

WOW Activities

from chapters 6-8 of Britt-Marie Was Here by Fredrik Backman

ACTIVITY 1: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Write one sentence about YOUR life for each word.

collect - What situation required you to collect yourself?

Example: I had to collect myself before defending my decision to my family.

concern - What issue concerns you most about your children's future?

Your sentence: _____

propose - What change would you propose to improve your community?

Your sentence: _____

faith - What do you have faith in?

Your sentence: _____

assume - What did you assume about America before you arrived that turned out wrong?

Your sentence: _____

associate - Who are your work or professional associates?

Your sentence: _____

slip - What comment or information slipped out accidentally?

Your sentence: _____

settle - Where do you settle to relax after a busy day?

Your sentence: _____

charge - When did you charge into a situation without thinking?

Your sentence: _____

conviction - What conviction do you hold strongly?

Your sentence: _____

ACTIVITY 2: SCENARIO RESPONSES

Read each situation. Write what you would say using the vocabulary word.

(collect) You're at a parent-teacher meeting and hear unexpected criticism. You need a moment to calm down.

You say: _____

(concern) Your neighbor asks if the neighborhood crime rate worries you.

You say: _____

(propose) At a community meeting, you want to suggest a solution to a local problem.

You say: _____

(faith) Your friend is worried about her child's future. You want to encourage her.

You say: _____

(assume) Your coworker asks why you brought lunch for him without being asked.

You say: _____

(associate) The human resource director wants to know who told you about the job opening.

You say: _____

(slip) Your friend asks how your boss found out about your job search.

You say: _____

(settle) Your family asks where you go when you need peace and quiet.

You say: _____

(charge) Your spouse asks why you confronted your neighbor so aggressively.

You say: _____

(conviction) Someone challenges your belief that education is essential for success.

You say: _____

ACTIVITY 3: REAL-LIFE APPLICATIONS

Match each situation with the best vocabulary word.

Situations:

- A. You took a deep breath and adjusted your attitude before reluctantly agreeing to host the family dinner.
- B. You're genuinely worried about how the school changes will affect your children's education.
- C. You want to suggest that your book club meet twice a month instead of once.
- D. You spoke strongly when you maintained that learning English is important.
- E. You accidentally told your mother-in-law that your family was moving to Alaska.
- F. Your lawyer became one of your most trusted professional connections and helped you obtain citizenship.
- G. You like to sit in your favorite quiet spot at the library and read books.
- H. You rushed into the school office and demanded to speak with the principal after your daughter told you that a bully had torn her shirt and broken her glasses.
- I. You knew the language-learning program would be hard, but you believed the teacher would help you stay motivated.
- J. You expected your husband would forget your birthday, but he surprised you with a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

1. collect: _____

2. concern: _____

3. propose: _____

4. conviction: _____

5. slip: _____

6. associate: _____

7. settle: _____

8. charge: _____

9. assume: _____

10. faith: _____

ACTIVITY 4: DISCUSSION TOPICS

Choose one topic. Create a brief speech that incorporates at least 3 of the vocabulary words. Make an audio recording of your speech. Listen to the recording to evaluate your pronunciation and correct use of vocabulary. Optional: send your recording to Lori for her feedback.

Topic 1: Managing Difficult Moments

Talk about a time when you had to collect yourself in a challenging situation. What conviction helped you get through it? What concerns did you have? How did things settle in the end?

Topic 2: Professional Relationships

Discuss your work or professional associates. How do you distinguish genuine colleagues from those who are just being polite? What concerns do you have about maintaining these relationships? What would you propose to strengthen professional connections?

Topic 3: Community Improvements

Talk about changes you would propose for your community. What issues concern you most? What conviction drives your ideas? What do you assume will happen if nothing changes? How can you adjust your approach to make your voice heard?

Topic 4: Making Quick Decisions

Discuss a time you charged into a situation without thinking carefully. What slipped out that you regretted? What concerns did you have afterward? What conviction guided you, even if you acted too quickly?

ACTIVITY 5: WORD COLLOCATIONS

Learn these common word combinations. Then write your own sentence.

collect yourself / collect your thoughts

Example: I needed to collect myself before I could respond to her accusations.

Your sentence: _____

concern + [someone] / be concerned about + [something]

Example: What concerns me most is that my children won't be eligible for good schools.

Your sentence: _____

propose + [a solution/plan/idea] / propose that + [clause]

Example: I propose that we continue our weekly book club meetings.

Your sentence: _____

have faith in + [person/thing]

Example: I have faith in my ability to adjust to my ability to overcome any challenge that comes my way.

Your sentence: _____

assume + [that clause]

Example: I assumed that everyone would resist my suggestion to cancel ESL class.

Your sentence: _____

business associate / professional associate

Example: I maintain that my business associate and I should show up for jury duty.

Your sentence: _____

slip out / slip away / slip through

Example: I accidentally let the details about her divorce slip out.

Your sentence: _____

settle + [somewhere] / settle down / settle into / settle in

Example: After we moved, it took months to settle into our new routine.

Your sentence: _____

charge into/toward/at + [something]

Example: Don't charge into important decisions without thinking—collect your thoughts first.

Your sentence: _____

hold a conviction / with conviction / strong conviction

Example: She spoke with conviction when she had to defend her beliefs.

Your sentence: _____

ACTIVITY 6: SYNONYM EXPLORATION

For each vocabulary word, circle which synonym is closest in meaning in the given context.

1. **collect** (in "**collect yourself**")
a) gather b) compose c) accumulate d) pick up
2. **concern** (in "**this concerns me**")
a) worry b) involve c) interest d) relate
3. **propose** (in "**I propose a solution**")
a) suggest b) answer c) explain d) reject
4. **faith** (in "**have faith in someone**")
a) religion b) trust c) hope d) wish
5. **assume** (in "**I assumed that...**")
a) take on b) suppose c) pretend d) accept
6. **associate** (in "**business associate**")
a) colleague b) friend c) neighbor d) connection
7. **slip** (in "**it slipped out**")
a) escape b) fall c) slide d) emerge accidentally
8. **settle** (in "**settle on the couch**")
a) resolve b) sink down c) agree d) pay
9. **charge** (in "**charge into the room**")
a) rush b) attack c) accuse d) bill
10. **conviction** (in "**speak with conviction**")
a) crime b) confidence c) strong belief d) certainty

ACTIVITY 7: ERROR CORRECTION

Each sentence has a mistake with the vocabulary word. Find and correct it.

1. I needed to collect me before speaking to defend my decision.

Correction: _____

2. This problem is concerning with all parents in the school.

Correction: _____

3. I would like to propose about a new schedule for meetings.

Correction: _____

4. I have faith for my children's abilities to adjust here.

Correction: _____

5. I was assume that the class was free for eligible students.

Correction: _____

6. She is my business associated who helped me distinguish the difference between a good choice and a bad choice.

Correction: _____

7. My secret accidentally slipped through when my friend asked about my broken arm.

Correction: _____

8. The dust settled about the shelf after I cleaned the room.

Correction: _____

9. She charged for the office to emphasize her concerns and maintain her position.

Correction: _____

10. I spoke for genuine conviction at the meeting.

Correction: _____

ANSWER KEY

Activity 1: Personal Connections (possible answers)

(concern) "What concerns me most is whether my children will maintain their connection to our home culture while they adjust to American life."

(propose) "I would like to propose that the library offer more ESL classes in the evenings for parents who are eligible but work during the day."

(faith) "I have faith in my children's ability to distinguish between right and wrong, even when I'm not there to guide them."

(assume) "I assumed that Americans would resist talking to strangers, but I've observed that people here are quite friendly and genuine."

(associate) "My professional associates include other teachers at the school and the librarian who helped me adjust when I first arrived."

(slip) "I was talking about my neighbor's new car, and it slipped out that she couldn't afford it—I felt terrible and had to defend myself later."

(settle) "I settle on my balcony with tea where I can collect my thoughts and emphasize to myself that tomorrow will be better."

(charge) "I charged into my daughter's room when I heard her screaming, only to find out she was just watching a scary movie reluctantly with her friends."

(conviction) "I maintain the conviction that children need to read genuine books, not just watch videos, to develop their minds."

Activity 2: Scenario Responses (possible answers)

(collect) "Give me a second to collect myself—I wasn't expecting to hear that."

(concern) "Yes, the crime rate is a concern for me, especially at night."

(propose) "I'd like to propose a simple solution: add more lighting and security."

(faith) "I have faith in your child—she's resilient, and she'll find her path."

(assume) "I assumed you'd be too busy to pack lunch today, so I brought extra."

(associate) "I have a business associate who recommended me for this job."

(slip) "It must have slipped out during the meeting—I didn't mean for him to know."

(settle) "When I need peace and quiet, I settle in at the park and read for a while."

(charge) "I didn't mean to charge at him like that—I was upset and reacted too fast."

(conviction) "I maintain that education matters, and I hold that view with genuine conviction."

Activity 3: Real-Life Applications

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. collect: A | 6. associate: F |
| 2. concern: B | 7. settle: G |
| 3. propose: C | 8. charge: H |
| 4. conviction: D | 9. assume: J |
| 5. slip: E | 10. faith: I |

Activity 6: Synonym Exploration

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| 1. b) compose | 6. a) colleague |
| 2. a) worry | 7. d) emerge accidentally |
| 3. a) suggest | 8. b) sink down |
| 4. b) trust | 9. a) rush |
| 5. b) suppose | 10. c) strong belief |

Activity 7: Error Correction

1. I needed to collect myself before speaking to defend my decision.
2. This problem concerns all parents in the school. / This problem is a concern to all parents.
3. I would like to propose a new schedule for meetings.
4. I have faith in my children's abilities to adjust here.
5. I assumed that the genuine class was free for eligible students.
6. She is my business associate who helped me distinguish the options.
7. My secret accidentally slipped out when my friend asked about my broken arm..
8. The dust settled on the shelf after I observed the room.
9. She charged into/to the office to emphasize her concerns and maintain her position.
10. I spoke about my conviction strongly at the meeting to resist pressure. / I spoke with conviction at the meeting.