was Leroy mad? P. 3 He was mad because the chemistry set got burned up in the fire before he got a chance to make a bomb or two.

8. What wonderful lesson did the Herdmans learn? P. 3 They learned that whenever there was a fire there would be free doughnuts sooner or later.

9. Why did the neighbors say the fire was a blessing? P. 3 They had been pestering Mr. Shoemaker to do something about the tool shed, and now it was done.

10. What was the Herdman’s idea of a game at home? P. 4 They would bang the garage door up and down really fast trying to squash one another.

11. Why wouldn’t the mailman deliver mail to the Herdman’s house? P. 4 He thought their cat was a wild bobcat and that it would attack him.

12. How did Claude empty the first grade in 3 minutes flat? P. 5 He brought the cat to school in a box after not feeding him for two days, and the cat shot up in the air when the lid was taken off.

13. What damage did the wild cat do? P. 5 It scratched the blackboard, scratched little kids, shed fur, and scattered books and papers.

14. How did the fish tank get broken? P. 5 Miss Brandel evacuated the room, and tried to smack the cat with a broom. She knocked over the dollhouse, and broke the fish tank.

15. Why did Ramona go home early? P. 7 She got hysterical when the cat ate her two pet mice that she brought to Show-and-Tell.
16. What new rule was added to the school list of rules? P. 7  You couldn’t bring anything alive to Show-and-Tell.

17. Why did the Herdmans and everybody else know that the Herdman kids would never flunk a grade? Pp. 7-8  There was always a Herdman kid coming up, and no teacher was crazy enough to let herself in for two of them at once.

18. What did Imogene do that caused havoc in the lives of her classmates? P. 8  She learned secrets about everyone.

19. Why did Imogene want to be in the health room? P. 9  She wanted to learn how much everyone weighed.

20. When Imogene was caught by the nurse, Miss Hemphill, what did Imogene tell the nurse to throw her off the trail? P. 9  Ollie has red spots that itch.

21. While the nurse was out trying to find Ollie to see the spots, what did Imogene do? P. 9  She copied down everybody’s weight.

22. What did Imogene learn about Albert? P. 10  He was so overweight that he would have to go to a fat farm instead of Disneyland this summer.

23. What did Imogene blackmail Wanda out of? P. 10  her charm bracelet

24. Why did the narrator think this was a good idea? P. 10  Wanda was such a showoff about the bracelet that it was almost a relief when Imogene got it, and Wanda couldn’t brag about the bracelet anymore.


26. How did the narrator describe her friend, Alice? P. 11  She was so nasty clean she had detergent hands by the time she was four years old. She washed her hands all the time.

27. What did Imogene learn that Alice had? P. 12  Alice had had a bad case of head lice at summer camp.

28. What did the classmates call Alice for the rest of the year? P. 12  cooties

29. What had happened to the Herdmans’ father? P. 13  The Herdmans didn’t know where he was, he had climbed on a train and disappeared.

30. What did Mrs. Herdman do? P. 13  She worked double shifts at a shoe factory so she wouldn’t have to be home.
31. What did the social worker tell the narrator’s mother about Mrs. Herdman working? P. 14 She’d rather be at the shoe factory than home with her horrible kids.

32. Where did the townspeople think the Herdmans would end up? P. 14 The townspeople thought the Herdmans would end up in Hell or the penitentiary.
Student’s Guide
Chapter 1  Pp. 1-14

Vocabulary

absolutely (1)  contagious (9)
worst (1)    blackmailed (11)
took the name of the Lord in vain (1)    horrified (11)
terrific (2)  imitation (11)
volunteer (2)  souvenir (11)
poured lighter fluid (2)  pneumonia (11)
disguise (3)  detergent (11)
aquarium (5)  cooties (12)
ordinary (7)  welfare (14)
hysterical (7)  penitentiary (14)
scrunching her back up and down on the medicine cabinet (9)

Comprehension Questions

1. How did the narrator describe the Herdman kids?  P. 1
2. What kind of things did they do?  P. 1
3. What did the narrator think maybe the burning of the tool shed was an accident?  P. 1
4. What did the Herdmans get out of the fire?  P. 2
5. How did they start the fire?  P. 2
6. How did chemistry set start the fire?  P. 2
7. Why was Leroy mad?  P. 3
8. What wonderful lesson did the Herdmans learn?  P. 3
9. Why did the neighbors say the fire was a blessing?  P. 3
10. What was the Herdmans idea of a game at home?  P. 4
11. Why wouldn’t the mailman deliver mail to the Herdman’s house?  P. 4
12. How did Claude empty the first grade in 3 minutes flat?  P. 5
13. What damage did the wild cat do?  P. 5
14. How did the fish tank get broken? P. 5
15. Why did Ramona go home early? P. 7
16. What new rule was added to the school list of rules? P. 7
17. Why did the Herdmans and everybody else know that the Herdman kids would never flunk a grade? Pp. 7-8
18. What did Imogene do that caused havoc in the lives of her classmates? P. 8
19. Why did Imogene want to be in the health room? P. 9
20. When Imogene was caught by the nurse, Miss Hemphill, what did Imogene tell the nurse to throw her off the trail? P. 9
21. While the nurse was out trying to find Ollie to see the spots, what did Imogene do? P. 9
22. What did Imogene learn about Albert? P. 10
23. What did Imogene blackmail Wanda out of? P. 10
24. Why did the narrator think this was a good idea? P. 10
25. Why did Floyd stop paying Imogene 10 cents a week? P. 11
26. How did the narrator describe her friend, Alice? P. 11
27. What did Imogene learn that Alice had? P. 12
28. What did the classmates call Alice for the rest of the year? P. 12
29. What had happened to the Herdmans’ father? P. 13
30. What did Mrs. Herdman do? P. 13
31. What did the social worker tell the narrator’s mother about Mrs. Herdman working? P. 14
32. Where did the townspeople think the Herdmans would end up? P. 14
Chapter 1  Pp. 1-14

Vocabulary

absolutely (1)
contagious (9)
pneumonia (11)

Comprehension Questions

1. How did the narrator describe the Herdman kids?  P. 1

2. Why wouldn’t the mailman deliver mail to the Herdman’s house?  P. 4

3. How did Claude empty the first grade in 3 minutes flat?  P. 5

4. Why did the Herdmans and everybody else know that the Herdman kids would never flunk a grade?  Pp. 7-8

5. What did Imogene do that caused havoc in the lives of her classmates?  P. 8

6. What had happened to the Herdmans’ father?  P. 13

7. Where did the townspeople think the Herdmans would end up?  P. 14
Chapter 2  Pp. 15-24

Vocabulary

tradition (19)
parable (19)
sentiment (21)

Comprehension Questions

1. What did the narrator’s father want to do during the Christmas pageant every year instead of seeing Charlie as a shepherd?  P. 15

2. What catastrophe happened this particular year that threw a monkey wrench into all the church activities?  P. 16

3. How did Mother get stuck directing the Christmas pageant?  P. 17

4. Who always played Mary, and why did she always get the part of Mary?  P. 18

5. What did Charlie say in Sunday school about what he liked best about Sunday school?  P. 20

6. How did Alice show she was worried that the narrator’s mother might not pick her for Mary?  P. 23

7. How did the Herdmans pay for going to the movies all the time?  P. 23
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.)

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And the answers to the comprehension questions are not always written in complete sentences. The answers have sometimes been made in shortened phrases which make the answers easier to find as well as limiting the space needed to give the answers.
Chapter 1  Pp. 1-14

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

absolutely (6, 1)  positively; ultimately; fundamentally
contagious (13, 9)  a sickness that is transmitted by contact with an infected person
pneumonia (8, 11)  an inflammatory disease of the lungs

Comprehension Questions

1. How did the narrator describe the Herdman kids?  P. 1  They were described as
   the worst kids in the history of the world.

2. Why wouldn’t the mailman deliver mail to the Herdman’s house?  P. 4  He
   thought their cat was a wild bobcat and that it would attack him.

3. How did Claude empty the first grade in 3 minutes flat?  P. 5  He brought the
   cat to school in a box after not feeding him for two days, and the cat shot up in the
   air when the lid was taken off.

4. Why did the Herdmans and everybody else know that the Herdman kids would
   never flunk a grade?  Pp. 7-8  There was always a Herdman kid coming up, and
   no teacher was crazy enough to let herself in for two of them at once.

5. What did Imogene do that caused havoc in the lives of her classmates?  P. 8
   She learned secrets about everyone.

6. What had happened to the Herdmans’ father?  P. 13  The Herdmans didn’t
   know where he was, he had climbed on a train and disappeared.

7. Where did the townspeople think the Herdmans would end up?  P. 14  The
   townspeople thought the Herdmans would end up in Hell or the penitentiary.
Chapter 2  Pp. 15-24

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

tradition (7, 19) a customary pattern of action

parable (11, 19) a simple story told to illustrate a moral truth

sentiment (7, 21) feeling; opinion; notion; emotional attitude

Comprehension Questions

1. What did the narrator’s father want to do during the Christmas pageant every year instead of seeing Charlie as a shepherd? P. 15
   
   He wanted to put on his bathrobe, sit by the fire, and relax.

2. What catastrophe happened this particular year that threw a monkey wrench into all the church activities? P. 16
   
   Mrs. Armstrong who ran everything in the church broke her leg.

3. How did Mother get stuck directing the Christmas pageant? P. 17 Everyone who would agree to help with all the activities took other jobs which left the pageant.

4. Who always played Mary, and why did she always get the part? P. 18 Alice Wendleken always played Mary because she was so smart, so neat, so clean and so holy-looking.

5. What did Charlie say in Sunday school about what he liked best about Sunday school? P. 20 There were no Herdmans in church or Sunday school.

6. How did Alice show she was worried that the narrator’s mother might not pick her for Mary? P. 23 Alice complimented the narrator on how well she played the part of an angel and hoped she would be one again this year.

7. How did the Herdmans pay for going to the movies all the time? P. 23 They didn’t pay. They would start a fight so they could sneak in.
Key Questions
Answer in complete sentences.

1. How did the narrator describe the Herdmans? P. 1

2. What was the Herdmans’ idea of a game at home? P. 4

3. How did the narrator describe her friend, Alice? P. 11

4. Why did Mother say Father couldn’t put on his bathrobe, sit by the fire and relax this year instead of going to the pageant? P. 15

5. What did Charlie tell the church congregation that he liked best about Sunday school? P. 20

6. What did Mrs. Armstrong keep calling Mother about especially at suppertime? P. 25
Key Questions Answer Key
Answer in complete sentences.

1. How did the narrator describe the Herdmans? P. 1

**They were worst kids in the history of the world.**

2. What was the Herdmans’ idea of a game at home? P. 4

**They would bang the garage door up and down really fast trying to squash one another.**

3. How did the narrator describe her friend, Alice? P. 11

**Alice was so nasty clean she had detergent hands by the time she was four years old.**

4. Why did Mother say Father couldn’t put on his bathrobe, sit by the fire and relax this year instead of going to the pageant? P. 15

**Charlie would be wearing the bathrobe for his costume as a shepherd.**

5. What did Charlie tell the church congregation that he liked best about Sunday school? P. 20

**There were no Herdmans in church or Sunday school.**

6. What did Mrs. Armstrong keep calling Mother about especially at suppertime? P. 25

**Mrs. Armstrong felt she needed to tell Mother how to run the pageant.**
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:________________________________________
    _________________________________________________________________________

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Comprehension Worksheet

Name _______________________

Answer five comprehension questions in complete sentences.

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________

4. ________________________________________________________________

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. ____________________________________________________________

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