

“Sonata for Harp and Bicycle” by Joan Aiken
Vocabulary Warm-up Word Lists

Study these words from “Sonata for Harp and Bicycle.” Then, complete the activities.

Word List A

concealed [kuhn SEELD] *v.* hid

The children concealed themselves in their secret hiding place.

corridors [KAHR i derz] *n.* passageways; halls

The new student wandered the corridors in search of his classroom.

crumbling [KRUHM bling] *v.* falling to pieces; breaking up

The yellowing pages of the old book were crumbling in her hands.

director [di REK ter] *n.* supervisor; head of a project or business

As director of the corporation, Ms. Gonzalez has a great deal of power.

doomed [DOOMD] *adj.* condemned; sure to meet a terrible fate

The poorly planned project was doomed from the start.

employees [em PLOY eez] *n.* hired workers

The employees joined together to ask their boss for better wages.

mocked [MAHKT] *v.* teased; made fun of

Jennie grew angry when the boys mocked her high-pitched voice.

tragic [TRAJ ik] *adj.* very sad; horrible

The audience wept when the play reached its tragic conclusion.

Word List B

admirable [AD muh ruh buhl] *adj.* deserving of praise

Patience and generosity are just two of his many admirable qualities.

agitated [AJ i tay tid] *adj.* disturbed; upset

When she failed the test, Alice became agitated and started to cry.

distinguished [dis TIN gwisht] *adj.* dignified; famous

We were impressed by the distinguished gentleman’s elegant manners.

intention [in TEN shun] *n.* plan; purpose

It is my intention to leave the party as soon as possible.

premises [PREM i siz] *n.* building and surrounding property

If you do not belong here, please leave the premises immediately.

reluctant [ree LUHK tuhnt] *adj.* hesitant; unwilling to act

She was reluctant to confess that she had not finished her homework.

vainly [VAYN lee] *adv.* unsuccessfully

They tried vainly to complete the assignment before finally giving up.

witty [WIT ee] *adj.* cleverly amusing

Everyone laughed at Sam’s witty observation.

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Vocabulary Warm-up Exercises

Exercise A Fill in each blank in the paragraph below with an appropriate word from Word List A. Use each word only once.

Firefighters saved many lives in the [1] _____ fire last week. The [2] _____ of the company ordered all of his [3] _____ to leave the office building just before the [4] _____ ceiling began to collapse. Firefighters ran up and down the winding [5] _____, alerting workers to alternate exits. Fallen rubble [6] _____ the main exit, so workers could not see it. Fortunately, firefighters’ alerts reached workers who were trapped inside their offices. No longer were they [7] _____ to die in the fire. Those who had [8] _____ the idea of weekly fire drills were no longer laughing as they fled from the burning building.

Exercise B Decide whether each statement below is true or false. Circle T or F. Then, explain your answer.

1. Most people are annoyed by an *admirable* person.
T / F _____
2. Students are likely to be *agitated* if they get too much homework.
T / F _____
3. A *distinguished* actor would probably perform poorly on stage.
T / F _____
4. If your *intention* is to do well in school, you will probably not spend much time studying.
T / F _____
5. If the value of the *premises* goes up, the price of the building comes down.
T / F _____
6. People who are *reluctant* to do a job usually show great enthusiasm.
T / F _____
7. If climbers struggled *vainly* to reach the mountaintop, they never got there.
T / F _____
8. No one thinks that a *witty* remark is amusing.
T / F _____