

Focus ON READING

Vocabulary

READING
COMPREHENSION

Holes

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ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Reproducible Activities

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

shriveled—shrank and wrinkled
convicted—found guilty of a crime
perseverance—the ability to stick with a task despite obstacles
canteen—a container or flask for carrying water to drink
counselor—one who advises
sanitary—clean; free from germs

scarcity—insufficient amount
coincidence—events that accidentally happen at the same time but seem planned
despicable—something despised; contemptible
grimaced—made a face showing disgust

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

A **warden** is a person in charge of a prison who oversees the activities of the inmates.

When a person is suspected of committing a crime, he or she is usually arrested and tried in court. If the judge or jury feels that the person is guilty, he or she is convicted and sentenced, or given some punishment.

A juvenile correction facility is a place where young people, usually teenagers, are sent to be reformed. The routine there usually consists of exercise, military activities such as marching, and education. The goal of the facility is to improve the body, mind, and attitude of the offender and make him or her a better citizen.

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “The town **shriveled** and dried up along with the lake, and the people who lived there.”
shriveled: _____
2. “He was innocent of the crime for which he was **convicted**.”
convicted: _____
3. “To be a successful inventor you need three things: intelligence, **perseverance**, and just a little bit of luck.”
perseverance: _____
4. “He was also given white sneakers, an orange cap, and a **canteen** made of heavy plastic, which unfortunately was empty.”
canteen: _____
5. “If you dig up anything interesting, you are to report it to me or any other **counselor**.”
counselor: _____
6. “Theodore spit a thin line of saliva between his teeth, causing some of the other boys to complain about the need to keep their ‘home’ **sanitary**.”
sanitary: _____
7. “Because of the **scarcity** of water, each camper was only allowed a four-minute shower.”
scarcity: _____
8. “It was too much of a **coincidence** to be a mere accident.”
coincidence: _____
9. “The judge called Stanley’s crime **despicable**.”
despicable: _____
10. “Stanley’s hole was . . . not quite wide enough on the bottom. He **grimaced** as he sliced off a chunk of dirt, then raised it up and flung it into a pile.”
grimaced: _____

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. Do you think Stanley would have chosen the camp or jail if he knew what the camp was like?
2. What is Stanley's father trying to invent?
3. Why does Stanley say, "Duh" when he sees the sign saying the Texas Penal Code does not allow guns, explosives, weapons, drugs, or alcohol at the camp?
4. Why do you think the boys at the camp all call Mr. Pendanski "Mom"?
5. Do the nicknames at the camp tell something about the boys? If so, what?
6. Why do you think the boys don't believe Stanley when he says he stole Clyde Livingston's sneakers?
7. Why did the baseball schedule delay Stanley's trial?
8. How does each boy know that his hole is exactly five feet wide and five feet deep?
9. What did Madame Zeroni think of Myra Menke? Why?
10. Why did Sarah Yelnats name her child Stanley?

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

predatory—in a manner of those that prey

on others, killing and consuming

intensity—the state of being intense;

extreme force, energy, or feeling

awesome—inspiring awe; extraordinary

survive—to remain alive

appropriate—suitable or fitting

responsible—trustworthy; able to

distinguish right from wrong

physical—relating to the body and its needs

metallic—made of or like metal

paranoid—suspicious; very fearful

excess—more than enough

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Lizards are closely related to snakes. They vary in size and color. Because their bodies have little temperature control, they usually live in warm places such as deserts. They lie in the shade when the sun is too hot. Some lizards have large jaws and will bite, but few are poisonous. The only poisonous lizards are the Gila monster, found in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico, and the beaded lizard, which lives in Mexico.

A sign on the door of the rec room is spelled **Wreck Room**. Either someone is a poor speller or has a sense of humor. *Rec Room* is short for “Recreation Room”: a place where the campers can go to talk, read, or play games.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. Why do you think the Wreck Room is such a mess, with everything broken and initials carved into the pool table?

2. What is Stanley's nickname? Why do the boys give him that name?

3. Why does Mr. Pendanski want each of the boys to have goals? Why doesn't Stanley tell him his goal?

4. Why does the Warden have two boys at each hole, one digging out the dirt and the other shoveling it into the wheelbarrow?

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

- Where do yellow-spotted lizards like to live?
 - underground
 - in holes
 - under shady trees
- What does Stanley find while digging his second hole?
 - a rock with a fossilized fish in it
 - a canteen
 - the gold top of a pen
- When Mr. Pendanski asks the boys about their goals, what does Stanley say he wants to be?
 - a fireman
 - a famous writer
 - an animal trainer
- What is the second thing Stanley finds while digging?
 - a fossilized fish
 - a gold tube
 - a copper coin
- Why does the Warden let X-ray have a double shower and clean clothes?
 - She thinks he found the gold tube.
 - She is pleased that he is the fastest digger.
 - He is her favorite boy at Camp Green Lake.
- According to Zero, how does the Warden know the nickname of every camper?
 - She watches and listens with hidden devices.
 - She checked with Mr. Sir and Mr. Pendanski, who told her their nicknames.
 - She takes each boy aside and asks him his nickname.
- Is Zigzag watching TV when he asks the boys to be quiet?
 - No, he is playing pool.
 - Yes, and he can't concentrate.
 - No, because the TV isn't working.
- When two boys are digging each hole, why does Stanley use the wheelbarrow?
 - The warden wants to take it easy on him.
 - He is the slowest digger.
 - He found the gold tube.
- Why are the shovels locked up each night?
 - so that they won't rust in the night air
 - so that the boys won't throw them away
 - so that they won't be used as weapons
- Why does Zigzag hit Stanley with his shovel?
 - He doesn't like Stanley.
 - Stanley's dirt is covering up Zigzag's dirt.
 - Stanley gave the gold tube to X-ray rather than to Zigzag.

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. What is the only thing that gets Stanley out of bed the morning after he digs his first hole?
2. Why does Mr. Pendanski laugh when Stanley expects a day off for finding a rock with a fossilized fish?
3. Why does Stanley agree to give anything he finds to X-ray?
4. Which hole seems the hardest to Stanley?
5. What is engraved on the gold tube that Stanley finds?
6. Why does Stanley move up one place in the water line?
7. Why didn't X-ray want to talk about the gold tube at breakfast?
8. Why does Stanley's mother say she is proud of him?
9. When Zero asks about the nursery rhyme, why doesn't Stanley recite it for him?
10. Why does the Warden jab Armpit with her pitchfork?

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Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

throbbing—pounding with abnormal force;
beating or vibrating in a rhythm

penetrating—piercing

unearthed—uncovered; dug up

writhed—twitched as if in pain

condemned—sentenced to die

desolate—deserted

astonishment—amazement

fabulous—wonderful; marvelous

grotesque—differing greatly from the
normal; ugly

distracted—mentally confused or troubled

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Racial problems are those that arise when people of different races cannot get along well with each other because of the color of their skin or their ethnic backgrounds.

Venom is the poison of an animal, such as a scorpion, a rattlesnake, or a black widow spider. In this book, the yellow-spotted lizard is venomous.

An **outlaw** is someone who is wanted for breaking the law.

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “If he jerked too quickly, he felt a **throbbing** pain just above his neck where Zigzag’s shovel had hit him.”
throbbing: _____
2. “Zero stared at him with **penetrating** eyes.”
penetrating: _____
3. “As he tried to cover them up, he **unearthed** a corner of the sack.”
unearthed: _____
4. “His body **writhed** in agony.”
writhed: _____
5. “Stanley wondered if this was how a **condemned** man felt on his way to the electric chair. . . .”
condemned: _____
6. “Walking across the **desolate** wasteland, Stanley thought about his great-grandfather. . . .”
desolate: _____
7. “He suddenly realized where he’d seen the gold tube before. . . . He felt a jolt of **astonishment**.”
astonishment: _____
8. “A special prize was given every year to Miss Katherine Barlow for her **fabulous** spiced peaches.”
fabulous: _____
9. “No one even dared to look at his **grotesque** face.”
grotesque: _____
10. “You seem **distracted**.”
distracted: _____