

“Priscilla and the Wimps” by Richard Peck

Vocabulary Preview

subtle (SUHT ul) *adj.* not very noticeable. *The perfume was so subtle that the smell didn't overpower the room.*

barred (bard) *v.* confine; keep out or exclude. *Because he wouldn't sit down, John was barred from riding the bus.*

slithered (SLITH urd) *v.* moved along with a sliding or gliding motion, like a snake; form of the verb *slither*. *The students slithered like snakes down the hall.*

lacerations (lass er A shuns) *n.* deeply cut wound. *His leg had many lacerations caused by the knife.*

pun (pun) *n.* humorous use of a word as to suggest two or more meanings. *The comedian's pun made everyone laugh.*

fate (fayt) *n.* a power that people believe determines events before they happen; inevitable outcome or end; destiny. *It seemed like it was Priscilla's fate to become a legend in the school.*

swaggers (SWAG urz) *v.* walks in a bold or proud way; from the verb *swagger*. *Full of confidence, Monk swaggers over to Priscilla.*

wittiness (WIT tee nes) *n.* ability to be smart and funny. *He showed his wittiness when he described the scene to everyone.*

stragglers (STRAG lurz) *n.* people who lag behind the main group. *A few stragglers were in the hallway after the bell.*

immense (ih MENS) *adj.* of great size; huge. *Priscilla's hands and forearms seemed immense.*

Prefixes A **prefix** is a word part added to the beginning of a word to form a new word. Look what happens when you add a prefix to the word *friendly*—it forms a new word that means the opposite.



Like *un-*, many other prefixes also reverse the meaning of a base word.

il-, *in-*, *im-* (“not”)

mis- (“bad” or “wrong”)

dis- (“not” or “do the opposite of”)

non- (“not” or “without”)

de- (“remove from” or “reduce”)

Skills Preview

Key Reading Skill: Identifying Sequence

Sequence is the order in which a writer presents ideas or events. Here are three common forms of sequence:

- Authors often present events in a story in **chronological**, or time, order.
- An author may present ideas in **spatial order**—or the order things are arranged in a certain space, such as a room or a playground.
- An author may present a range of ideas in their **order of importance**, either from most important to least important or from least to most.

As you read “Priscilla and the Wimps,” look for clues that tell you about sequence.

- In a work of fiction, events usually happen in chronological, or time, order. Do events in “Priscilla and the Wimps” follow one another in chronological order? Do you see words such as *first*, *next*, *then*, *later*, and *eventually*?

Key Literary Element: Plot

The **plot** of a story is all the events that happen. The plot is organized around the story’s main conflict. A **conflict** is the struggle between opposing forces. Most plots develop in the following stages:

- The plot of the story starts with the **exposition**, which introduces the characters, setting, and conflict of the story.
- The **rising action** is all of the events that lead to the **climax**.
- The **climax** is the point of most of the action, emotion, and suspense of the story.
- The **falling action** shows what happens to the characters after the climax.
- The **resolution** shows how the conflict is resolved or the problem solved. It is the final outcome of the story.

Get Ready to Read

Connect to the Reading

Why do people bully others? Why do some people get picked on more than others? What can you do if you are bullied? As you read “Priscilla and the Wimps,” think about what bullying is and why it happens.

Mini-Questionnaire Agree or disagree with these statements. Discuss your answers with a partner.

- _____ Bullies make life miserable for many students.
- _____ Most people I know have the same feelings about bullies as I do.
- _____ I am sure that I could handle a bully.
- _____ Adults can help bullies and their victims.
- _____ At least one person thinks I’m a bully.

Build Background

A bully is someone who tries to tease or hurt someone. Bullies may pick on people to prove how powerful they are. Some do it because they feel that they are not as good as other people. Some do it for attention. Other bullies act tough so people will not bother them.

- Bullying may be obvious, such as pushing or hitting.
- Bullying can also be sneaky, such as spreading rumors or making cruel jokes.
- Some bullies say they are “just teasing” to try to excuse what they are doing.

Set Purpose for Reading

Read “Priscilla and the Wimps” to find out how a fictional character deals with a bully.