Emily Dickinson’s Poetry
Vocabulary Warm-up Word Lists

Study these words from the selections. Then, complete the activities.

Word List A

absorb [ab SORB] v. to suck up; to take in and incorporate; to assimilate
   It took us hours to absorb all the information from the lengthy chapter.

assignable [uh SYN uh buhl] adj. able to be given away
   In her will, she left the assignable parts of her estate to her favorite niece.

keepsakes [KEEP sayks] n. souvenirs; mementoes; heirlooms
   Mother has a trunk full of keepsakes in the attic.

leisure [LEE zhuhr] n. free time; relaxation
   Timothy uses much of his leisure for reading.

onset [ON set] n. approach; beginning
   A tickling in my throat signaled the onset of a cold.

portion [POR shuhn] n. part; section
   The dessert was so large that I could eat only a portion of it.

quivering [KWIV uhr ing] adj. shivering
   When the dog barked loudly, the cat retreated, quivering with fear.

wrung [RUNG] v. squeezed; compressed
   I wrung out the shirt I had washed, squeezing all the water from it.

Word List B

befel [bee FEL] v. happened (modern spelling befell)
   What fate befell the hero in that novel?

finite [FY nyt] adj. limited; able to be calculated or reckoned
   Although the speed of light is unbelievably fast, it is still finite.

immortality [i mor TAL i tee] n. eternal life
   The heroes of ancient epics often had immortality as their goal.

majority [muh JOR uh tee] n. greater part or larger number; more than half the total
   The majority of voters did not agree with the governor, and he was not re-elected.

strove [STROHV] v. tried very hard; struggled
   Each team strove hard for victory, but the outcome of the game was a tie score.

surmised [suhr MYZD] v. guessed; made an inference
   From his remarks, we surmised that Keith was not in favor of our proposal.

unveil [un VAYL] v. to uncover; to reveal
   The museum director planned to unveil a dramatic new painting.

valves [VALVZ] n. gates or devices regulating the flow of a liquid
   The valves in that automobile engine need regular lubrication.
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Vocabulary Warm-up Exercises

Exercise A  Fill in the blanks, using each word from Word List A only once.

Elaine had promised herself that, when she had a day of [1] ________________, she would do some gardening. All winter, she had tried to [2] ________________ all the tips she could from gardening magazines. She had carefully charted each [3] ________________ of the ground, calculating what part was [4] ________________ to rose bushes and how much for vegetables and herbs. On Saturday morning, she gathered her gardening tools, some of which were [5] ________________ left her by her grandmother. The weather was sunny and still: not a leaf was shaking or [6] ________________ on the trees. Elaine worked all day long—digging, planting, and watering. With the [7] ________________ of twilight, she had the work done. She felt happy but [8] ________________ out with fatigue.

Exercise B  Revise each sentence so that the underlined vocabulary word is logical. Be sure to keep the vocabulary word in your revision.

Example:  Because the work was so arduous, we completed it quickly and easily.
Because the work was so arduous, we had a hard time completing it.

1. Two setbacks befell James, and he was relieved to have avoided them.

2. Because our resources are finite, we can pledge any amount of money for that cause.

3. The immortality of the Greek gods was one way in which they resembled humans.

4. The election was close, and the loser received a very small majority of votes.

5. In all his undertakings, Tom strove hard, putting in minimum effort.

6. Unwilling to use an educated guess, Phil surmised the ending from hints in the story.

7. In favor of concealing the new painting, the museum director prepared to unveil it.

8. Valves are used to heat the water in those pipes.