Vocabulary Study: *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

**Teacher Overview**

**Grades 11-12**

**Lesson Introduction/Overview**

**Vocabulary words, definitions, derivatives, and quotations**

An alphabetical listing of the ten words in each section is given at the beginning of each section. The definitions are given in the order that the words appear in the text. The part of speech indicated in the definition corresponds to the way the word is used in the quotation provided from the text. Common derivatives and terms related to the words are listed below each definition.

**Complete List of Words**

A complete list of words is provided in alphabetical order.

**Fill-in-the-Blank Activity**

The sentences in this activity correspond to the sequence of events in the chapters. Many of the sentences require students to add an inflectional ending or use another form of the word to correctly complete the sentence, adding a higher level of thinking to the lesson. It would also be helpful to discuss with students the grammatical function of the vocabulary word in each sentence.

**Multiple Choice Exam**

The students are tested on 25 of the words, encouraging them to study all 50 words to be ready for the test. Teachers might also require students to use words correctly in an original sentence that they create.

**Writing Activity**

This essay assignment is designed to complement the vocabulary study and is intended to be used after students complete the novel. Since the writing activity is based on a specific passage, it is suitable for a timed writing activity. Students should be encouraged to use the new vocabulary from this lesson in their essays.

**Acknowledgment**


**Materials and Resources:**

- Copy of lesson for each student
- Copy of *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote
### Alphabetical Listing of Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>abstemious</th>
<th>jaunty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>altercation</td>
<td>jovial</td>
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<tr>
<td>ambivalent</td>
<td>languid</td>
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<tr>
<td>animosity</td>
<td>malodorous</td>
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<tr>
<td>auditors</td>
<td>mélangé</td>
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<tr>
<td>beneficence</td>
<td>ministrations</td>
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<td>bravura</td>
<td>ominous</td>
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<tr>
<td>candor</td>
<td>ostensibly</td>
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<tr>
<td>caustic</td>
<td>pensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collusion</td>
<td>phlegmatic</td>
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<tr>
<td>cortège</td>
<td>placid</td>
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<tr>
<td>coterie</td>
<td>prevalence</td>
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<tr>
<td>deterrent</td>
<td>prevarications</td>
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<td>disregard</td>
<td>progeny</td>
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<td>dissociative</td>
<td>pugnacious</td>
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<td>dissuaded</td>
<td>purloined</td>
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<td>expurgated</td>
<td>querulous</td>
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<tr>
<td>fusillade</td>
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<td>genial</td>
<td>ruminations</td>
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<td>guise</td>
<td>sartorially</td>
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<tr>
<td>equanimity</td>
<td>sedateness</td>
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<td>habitués</td>
<td>somnolent</td>
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<tr>
<td>haranguing</td>
<td>venire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hegira</td>
<td>vicissitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ineffable</td>
<td>unctuous</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Answer keys for the sentence completion and multiple choice quizzes for this lesson are not included in open source materials. As the teacher of record, you may obtain copies of these answer keys by sending a message from your school email address to the NMSI help desk at HelpDesk@nms.org. Include your name, course taught, the name of your school, and your city and state.**
Vocabulary Study  
*In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

Note: The words in each section are listed in alphabetical order. The words, definitions, and quotations are presented in the order in which they appear in the *Vintage International* edition, New York: 1993.

List 1

| abstemious | haranguing |
|beneficence|ineffable|
coterie|placid|
genial|reticent|
equanimitity|ruminations|

1. **beneficence** (buh-nef-uh-suhns) *n.* active goodness or kindness; charity; an act or gift that is kindly in purpose

   derivatives: beneficent, beneficial

   “However, the last seven years have been years of droughtless **beneficence**” (5).

2. **genial** (jeen-yuhl, jee-nee-yuhl) *adj.* warmly and pleasantly cheerful; cordial

   derivatives: genially, geniality

   “But weakened by the **genial** events of the evening, he had consented” (8).

3. **abstemious** (ab-stee-mee-uhs) *adj.* characterized by abstinence, moderation, or temperance in eating, drinking, and other aspects of life

   derivatives: abstemiously, abstemiousness

   “[T]he center of [Mr. Clutter’s social] circle was supplied by the members of Garden City’s First Methodist Church, a congregation totaling seventeen hundred, most of whom were as **abstemious** as Mr. Clutter could desire” (10).

4. **equanimity** (ek-wuh-nim-i-tee) *n.* mental or emotional stability or composure, especially under tension or strain; calmness; equilibrium

   derivatives: equanimous, equanimously

   “Otherwise, he was known for his **equanimity**, his charitableness, and the fact that he paid good wages and distributed frequent bonuses” (10).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. <strong>reticent</strong> <em>(ret-uh-suhnt)</em> <strong>adj.</strong> disposed to be silent or not to speak freely; reserved; reluctant or restrained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>derivatives: reticence, reticently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Thus, the girls were no longer always together, and Nancy deeply felt the daytime absence of her friend, the one person with whom she need be neither brave nor <strong>reticent</strong>” (21).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. <strong>ineffable</strong> <em>(in-ef-uh-buhl)</em> <strong>adj.</strong> incapable of being expressed or described in words; inexpressible</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>derivatives: ineffability, ineffably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“‘So does your mother. I could see—the <strong>ineffable</strong> way they looked at me’” (23).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. <strong>haranguing</strong> <em>(huh-rang-ing)</em> <strong>v.</strong> to scold or deliver a long or intense verbal attack or diatribe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>derivatives: harangue, harangued</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Along with Buffalo Jones, who lost his money and then his mind (the last years of his life were spent <strong>haranguing</strong> street groups against the wanton extermination of the beasts he himself had so profitably slaughtered), the glamours of the past are today entombed” (32).</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. <strong>placid</strong> <em>(plas-id)</em> <strong>adj.</strong> pleasantly calm or peaceful; unruffled; tranquil; serenely quiet or undisturbed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>derivatives: placidly, placidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[T]he newcomer to Garden City . . . discovers much to support the defensive boastings of the citizenry: a well-run public library, a competent daily newspaper, green-lawned and shady squares here and there, <strong>placid</strong> residential streets where animals and children are safe to run free, . . . and a swimming pool that consumes several acres” (33).</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. <strong>coterie</strong> <em>(koh-tuh-ree)</em> <strong>n.</strong> a group of people who associate closely, usually marked by exclusivity or cliquishness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>derivatives: coteries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mr. Clutter was entitled to rank among the local patricians, but just as he had never joined the Garden City Country Club, he had never sought to associate with the reigning <strong>coterie</strong>” (34).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. **ruminations** (roo-muh-ney-shuns) *n.* thoughts, meditations, musings, or ponderings

derivatives: ruminate, ruminatingly, ruminative, ruminatively, ruminator

“Johnson, a veteran at listening to **ruminations** of this sort, knew it was time to intervene” (47).
# List 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>dissuaded</th>
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<tr>
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<td>purloined</td>
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<tr>
<td>cortege</td>
<td>querulous</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. **caustic** (kaw-stik) *adj.* severely critical or sarcastic

   derivatives: caustically, causticly, causticity, causticness

   “‘Yes, it’s a disgrace,’ agrees the **caustic**, somewhat original, and entirely imposing lady who presides over this litter” (67).

2. **candor** (kan-der) *n.* the state or quality of being frank, open, and sincere in speech or expression; candidness

   derivatives: none

   “The owner, Mrs. Bess Hartman, . . . is a cousin of Postmistress Claire, whose style of **candor** Mrs. Hartman can equal, perhaps surpass” (70).

3. **cortege** (kawr-tezh, -teyzh) *n.* a procession, especially a ceremonial one

   derivatives: pervade, pervaded, pervadingly, pervadingness, pervasion, pervasive

   “From her parlor window, Susan Kidwell saw the white **cortege** glide past, and watched until it had rounded the corner and the unpaved street’s easily airborne dust had landed again” (73).

4. **prevarications** (prih-var-i-key-shuhnz) *n.* the act of lying or lies themselves

   derivatives: prevarication, prevaricate, prevaricatingly, prevaricative, prevaricatory

   “‘That’s what I’ve got now. A **premonition**. Something tells me this is a trap.’ He tapped the newspaper. ‘A lot of **prevarications**’” (90).

5. **bravura** (bruh-vyoor-uh, -voor-uh) *n.* a display of daring; brilliant performance

   derivatives: none

   “A marvel, really, the ease with which Dick negotiated changes of mood; in a trice, all trace of meanness, of sullen **bravura**, had evaporated” (91-92).
6. **purloined** (per-loind, pur-loind) *v.* to take dishonestly; steal; pilfer
   
   derivatives: purloin, purloins, purloiner

   “But while the *purloined* guitar presented no ownership problem, his remaining property did” (125).

7. **ambivalent** (am-biv-uh-luhnt) *adj.* having mixed feelings about someone or something; being unable to choose between two (usually opposing) courses of action
   
   derivatives: ambivalently, ambivalence, ambivalency

   “On the whole, Mrs. Johnson’s attitude toward her father was *ambivalent*, but one aspect of him she had always respected—his fortitude” (183).

8. **ominous** (om-uh-nuhs) *adj.* portending evil or harm; foreboding; threatening; inauspicious
   
   derivatives: ominously, ominousness

   “That, Barbara Johnson felt, was what made his suicide so *ominous*” (185).

9. **dissuaded** (dih-swey-did) *v.* to deter by advice or persuasion; to persuade not to do something
   
   derivatives: dissuade, dissuadable, dissuader

   “But Dick was not to be *dissuaded*” (188).

10. **querulous** (kwer-uh-luhs, kwer-yuh-luhs) *adj.* full of complaints; complaining
    
    derivatives: querulously, querulousness

    “Christmas carols were in the air; they issued from the radio of the four women and mixed strangely with Miami’s sunshine and the cries of the *querulous*, never thoroughly silent seagulls” (202).
# List 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>expurgated</th>
<th>mélange</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fusillade</td>
<td>pugnacious</td>
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<tr>
<td>habitués</td>
<td>sartorially</td>
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<tr>
<td>hegira</td>
<td>somnolent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languid</td>
<td>venire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **somnolent** *(som-nuh-luhnt)* adj. sleepy or drowsy
   - derivatives: somnolence, somnolency, somnolently
   - “Perry looked at the invalid, still **somnolent**, dazed, deaf, and he looked at the boy” (209).

2. **hegira** *(huh-jahy-ruh)* n. any flight or journey to a more desirable or congenial place
   - derivatives: none
   - “They talked of everything else: Hickock’s religious philosophy . . .; his sexual history . . .; and, once more, the history of his recent cross-country **hegira**” (228-229).

3. **expurgated** *(ek-sper-gey-tid)* v. to purge or cleanse of moral offensiveness; to amend by removing words, passages, etc., deemed offensive or objectionable
   - derivatives: expurgate, expurgating, expurgation, expurgator
   - “Dewey admits it, but he adds that except for an apparently somewhat **expurgated** version of his own conduct, Hickock’s story supports Smith’s” (243).

4. **fusillade** *(fyoo-suh-leyd, -lahd)* n. a general discharge or outpouring of anything
   - derivatives: also a verb, fusillading, fusilladed
   - “But the voice plunges on, ejecting a **fusillade** of sounds and images” (245).

5. **mélange** *(mey-lahnj)* n. a mixture or medley
   - derivatives: mélanges
   - “[S]he cooks and sews for the prisoners, darns, does their laundry, takes splendid care of her husband, and looks after their five-room apartment, with its **gemütlich mélange** of plump hassocks and squashy chairs and cream-colored lace window curtains” (251).
<table>
<thead>
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<th><strong>Vocabulary Study: In Cold Blood</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>habitués</strong> (huh-bich-oo-eyz) <em>n.</em> a frequent or habitual visitor to a place</td>
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<td>derivatives: habitué</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“As the weeks went by he had become familiar with life on Courthouse Square, its <strong>habitués</strong> and their habits” (264).</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>pugnacious</strong> (puhg-ney-shuhs) <em>adj.</em> inclined to quarrel or fight readily; quarrelsome; belligerent; combative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>derivatives: pugnaciously, pugnacity, pugnaciousness</td>
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<td>“Short, <strong>pugnacious</strong>, a Kentuckian by birth, Green began by pointing out to the court that Kansas’ law, in regard to sanity, adheres to the M’Naughten Rule” (267).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td><strong>sartorially</strong> (sahr-tawr-ee-uh-lee, -tohr-) <em>adv.</em> of or pertaining to clothing or style or manner of dress, to tailors or their trade, or fashion generally</td>
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<td></td>
<td>derivatives: sartorial</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Only Perry Smith, who owned neither jacket nor tie, seemed <strong>sartorially</strong> misplaced” (272).</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>venire</strong> (vuh-nigh-ree) <em>n.</em> a group of people summoned for jury service from whom a jury will be chosen</td>
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<td>derivatives: none</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“On Tuesday morning, March 22, the benches were occupied exclusively by the all-male <strong>venire</strong> of Finney County residents from which a jury was to be selected” (272).</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td><strong>languid</strong> (lang-gwid) <em>adj.</em> lacking in spirit or interest; listless; indifferent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>derivatives: languidly, languidness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“[T]hey chewed gum and tapped their feet with <strong>languid</strong> impatience as the state summoned its first witness” (280).</td>
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### List 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alterations</td>
<td>n. the act of or an instance of giving care, aid, religious service, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auditors</td>
<td>n. success, alternating, or changing phases or conditions, as of life or fortune; ups and downs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dissociative</td>
<td>in a state which severs or has severed the association of (oneself); a separate state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jovial</td>
<td>adj. expressing or revealing thoughtfulness, usually marked by some sadness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ministrations</td>
<td>n. the act of or an instance of giving care, aid, religious service, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pensive</td>
<td>adj. expressing or revealing thoughtfulness, usually marked by some sadness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prevalences</td>
<td>in a state which severs or has severed the association of (oneself); a separate state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sedateness</td>
<td>in a state which severs or has severed the association of (oneself); a separate state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vicissitudes</td>
<td>n. success, alternating, or changing phases or conditions, as of life or fortune; ups and downs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **ministrations** (min-uh-strey-shuhns) 
   - *n.* the act of or an instance of giving care, aid, religious service, etc.
   - derivatives: ministration, ministrative
   - “Having established premeditation of great degree, Green left the witness to the **ministrations** of the defense” (283).

2. **vicissitudes** (vi-sis-i-toods, -tyoods) 
   - *n.* success, alternating, or changing phases or conditions, as of life or fortune; ups and downs
   - derivatives: none
   - “He was soon in trouble again, and, over the years, has experienced many **vicissitudes**” (285).

3. **pensive** (pen-siv) 
   - *adj.* expressing or revealing thoughtfulness, usually marked by some sadness
   - derivatives: pensively, pensiveness
   - “Mr. Hickock between **pensive** hesitations, listed several” (292).

4. **dissociative** (dih-soh-shyeh-tiv, -see-uh-tiv) 
   - *adj.* in a state which severs or has severed the association of (oneself); a separate state
   - derivatives: dissociate
   - “[I]n each instance the murderer appears to have lapsed into a dreamlike **dissociative** trance from which he awakened to ’suddenly discover’ himself assaulting his victim” (299).
5. **altercations** (awl-ter-key-shuhns) *n.* a heated or angry dispute; noisy argument or controversy

   derivatives: altercation

   “For example, three of the men, throughout their lives, had been frequently involved in fights which were not ordinary **altercations**, and which would have become homicidal assaults if not stopped by others” (299).

6. **auditors** (aw-di-ter) *n.* hearers or listeners

   derivatives: auditor

   “But a few of Green’s **auditors** were less enthusiastic; and after the jury retired to discuss the verdict, one of them . . . exchanged sharp words with another newsman” (305).

7. **jovial** (joh-vee-uhl) *adj.* endowed with or characterized by a hearty, joyous humor or spirit of good fellowship

   derivatives: jovially, jovialness

   “A **jovial** fellow with gold-filled teeth and a silvery widow’s peak, he jovially repeated, ‘Sometimes I despair. Sometimes I think old Doc Savage had the right idea’” (306).

8. **sedateness** (si-deyt-nis) *n.* the quality of being calm, quiet, or composed; undisturbed by passion or excitement

   derivatives: sedate, sedately

   “A hurriedly donned black robe billowed about him when at last he arrived, but it was with impressive **sedateness** and dignity that he asked, ‘Gentlemen of the jury, have you reached your verdicts?’” (307).

9. **prevalence** (prev-uh-luhns) *n.* the condition of being widespread

   derivatives: prevalent, prevalently

   “Kansas abolished capital punishment in 1907; in 1935, due to a sudden **prevalence** in the Midwest of rampaging professional criminals . . . , the state legislators voted to restore it” (310).
10. **ostensibly** *(o-sten-suh-blee)* *adv.* outwardly appearing as such; apparent, evident, or conspicuous

derivatives: ostensible

“A desire to inherit this estate was **ostensibly** the motivation behind Lowell Lee’s plot to destroy his family” (312).
## List 5

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>disregard</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>guise</td>
<td>progeny</td>
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<tr>
<td>unctuous</td>
<td>characterized by excessive piousness or moralistic fervor; excessively smooth, suave, or flattering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animosity</td>
<td>a feeling of strong dislike, ill will, or enmity that tends to display itself in action; hostility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guise</td>
<td>general external appearance; aspect; resemblance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malodorous</td>
<td>having an unpleasant or offensive odor, smelling bad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **unctuous** *(uhngk-choo-uhs)* _adj._ characterized by excessive piousness or moralistic fervor; excessively smooth, suave, or flattering

   derivatives: unctuously, unctuousness

   “The Reverend Dameron, a Dickensian personage, an unctuous and jolly brimstone-and-damnation orator, was minister of the Grandview Baptist Church in Kansas City, Kansas” (314).

2. **animosity** *(an-uh-mos-i-tee)* _n._ a feeling of strong dislike, ill will, or enmity that tends to display itself in action; hostility

   derivatives: animosities

   “[T]hough invisible to each other, they could easily converse, yet Perry seldom spoke to Dick, and it wasn’t because of any declared animosity between them” (317).

3. **guise** *(gahyz)* _n._ general external appearance; aspect; semblance

   derivatives: also a verb, guised, guising

   “His favorite old theatrical fantasy, the one in which he thought of himself as ‘Perry O’Parsons, The One-Man Symphony,’ returned in the guise of a recurrent dream” (319).

4. **malodorous** *(mal-oh-der-uhhs)* _adj._ having an unpleasant or offensive odor, smelling bad

   derivatives: malodorously, malodorousness

   “[I]n the summer, when temperatures often hurtled over the hundred mark, the old cells were malodorous cauldrons” (321).
5. **progeny (proj-uh-nee)** *n.* a descendent or descendents (collectively) or offspring, as a child, plant, or animal
   
   derivatives: none
   
   “Born in Texas, he was the youngest child of fertile, moneyless, embattled parents who, when finally they separated, left their progeny to fend for themselves” (322-323).

6. **phlegmatic (fleg-mat-ik)** *n.* not easily excited to action or display of emotion; apathetic; sluggish; self-possessed, calm, or composed
   
   derivatives: phlegmatically, phlegmaticness
   
   “Though they were very unlike—even physically, York being tall and phlegmatic, whereas the Texan was a short young man with foxy brown eyes animating a compact, cute little face—they found they shared at least one firm opinion: the world was hateful, and everybody in it would be better off dead” (323).

7. **collusion (kuh-loo-zhuhn)** *n.* a secret agreement, especially for fraudulent or treacherous purposes; conspiracy
   
   derivatives: none
   
   “[T]his lack of effort, it was implied, had been deliberate—an act of collusion between the defense and the prosecution” (326).

8. **jaunty (jawn-tee, jahn-)** *adj.* easy and sprightly in manner or bearing
   
   derivatives: jauntier, jauntiest, jauntily, jauntiness
   
   “[H]e stopped chewing a hunk of Doublemint gum he had in his mouth, and grinned and winked at Dewey, jaunty and mischievous” (340).

9. **deterrent (dih-tur-uhnt)** *n.* something that discourages or restrains from acting or proceeding
   
   derivatives: also an adjective, deter, deterrently
   
   “Like the majority of American law-enforcement officials, Dewey is certain that capital punishment is a deterrent to violent crime, and he felt that if ever the penalty had been earned, the present instance was it” (340).
10. **disregard** (dis-ri-gahrd) **v.** to pay no attention to; to leave out of consideration; to ignore

derivatives: disregarded, disregarding, disregardable, disregarder

“Perry possessed a quality, the aura of an exiled animal, a creature walking wounded, that the detective could not **disregard**” (341).
Fill-in-the-Blank Activity

_In Cold Blood_

Using the words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once.

**List 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abstemious</th>
<th>Haranguing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beneficence</td>
<td>Ineffable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coterie</td>
<td>Placid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genial</td>
<td>Reticent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equanimity</td>
<td>Ruminations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Unlike outgoing and friendly Nancy, Susan is often ________________ in company.

2. Herb Clutter is a/an ________________ fellow, able to make friends wherever he goes.

3. As Dick Hickock ________________ over his and Perry’s plan, his confidence in the crime buoys his spirits.

4. Dick holds a/an ________________ charm for Perry. Though Perry often tries to describe their relationship, there is much he cannot put into words.

5. Very few things disturb Mr. Clutter’s ________________, though his wife’s condition does worry him.

6. Mr. Clutter doesn’t waste his time ________________ his workers. He just tells them what needs to be done and expects them to do it.

7. Herb Clutter and his family could be part of the town’s ruling ________________, but he prefers to move in different social circles.

8. Mr. Clutter, a/an ________________ man, expects his employees to refrain from smoking, drinking, and carousing while working for him.

9. Holcomb, Kansas, is a small, ________________ town, undisturbed by social upheaval, the passage of time, or even mean-spirited gossip.

10. Mistreated throughout his childhood, Perry’s upbringing was bereft of any ________________ ________________.
List 2

ambivalent
bravura
candor
caucistic
cortege
dissuaded
ominous
prevarications
purloined
querulous

1. Mrs. Clare speaks with ________________________, but some of her hearers might prefer a little more discretion on her part.

2. Perry’s later claim that he killed all four of the Clutters supports Dick’s possible ________________________.

3. Mrs. Clare’s ________________________ comments are truthful, but still painful to hear.

4. Once Dick and Perry begin to infiltrate the Clutters’ home, they cannot be ________________________ from carrying out their plan in its entirety—even though there is not any money in the house.

5. A/An ________________________ of ambulances carry the Clutters’ corpses from their home to the morgue.

6. After the Clutters are murdered, a/an ________________________ mood settles over Garden City as residents wait anxiously, fearing another attack.

7. In an ironic twist, Perry, usually the ________________________, has his guitar stolen while he and Dick are in Acapulco.

8. Dick speaks of prison life with an air of ________________________, as though he’s not afraid of serving time again.

9. Perry’s sister does not feel ________________________ toward him; she clearly fears what he is capable of doing.

10. Perry’s ________________________ can be blamed on the lack of a good payoff and Dick’s lack of interest in Perry’s prospecting schemes.
List 3

expurgated  mélangé
fusillade  pugnacious
habitués  sartorially
hegira  somnolent
languid  venire

1. Perry is as much a misfit ___________________________ as he is socially. He cannot even dress like everyone else.

2. The old hitchhiker sits in a ___________________________ daze in the back seat trying not to fall completely asleep.

3. Dick ___________________________ his version of the events at the Clutter home to leave Perry with all the blame for the murders.

4. The Finney County ___________________________ from which the jury is chosen is as impartial a group of men as Dick and Perry would be able to find in Kansas.

5. The Meiers have decorated the Sheriff’s Residence with a/an ___________________________ of cozy, friendly furniture which does not match exactly, but goes together comfortably.

6. Dick and Perry’s cross-country ___________________________ helps them avoid being captured, but it also allows Perry to try living out some of his fortune-hunting fantasies.

7. Of all the ___________________________ who visit Courthouse Square, Perry identifies most closely with the scavenging cats that daily pick dead birds out of the front grills of the cars parked along the street.

8. Dick and Perry wait ___________________________ for the court proceedings, behaving as though the whole trial has nothing to do with them.

9. The police expect a/an ___________________________ of insults to be hurled down on the suspected criminals, but they are greeted instead by a sullen, mournful silence from the townsfolk.

10. The prosecuting attorney displays his ___________________________ by haranguing Perry and Dick’s representatives in court.
List 4

| altercations | ostensibly |
| auditors | pensive |
| dissociative | prevalence |
| jovial | sedateness |
| ministrations | vicissitudes |

1. Although everyone experiences ________________ in life, for Perry there are more bad times than good.

2. Some of the ________________ listening to the case unfold in the courtroom feel that the defendants are being railroaded, while others feel that Dick and Perry are just getting what they deserve.

3. Mr. Fleming tries to improve the defense’s ailing case, but his ________________ prove ineffective.

4. Perry ________________ himself from the Clutter murders—almost as though someone else committed the crimes using his body.

5. A few townspeople admit they had some minor ________________ with Herb Clutter, but the vast majority exalts his placid disposition.

6. The ________________ belief in the state of Kansas is that Dick and Perry are guilty of murdering the Clutter family.

7. Perry’s plan to reconnect with his old prison friend and mentor, Willie-Jay, provides an ________________ reason for returning to Kansas, but his true motive is to aid Dick in robbing and murdering the Clutters.

8. Mr. Hickock, Dick’s father, sits ________________ on the witness stand, carefully crafting his response to the prosecution’s questions.

9. Revered Post’s ________________ manner and optimism seem at odds with the ________________ atmosphere of the courtroom.
List 5

animosity jaunty
collusion malodorous
deterrent phlegmatic
disregard progeny
guise unctuous

1. Lowell Lee Andrews approaches his family under the __________________ of a loving son and brother, but in reality he is a sociopathic killer with no emotional connection to his family.

2. Whatever __________________ might have arisen between Dick and Perry during the trial due to their mutual accusations is quickly swept away once they are both on Death Row together.

3. Mr. Green, the lead prosecuting attorney, is by turns confrontational and ____________ towards the jury and the witnesses on the stand. He goes from fighting them to flattering them with ease.

4. Sweaty bodies, unwashed clothes, and lack of ventilation combine with high temperatures to turn prison cells into ________________ ovens during the summer.

5. __________________________ such as Dick and Perry’s cause one to wonder how many other conspiracies have their inception within prison cells.

6. Perry will not leave any ________________ behind him after he is executed, but Dick has three children.

7. Hickock faces his execution in a/an ________________ manner, remaining calm and relatively good-humored in spite of his dire situation.

8. As much as he tries to harden himself towards Perry Smith, Dewey cannot ________________ how weak and vulnerable he seems.

9. Agent Dewey observes that Perry moves almost ________________ toward his execution without the heavily laden steps one would expect when death is imminent.
10. Dewey believes that capital punishment is a/an __________________________ to violent crime, but the threat of execution did not prevent Perry or Dick from committing violent crimes.
Multiple Choice Exam

In Cold Blood

1. beneficence
   a. kindness
   b. theft
   c. violence
   d. threatening
   e. wealth

6. unctuous
   a. unguent
   b. zealous
   c. decorous
   d. flattering
   e. sweet

2. caustic
   a. profane
   b. deadly
   c. hasty
   d. terminal
   e. abrasive

7. somnolent
   a. poor
   b. sleepy
   c. whiny
   d. aggressive
   e. resigned

3. auditors
   a. descendants
   b. listeners
   c. admirers
   d. financiers
   e. police officers

8. genial
   a. indigent
   b. generous
   c. cheerful
   d. ancestry
   e. indolent

4. prevarications
   a. differences
   b. claims
   c. attacks
   d. lies
   e. confusions

9. hegira
   a. excursion
   b. helicopter
   c. attraction
   d. party
   e. sanctuary

5. pensive
   a. imagination
   b. nauseous
   c. celebratory
   d. trek
   e. thoughtful

10. phlegmatic
    a. biased
    b. calm
    c. sick
    d. yellowed
    e. garrulous
11. equanimity
   a. cruelty
   b. composure
   c. pugnacity
   d. equality
   e. flexibility

12. sartorially
   a. freely
   b. vacillatingly
   c. sarcastically
   d. authoritatively
   e. fashionably

13. collusion
   a. conspiracy
   b. inspiration
   c. perspiration
   d. punctilious
   e. placid

14. cortege
   a. depression
   b. disturbance
   c. procession
   d. corsage
   e. corset

15. ostensibly
   a. seemingly
   b. obviously
   c. wonderfully
   d. ossuary
   e. indolently

16. purloined
   a. stolen
   b. sold
   c. eaten
   d. pawned
   e. given

17. jovial
   a. thundering
   b. false
   c. militant
   d. merry
   e. calm

18. reticent
   a. dishonest
   b. reserved
   c. outgoing
   d. antagonistic
   e. inebriated

19. expurgated
   a. exploded
   b. discovered
   c. disliked
   d. vomited
   e. sanitized

20. progeny
   a. experiment
   b. prosecution
   c. defendant
   d. children
   e. professional
21. ruminations
   a. mouthfuls
   b. thoughts
   c. furnishings
   d. imprisonment
   e. rumblings

22. querulous
   a. congenial
   b. exultant
   c. whiny
   d. enquiring
   e. hidden

23. fusillade
   a. purloiner
   b. fusing
   c. pristine
   d. dissuade
   e. outpouring

24. sedateness
   a. benevolence
   b. calmness
   c. empowerment
   d. flippancy
   e. danger

25. deterrent
   a. burden
   b. detonation
   c. error
   d. warning
   e. encouragement
Writing Activity

*In Cold Blood*

*In Cold Blood* is based on true events, but Capote employs plenty of artistic choices in his narration. In a well written essay, consider how his use of rhetorical devices contributes to the characterization of Perry and Dick. Use the excerpts below as well as additional evidence from the text to support your assertions about Capote’s use of rhetorical devices to achieve his purpose.

“Until Perry was five, the team of ‘Tex & Flo’ continued to work the rodeo circuit. As a way of life, it wasn’t ‘any gallon of ice cream,’ Perry once recalled: ‘Six of us riding in an old truck, sleeping in it too, sometimes, living off mush and Hershey kisses and condensed milk. Hawks Brand condensed milk it was called, which is what weakened my kidneys—the sugar content—which is why I was always wetting the bed.’ Yet it was not an unhappy existence, especially for a little boy proud of his parents, admiring of their showmanship and courage—a happier life, certainly, than what replaced it. For Tex and Flo, both forced by ailments to retire from their occupation, settled near Reno, Nevada. They fought, and Flo ‘took to whisky,’ and then, when Perry was six, she departed for San Francisco, taking the children with her. It was exactly as the old man had written: ‘I let her go and said goodbye as she took the car and left me behind (this was during depression). My children all cried at the top of their voices. She only cursed them saying they would run away to come to me later.’ And, indeed, over the course of the next three years Perry had on several occasions run off, set out to find his lost father, for he had lost his mother as well, learned to ‘despise’ her; liquor had blurred the face, swollen the figure of the once sinewy, limber Cherokee girl, had ‘soured her soul,’ honed her tongue to the wickedest point, so dissolved her self-respect that generally she did not bother to ask the names of the stevedores and trolley-car conductors and such persons who accepted what she offered without charge (except that she insisted they drink with her first, and dance to the tunes of a wind-up Victrola)” (131-132).

“Several murderers, or men who boasted of murder or their willingness to commit it, circulated inside Lansing; but Dick became convinced that Perry was that rarity, ‘a natural killer’—absolutely sane, but conscienceless, and capable of dealing, with or without motive, the coldest-blooded deathblows. It was Dick’s theory that such a gift could, under his supervision, be profitably exploited. Having reached this conclusion, he had proceeded to woo Perry, flatter him—pretend, for example, that he believed all the buried treasure stuff and shared his beachcomber yearnings and seaport longings, none of which appealed to Dick, who wanted “a regular life,” with a business of his own, a house, a horse to ride, a new car, and ‘plenty of blond chicken.’ It was important, however, that Perry not suspect this—not until Perry, with his gift, had helped further Dick’s ambitions” (55).