

The Little Mermaid

Name: _____

Hans Christian Andersen was a famous Danish writer of children's stories and fairy tales. He wrote "The Little Mermaid" in 1837. It's the story of a young mermaid who is the youngest of five sisters. She has never seen the world above the sea, but she has heard many stories about the land of humans. Below is a passage from the beginning of the story.

The Little Mermaid

by Hans Christian Andersen

Nothing gave her so much pleasure as to hear about the world above the sea. She made her old grandmother tell her all she knew of the ships and of the towns, the people and the animals. To her it seemed most wonderful and beautiful to hear that the flowers of the land had fragrance, while those below the sea had none; that the trees of the forest were green; and that the fishes among the trees could sing so sweetly that it was a pleasure to listen to them. Her grandmother called the birds fishes, or the little mermaid would not have understood what was meant, for she had never seen birds.

"When you have reached your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you will have permission to rise up out of the sea and sit on the rocks in the moonlight, while the great ships go sailing by. Then you will see both forests and towns."

In the following year, one of the sisters would be fifteen, but as each was a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before her turn came to rise up from the bottom of the ocean to see the earth as we do. However, each promised to tell the others what she saw on her first visit and what she thought was most beautiful. Their grandmother could not tell them enough—there were so many things about which they wanted to know.

None of them longed so much for her turn to come as the youngest—she who had the longest time to wait and who was so quiet and thoughtful. Many nights she stood by the open window, looking up through the dark blue water and watching the fish as they splashed about with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars shining faintly, but through the water they looked larger than they do to our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed between her and them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship full of human beings who never imagined that a pretty little mermaid was standing beneath them, holding out her white hands towards the keel of their ship.



At length the eldest was fifteen and was allowed to rise to the surface of the ocean.

When she returned she had hundreds of things to talk about. But the finest thing, she said, was to lie on a sand bank in the quiet moonlit sea, near the shore, gazing at the lights of the near-by town, that twinkled like hundreds of stars, and listening to the sounds of music, the noise of carriages, the voices of human beings, and the merry pealing of the bells in the church steeples. Because she could not go near all these wonderful things, she longed for them all the more.

Oh, how eagerly did the youngest sister listen to all these descriptions! And afterwards, when she stood at the open window looking up through the dark-blue water, she thought of the great city, with all its bustle and noise, and even fancied she could hear the sound of the church bells down in the depths of the sea.

The Little Mermaid: Do You Understand?

Part I. Short Answer

Answer each question below.

1. What did the grandmother call birds? _____
2. What was something the little mermaid saw from her window? _____
3. How old did each mermaid have to be before she could above the sea? _____
4. How long did the little mermaid have to wait to go above the sea? _____
5. What was something the first sister heard when she went above the sea? _____

Part II. Compare the Mermaid's World and the Human World

1. How were flowers different in the human world? _____

2. What was the difference in the way the little mermaid saw the moon and the stars and the way humans see them? _____

3. What do black clouds mean to humans, and what did they mean to the little mermaid? _____

The Little Mermaid: Vocabulary

I. Vocabulary Match

Match each word in Column A with its meaning in Column B

Column A

1. eldest _____
2. permission _____
3. depths _____
4. steeple _____
5. fragrance _____
6. thoughtful _____
7. keel _____
8. pealing _____
9. longed _____
10. faintly _____

Column B

- A. approval
- B. pleasant smell
- C. ringing
- D. serious or thinking carefully
- E. oldest
- F. wanted deeply
- G. deep parts
- H. slightly or weakly
- I. bottom part of a ship
- J. tall tower on a church

Part II. Which Meaning?

Below are words from the passage. Each word has at least two meanings; circle the meaning for the words as it is used in the passage.

1. turn

- A. move in a different direction B. opportunity or time



2. bank

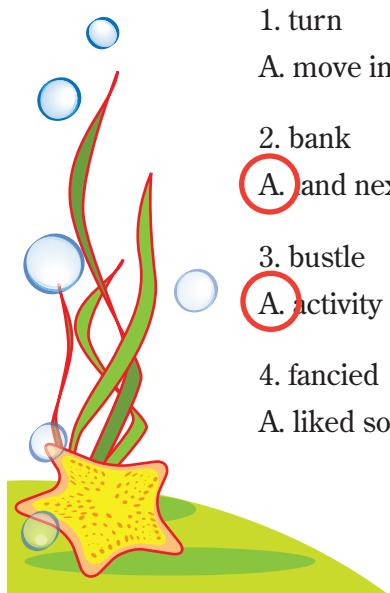
- A. land next to water B. a place that holds money for customers

3. bustle

- A. activity B. padding on a woman's skirt

4. fancied

- A. liked someone B. imagined or thought



Find the Supporting Evidence

Below is one of the main ideas of the passage. Write three ideas from the passage that support this main idea.

The little mermaid wanted to see the world of humans.

Student's answers may vary. Example of correct answers:

"None of them longed so much for her turn to come as the youngest..."

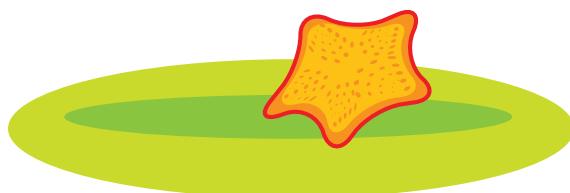
"Oh, how eagerly did the youngest sister listen to all these descriptions! "

"...human beings who never imagined that a pretty little mermaid was standing beneath them, holding out her white hands towards the keel of their ship."

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The Little Mermaid: Where Would You Want to Go?

The little mermaid wanted to see go above the ocean and see the human world. Where is a place you would like to go to that you have never been to before? What do you think you will see and hear there? How will it be different from where you live now? Would you want to live there forever?



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The Little Mermaid Word Search

Circle each word from the list in the puzzle. The words can go in any direction.

Q	O	T	A	M	U	B	M	A	R	E	P	N	F	C
I	L	Z	E	E	I	O	R	D	S	R	A	B	O	D
P	U	V	G	R	A	N	D	M	O	T	H	E	R	O
D	K	N	Z	M	V	C	T	K	H	E	D	A	E	K
F	I	W	H	A	L	E	H	E	B	M	O	N	S	N
O	E	B	A	I	T	T	H	D	G	U	C	V	T	S
O	D	U	G	D	F	I	S	H	E	B	E	E	V	O
F	G	L	E	F	E	O	A	Q	I	M	A	O	R	E
J	I	R	F	I	A	J	E	T	W	R	N	D	Y	U
D	Q	F	O	N	L	H	U	M	A	N	S	L	N	I
S	I	S	T	E	R	S	O	W	P	L	E	O	B	K
P	M	G	V	E	P	Q	W	H	B	E	L	L	S	K
L	E	F	H	C	E	I	M	T	P	E	N	A	R	M
Z	S	W	Q	D	H	N	U	Y	T	O	W	N	S	A
S	H	I	P	K	T	R	Z	Q	F	O	N	F	M	J

BELLS
FIFTEEN
FISH

FOREST
GRANDMOTHER
HUMANS

MERMAID
OCEAN
SISTERS

SHIP
TOWNS
WHALE

The Little Mermaid

Name: _____ **KEY**

Hans Christian Andersen was a famous Danish writer of children's stories and fairy tales. He wrote "The Little Mermaid" in 1837. It's the story of a young mermaid who is the youngest of five sisters. She has never seen the world above the sea, but she has heard many stories about the land of humans. Below is a passage from the beginning of the story.

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"When you have reached your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you will have permission to rise up out of the sea and sit on the rocks in the moonlight, while the great ships go sailing by. Then you will see both forests and towns."

In the following year, one of the sisters would be fifteen, but as each was a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before her turn came to rise up from the bottom of the ocean to see the earth as we do. However, each promised to tell the others what she saw on her first visit and what she thought was most beautiful. Their grandmother could not tell them enough—there were so many things about which they wanted to know.

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The Little Mermaid: Do You Understand?

Actual student's answers may vary. Example of correct answers.

Part I. Short Answer

Answer each question below.

1. What did the grandmother call birds? **fishes**
2. What was something the little mermaid saw from her window? **fish splashing**
3. How old did each mermaid have to be before she could above the sea? **fifteen years old**
4. How long did the little mermaid have to wait to go above the sea? **five years**
5. What was something the first sister heard when she went above the sea? **voices of human beings**

Part II. Compare the Mermaid's World and the Human World

1. How were flowers different in the human world? **The flowers in the human world have a fragrance; under the sea they do not.**

2. What was the difference in the way the little mermaid saw the moon and the stars and the way humans see them? **The little mermaid saw the moon and stars larger than humans do.**

3. What do black clouds mean to humans, and what did they mean to the little mermaid? **To humans a black cloud means bad weather; to the little mermaid it meant there was a whale or ship passing above her.**

The Little Mermaid: Vocabulary

I. Vocabulary Match

Match each word in Column A with its meaning in Column B

Column A

1. eldest _____ E
2. permission _____ A
3. depths _____ G
4. steeple _____ J
5. fragrance _____ B
6. thoughtful _____ D
7. keel _____ I
8. pealing _____ C
9. longed _____ F
10. faintly _____ H

Column B

- A. approval
- B. pleasant smell
- C. ringing
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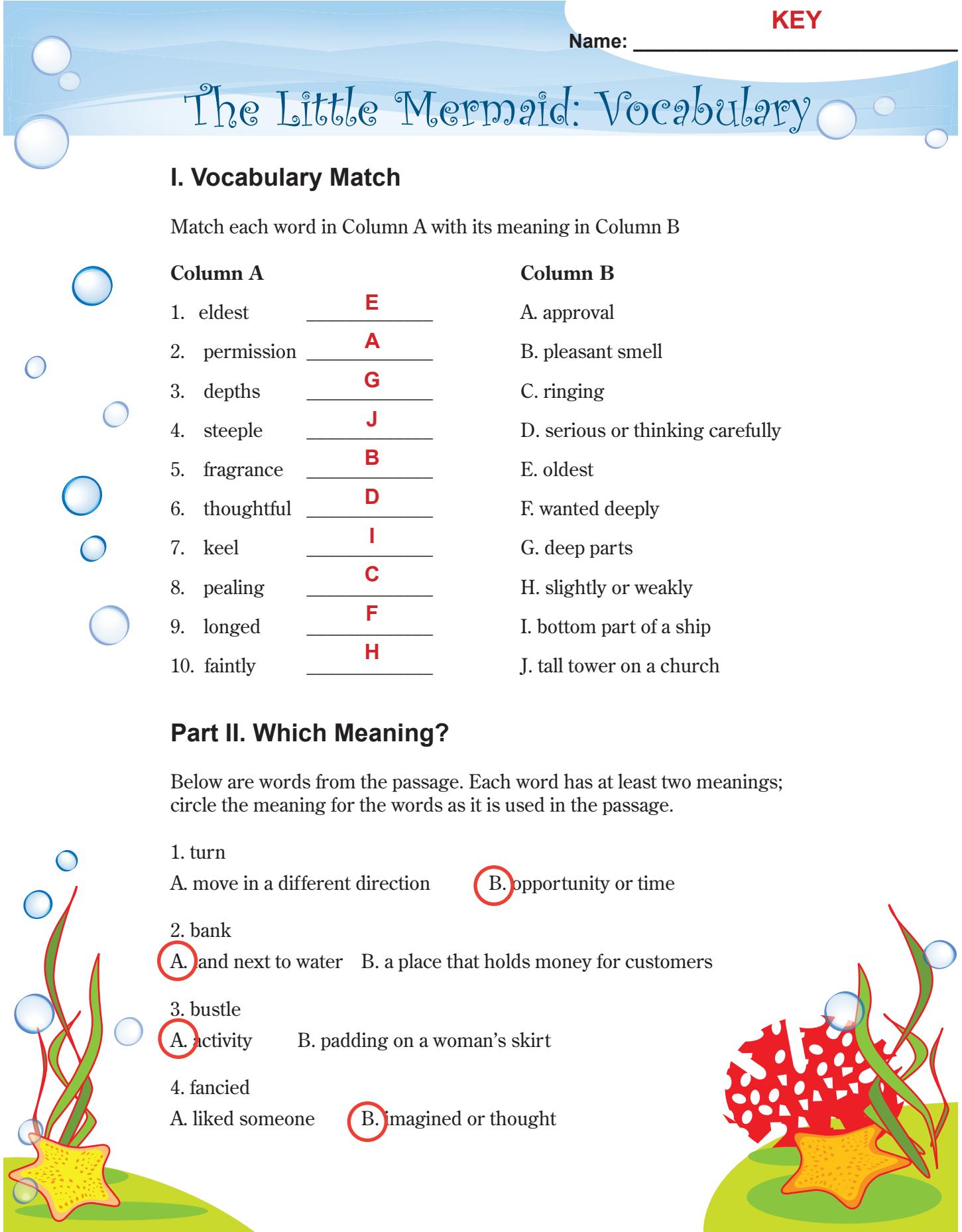
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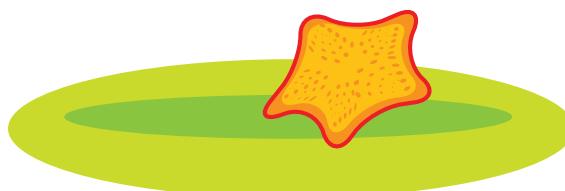
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KEY

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Student's answers will vary.



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