

## VOCABULARY LISTS

## "The Glass Castle," Vocabulary from Parts I and II

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"The Glass Castle" is a memoir about family, poverty, and growth. Learn these words found in Jeannette Walls's account of her childhood. Here are the links to our lists from the memoir: [Parts I and II](#), [Parts III, IV, and V](#)

### potential

✓ existing in possibility

*Mom's gestures were all familiar—the way she tilted her head and thrust out her lower lip when studying items of **potential** value that she'd hoisted out of the Dumpster, the way her eyes widened with childish glee when she found something she liked.*

### tentatively

✓ in a hesitant manner

*The wiener was hot, so Juju licked at it **tentatively**, but when I stood up and started stirring the hot dogs again, I felt a blaze of heat on my right side.*

# stunned

✓ in a state of mental numbness as resulting from shock

*I put it in my mouth and was **stunned** by the sharp sweetness.*

# vulgar

✓ conspicuously and tastelessly indecent

*It was a disgusting low-class habit, and the nurse should have consulted her before encouraging me in such **vulgar** behavior.*

# lopsided

✓ having one side lower or smaller or lighter than the other

*Tinkerbell's once perfect little nose had completely disappeared, and her saucy red lips had been replaced with an ugly, **lopsided** smear.*

# accelerate

✓ move faster

*Quixote landed with a screeching meow and a thud, Dad **accelerated** up the road, and I burst into tears.*

# sentimental

✓ marked by tender, romantic, or nostalgic emotion

*"Don't be so **sentimental**," Mom said.*

# rousing

✓ capable of stirring enthusiasm or excitement

*To distract us kids, Mom got us singing songs like "Don't Fence Me In" and "This Land Is Your Land," and Dad led us in **rousing** renditions of "Old Man River" and his favorite, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."*

# unidentifiable

✓ impossible to recognize

*That way, he explained, he burned up the brand name, and if the people who were tracking us looked in his ashtray, they'd find **unidentifiable** butts instead of Pall Malls that could be traced to him.*

# nomad

✓ a member of a people who have no permanent home

*We moved around like **nomads**.*

# desolate

✓ providing no shelter or sustenance

*The more **desolate** and isolated a place was, the better Mom and Dad liked it.*

# thrive

✓ make steady progress

*Most people had trouble surviving in the desert, but Mom **thrived** there.*

# insulate

✓ surround with material to protect from heat, cold, or noise

*One time when a neighbor's TV set broke, Dad opened the back and used a macaroni noodle to **insulate** some crossed wires.*

# primitive

✓ characteristic of an earlier ancestral type

*She didn't have any particular style; some of her paintings were what she called **primitive**, some were impressionistic and abstract, some were realistic.*

# blasphemy

✓ profane language

*Mom got upset at Dad's **blasphemy**, reached her foot over to the driver's side, and stomped on the brake.*

# stagger

✓ walk with great difficulty

*One of her friends pushed me to the ground and kicked me in the face; then they all ran off, the girl I had hit holding her head as she **staggered** along.*

# diminutive

✓ a word that is formed with a suffix to indicate smallness

*But we'd call the baby Maureen, a name Mom liked because it was a **diminutive** of Mary, so she'd also be naming the baby after herself but pretty much no one would know it.*

# ingenuity

✓ the power of creative imagination

*Before, whenever we were out of food, Dad was always there, full of ideas and **ingenuity**.*

# wheedle

✓ influence or urge by gentle urging, caressing, or flattering

*If she tried, he'd argue and **wheedle** and sulk and bully and plain wear her down.*

# evasive

✓ deliberately vague or ambiguous

*So she resorted to **evasive** tactics.*

# corrugated

✓ shaped into alternating parallel grooves and ridges

*Billy lived with his dad in a house made of tar paper and **corrugated** tin, down the tracks from our house.*

# delinquent

✓ a young offender

*After all, Billy was a certified JD—juvenile **delinquent**.*

# justifiable

✓ capable of being shown to be reasonable

*Dad had always said that self-defense was a **justifiable** reason for shooting someone.*

# nuance

✓ a subtle difference in meaning or opinion or attitude

*We tried to explain that Billy had started it, that we'd been provoked and were defending ourselves and didn't even aim to kill, but the cop wasn't interested in the **nuances** of the situation.*

# flourish

✓ grow vigorously

*"My art career is going to **flourish** in Phoenix. I can just feel it."*

# cajole

✓ influence or urge by gentle urging, caressing, or flattering

*Although we lived outside the district, Mom begged and **cajoled** the principal until he allowed us to enroll.*

# pithy

✓ concise and full of meaning

*If the typewriter keys were clattering away, she was at work on one of her novels, poems, plays, short stories, or her illustrated collection of **pithy** sayings—one was "Life is a bowl of cherries, with a few nuts thrown in"—which she'd titled "R. M. Walls's Philosophy of Life."*

# scuttle

✓ to move about or proceed hurriedly

*After a while, entire armies were **scuttling** across the walls and the floors and the kitchen counters.*

# vagrant

✓ a wanderer with no established residence or means of support

*From time to time, a **vagrant** or a wino would wander through the front door, assuming the house was deserted.*

# sweltering

✓ excessively hot and humid; marked by sweating and faintness

*Since the weather was **sweltering**, she suggested we cool off by jumping into the fountain in front of the building.*

# hostile

✓ characterized by enmity or ill will

*He didn't do it to be **hostile**.*



# vigorous

✓ characterized by forceful and energetic action or activity

*Dad gave the cheetah the kind of hardy, **vigorous** petting you'd give a big dog.*

# felonious

✓ involving or being or having the nature of a crime

*Lori said it sounded outright **felonious**, but Dad said all he was doing was outsmarting the fat-cat bank owners who shylocked the common man by charging usurious interest rates.*

# sodden

✓ wet through and through; thoroughly wet

*Once the fire was out and the **sodden**, burned tree lay smoldering on the floor, we all just stood there.*