



Vocabulary

In the blank underneath each word, write a sentence that correctly uses the word and shows that you know what it means.

Vocab Set #1 (Chapters 1-8)

hoax (noun): a trick, a deception

nonconformity/nonconformist (noun): not going along with the crowd; being different than the group

saguaro (noun): giant cactus

balk (verb): to hesitate or fail to follow through

paleontologist (noun): one who studies fossils

orate (verb): to speak in public, to give a speech (other forms: **orator**, **oration**)

Vocab Set #2 (Chapters 9-14)

amorphous (adj.): shapeless (like a blob or an amoeba)

inquisition (noun): angry questioning (preceded by a noun marker: “an” or “the”)

spiel (noun): prepared performance or speech (like a sales pitch)

impromptu (adj.): unplanned, on the spur of the moment

raucous (adj.): loud, rambunctious

ferocity (noun): quality of being ferocious, aggressiveness

Vocab Set #3 (Chapters 15-21)

mica (noun): a sparkly rock in the desert

ocotillo (noun): a desert plant with red flowers

serene (adj.): peaceful; **serenity** (noun) peacefulness

derelict (adj.): not taken care of, run-down

rapture (noun): perfect bliss

facetious (adj.): jokingly, non-serious

Vocab Set #4 (Chapters 22-33)

disparage (verb): to belittle, insult, or make fun of

festooned (adj., always followed by *with*): decorated, covered

moa (noun): giant prehistoric bird, now extinct

jostling (adj./verb): maneuvering through a crowd, bumping into lots of other people

gander (noun): a long, thoughtful look (*take a gander...*)

preamble (noun): introduction, something that goes before a speech or a document

