

"Breaker's Bridge" by Laurence Yep

Build Vocabulary

Using Related Words: Forms of *execute*

The Word Bank word *executioner* is a noun that means "one who carries out a death penalty." It is a form of the word *execute*, which means "put to death." The word *execute* has other meanings as well. It can be used to mean "carry out," or simply "do."

The death penalty in a state allows it to *execute* convicted criminals. (*execute* = put to death)

We worked hard to *execute* our plan. (*execute* = carry out, do)

Several other English words are based on the word *execute*. Here are some of them:

The convicted man's *execution* will take place at midnight. (*execution* = putting to death)

The *executive* worked hard to make his company successful. (*executive* = person who manages)

Fred was the *executor* of our project. (*executor* = person who performs a job or assignment)

A. DIRECTIONS:

Use one of the words above to complete each of the sentences below.

1. The highest _____ in state government is the governor.
2. The school principal will _____ the order for a school uniform.
3. The _____ felt pity for the condemned man, but carried out the sentence.
4. The prisoner was allowed to choose the means of his _____.

Using the Word Bank

obstacle	writhing	piers	executioner	immortals
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B. DIRECTIONS: Use one word from the Word Bank to replace the word or words in parentheses in the following sentences.

1. The town closed the bridge when several of its (supports) _____ cracked.
2. The dead hero is now one of the (beings who live forever) _____.
3. The biggest (barrier) _____ to our baseball team reaching the championship was a rival team.
4. The kite was (twisting and turning) _____ in the strong winds.
5. The identity of the (person who carries out the death sentence) _____ is often kept a secret.

Sentence Completions

C. DIRECTIONS: Circle the letter of the word that best completes each sentence.

1. If a car breaks down on a busy road, it could become a dangerous ____ .
 a. writhing b. piers c. immortals d. obstacle
2. I was ____ with pain as the doctor examined my injured shoulder.
 a. writhing b. piers c. immortals d. obstacle

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Build Spelling Skills: *i* Before *e* Rule and Exceptions

Spelling Strategy A famous rhyme says, “Put *i* before *e* except after *c*, or when sounded like *a* as in *neighbor* and *weigh*.”

Examples: *i* before *e*— piers, piece, believe, field
except after *c*— receive, conceited, deceive
or when sounded like *a*— rein, sleigh, neighbor, weigh

Here are some exceptions to the rhyme:

either financier foreign forfeit height heir leisure
sheik sovereign their weird neither protein seize

A. Practice: Complete the words by adding *i* and *e* in the correct order.

1. It is better to give than to rec____ve.
2. My little brother has a w____rd way of tying his shoelaces.
3. I grabbed the r____ns of the horse and held tight.
4. The arrow p____rced the bull’s eye on the target.
5. The American people bel____ve in the principles of democracy.

B. Practice: Proofread the following paragraph carefully, looking for misspelled words containing the *ie* combination. Cross out each misspelled word, and write it correctly above the line.

Engineers have concieve and build impressive suspension bridges. Some, such as the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and the Verrazano Narrows Bridge in New York City, span waterways at a great height. The cheif users of these bridges are commuters on thier way to and from work. Some beleived the wide lanes would help them receive some releif from rush-hour congestion. However, to their greif, traffic still creeps along, morning and evening.

Challenge: In the Word Bank word *writhing*, and in other words beginning with *wr*, the *w* is silent. On the lines below, write five sentences using the following *wr* words.

wrong write wrath wreath wrap

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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Build Grammar Skills: Direct and Indirect Objects

You know that a verb is the action word in a sentence. A **direct object** is a noun or pronoun that *receives* the action of the verb. In other words, the verb tells what happens. The thing or person the action *happens to* is the direct object. It answers the question *what?* or *whom?*

The old man held the crutch.

What was held? A crutch. The crutch *receives* the action of the verb *held*.

Indirect objects are nouns or pronouns that name the person or thing *to whom* or *for whom* an action is done. Indirect objects may come before or after the direct object. Now look at these sentences:

The old man gave the emperor advice. The old man gave advice to the emperor.

In the sentence, *gave* is the verb. *Advice* is the direct object. *To whom* did the old man give the advice? The answer is *the emperor*. *Emperor* is the indirect object of both sentences.

A. Practice: In each of the following sentences, underline the direct object once. Underline the indirect object twice. On the lines following each sentence, write the question each object answers. Choose from the questions *What?* *To whom?* and *For whom?* The first example has been done for you.

1. The old man gave Breaker the pellets.

Question answered by direct object what? Question answered by indirect object to whom?

2. Breaker built the emperor a bridge.

Question answered by direct object _____ Question answered by indirect object _____

3. Breaker offered the old man the crutch.

Question answered by direct object _____ Question answered by indirect object _____

4. The emperor wrote him a letter.

Question answered by direct object _____ Question answered by indirect object _____

B. Writing Application: Combine each of the following sentence pairs into one sentence with both a direct object and an indirect object. The first sentence has been done for you.

1. My sister threw the ball. She threw it to the puppy.

My sister threw the puppy the ball.

2. My father built a desk. He built it for me.

3. I gave a wonderful present. I gave it to my best friend.

4. The babysitter told a bedtime story. She told it to the children.

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Reading Strategy: Determining Cause and Effect

It’s time for school and you’re running late. You’d be on time if you’d remembered to turn on your alarm clock. The alarm clock’s failure to go off is a cause. The effect was that you were late for school. A **cause** is a reason that something happens. An **effect** is the thing that happens.

Recognizing cause-and-effect relationships when you read helps you to connect one event to another in a story. For example, in “Breaker’s Bridge,” the dam on the river breaks. The effect is that the water rushes down and destroys the two piers Breaker has built for his bridge.

DIRECTIONS: Read each passage below. On the lines following each passage, write the cause and the effect. The first one has been modeled for you.

1. “But Breaker was as clever as he was clumsy. When he grew up, he managed to outlive his nickname. He could design a bridge to cross any obstacle. No canyon was too wide. No river was too deep. Somehow the clever man always found a way to bridge them all.
Eventually the emperor heard about this clever builder and sent for him.”

Cause: Breaker proves himself a clever bridge builder. _____

Effect: The emperor sends for Breaker. _____

2. “The river was too wide to span with a simple bridge. Breaker would have to construct two piers in the middle of the river. The piers would support the bridge like miniature stone islands.”

Cause: _____

Effect: _____

3. “The old man looked at the branches that grew from the sides of his new crutch. ‘A little splintery.’
Breaker angrily took his cut finger from his mouth. ‘Don’t insult someone who’s doing you a favor.’”

Cause: _____

Effect: _____

"Breaker's Bridge" by Laurence Yep**Literary Analysis: Character Traits**

Character traits are the qualities that make up an individual's personality. Fictional characters demonstrate their character traits through how they act and speak. Read the following passage from "Breaker's Bridge" about Breaker.

Although it was hard to see, Breaker found a tall-straight sapling and tried to trim the branches from its sides; but being Breaker, he dropped his knife several times and lost it twice among the old leaves on the forest floor. He also cut each of his fingers. By the time he was ready to cut down the sapling, he couldn't see it. Of course, he cut his fingers even more.

In the passage, Breaker drops his knife and loses it and cuts his fingers twice. Based on this behavior, you could say that clumsiness is one of Breaker's character traits.

A. DIRECTIONS: On the lines below each excerpt, write the actions of the character as described. Then write a word or words describing the character trait that these actions illustrate.

1. But before Breaker could straighten, the old man's left hand shot out and caught hold of Breaker's wrist. The old man's grip was as strong as iron. "Even the least word from me will remind that river of the law."

Breaker tried to pull away, but as strong as he was, he could not break the old man's hold. "Let me go."

But the crooked old man lowered his right hand so that Breaker could see that he had rubbed some of the dirt and sweat from his skin. "We are all bound together," the old man murmured, "and by the same laws."

The Old Man's Actions

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Character Trait: _____

2. "There is a river in the hills," the emperor said to him. "Everyone tells me it is too swift and deep to span. So I have to go a long way around it to get to my hunting palace. But you're famous for doing the impossible."

The kneeling man bowed his head to the floor. "So far I have been lucky. But there is always a first time when you can't do something."

The emperor frowned. "I didn't think you were lazy like my other bridge builders. You can have all the workers and all the materials you need. Build the bridge and you'll have your weight in gold. Fail and I'll have your head."

The Emperor's Actions and Words

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Character Trait: _____