

English IV – *The Contender* Chapters 14-20 Vocabulary Words

1. peek

throw a glance at; take a brief look at

*He put his hands under his head and watched them eat breakfast, smiling as the girls kept **peeking** at him over their cereal bowls.*

2. lurch

move abruptly

*He said something to the driver, and the cab **lurched** into the uptown traffic.*

3. fleck

a small fragment of something broken off from the whole

*A breeze had sprung up, whipping **flecks** of white on the Hudson River.*

4. mumble

talk indistinctly; usually in a low voice

*"I don't know," **mumbled** Henry, lowering himself into a soft chair.*

5. sluggish

moving slowly

*If you eat a big meal too close to a fight there isn't time for proper digestion. Makes you **sluggish** and slow, and one good punch to the belly and—*

6. **integrated**

not segregated

"This is a fairly well-integrated neighborhood," said Spoon.

7. **murmur**

a low continuous indistinct sound

*The room was dark, and the **murmur** of voices outside the door was too low to make out words.*

8. **satchel**

luggage consisting of a small case with a flat bottom

*They climbed into the front, Bud carrying his black **satchel**, an overnight bag, and a large cardboard box.*

9. **pierce**

sound sharply or shrilly

*The crowd started whistling, **piercing** whistles that upset his concentration.*

10. **plod**

walk heavily and firmly, as when weary, or through mud

*Rivera was **plodding** after him now on slow and heavy feet, pop-pop, stay one step ahead of him, jab and jump away, jab and hook and duck under the swinging arm.*

11. rage

be violent; as of fires and storms

*His legs were soft rubber and a fire was **raging** in the lower part of his belly.*

12. fume

a cloud of fine particles suspended in a gas

*Bud held a small bottle under his nose, and the **fumes** clawed up into his brain, and cleared his head.*

13. tenant

someone who pays rent to use property owned by someone else

*"For one thing, a lot of groups are trying to organize self-help programs in the black communities. Parents' groups, **tenants'** groups... ."*

14. whimper

cry weakly or softly

*They **whimpered** in the cold, and began to wake up.*

15. instinct

inborn pattern of behavior often responsive to stimuli

*You don't have the killer **instinct**, Alfred, the coldness to beat a man into the ground when you sense his weakness.*

16. **conquer**

put down by force or authority

*You **conquered** your fear. You worked hard. You almost quit once, and then you came back and worked harder.*

17. **hypnotized**

having your attention fixated as though by a spell

*"Are you guys **hypnotized**?"*

18. **bustle**

move or cause to move energetically or busily

*Betty **bustled** in a few minutes later, and started chattering with Spoon about her day at school.*

19. **narcotic**

a drug that produces numbness or stupor

*I talked to that doctor at the **narcotics** clinic, Alfred.*

20. **abreast**

alongside each other, facing in the same direction

*They went down the aisle three **abreast**, Donatelli and Henry moving him along with their shoulders, Bud right behind with the towels and the bucket, up the ring steps and through the ropes.*

21. hover

hang in the air; fly or be suspended above

*A gray shirt and a black bow tie **hovered** above him, and a forefinger waved in his face.*

22. pummel

strike, usually with the fist

*Hubbard was **pummeling** his ribs now, and Alfred worked his left arm free and began banging at the side of the bullet head, again and again and again, until Hubbard straightened up.*

23. unanimous

in complete agreement

The bell rang, but neither of them heard it, grunting, straining, slugging, and then everyone was in the ring pulling them apart, grabbing their gloves.

*". . . by **unanimous** decision . . . Elston Hubbard."*

24. bellow

shout loudly and without restraint

*"Let him breathe," **bellowed** Bud, pushing them all out and slamming the door shut.*

25. thicket

a dense growth of bushes

*The snow deadened his careful footsteps, over the smaller rocks, over the low **thicket** of leafless bushes.*

26. seep

pass gradually or leak or as if through small openings

*He moved in closer, his knees quivering as the snow **seeped** through his trousers.*

27. meek

humble in spirit or manner

*"You a fighter. Always so **meek** and quiet."*