

# The Chenoo

Native American Legend Retold by Joseph and James Bruchac

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML6-712

## Is **FEAR** ever fun?



**READING 3** Analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural and historical contexts. **3A** Infer the implicit theme of a work of fiction. **3B** Analyze the function of stylistic elements in traditional literature from various cultures. **12** Understand how to glean and use information in documents. **12B** Interpret factual, quantitative, or technical information presented in maps and timelines. **RC-6(D)** Make inferences about text.

What do scary movies, amusement park haunted houses, and roller coasters have in common? Though they cause chills, screams, and fear, we turn to them again and again because they are fun. In the following Native American legend, you'll meet a monster—so prepare yourself for some fearful fun.

**CHART IT** Make a chart listing the fearful activities you've experienced. Then rate their fear and fun levels on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest). Compare your answers with those of your classmates.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Fun Level</i>	<i>Fear Level</i>
roller coaster	4	3
reading a scary story		



## Meet the Authors

### LITERARY ANALYSIS: CHARACTERISTICS OF LEGENDS

A **legend** is a traditional tale about heroes and heroines and their deeds. While many legends are based on real people and events from history, they also contain certain stylistic elements that make them exciting. One stylistic element of most legends is that everyday objects or events take on extraordinary meanings, becoming **symbols** of something else. Another such element is a hero or heroine that shows uncommon courage and cleverness in the face of danger. You will also notice that many events in legends could not actually occur in the real world. Be sure to note these stylistic elements as you read “The Chenoo.”

### READING SKILL: MAKE INFERENCES

When you **make inferences** as you read, you make educated guesses about the events or characters in a story. For example, you might infer that a character is kind and considerate if that character helps someone in need. Often, these inferences will help you identify a story’s **theme**, or message about life or human nature.

As you read “The Chenoo,” record the inferences you make about Nolka based on her words and actions.

<i>Nolka’s Words and Actions</i>	<i>Inferences About Nolka</i>
<i>cleans an elk hide and heats rocks for a sweat lodge</i>	<i>She is hard-working and takes good care of her brothers.</i>

### VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The Bruchacs use the listed words to help tell the story of an encounter with a monster. Choose the word that best completes each sentence.

**WORD LIST** clearing inspect proceed sibling

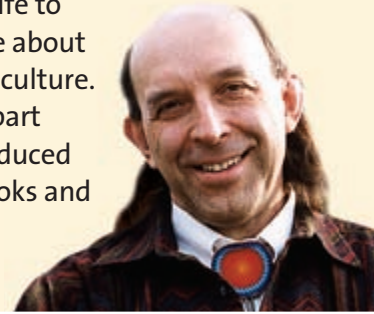
1. The brothers were worried about their \_\_\_\_\_, Nolka.
2. They walked through the forest into a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. She wanted to \_\_\_\_\_, but she was frozen by fear.
4. Awasos bent down to \_\_\_\_\_ the tracks on the ground.

## Joseph Bruchac III

born 1942

### Keeper of Culture

Joseph Bruchac (brōō’shăk) has devoted his life to educating people about Native American culture. Bruchac, who is part Abenaki, has produced more than 70 books and is well known as a storyteller.



## James Bruchac

### The Next Generation

James Bruchac felt lucky to grow up as the son of storyteller Joseph Bruchac. Of the many Native American legends he heard as a child, his favorites were monster stories. James works with his father and younger brother to help preserve Native American culture.



### BACKGROUND TO THE LEGEND

#### Scary Stories

Monster stories are a popular type of legend passed down in Native American culture. In many monster stories, a hero or heroine defeats a foe by using his or her wits and courage. Often, the lesson of these stories is that bravery and intelligence can triumph over evil.

Authors Online



Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com). KEYWORD: HML6-713



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

# The Chenoo

Retold by Joseph and James Bruchac

Long ago, during the Moon of Falling Leaves,<sup>1</sup> a woman and her two brothers traveled to the north to set up a hunting camp. Hoping to bring back enough furs and meat for the winter, they went far away from their village, much farther than anyone had gone in a long time.

During the first two days after making camp the hunting was very good. Each day the two brothers would go hunting. The sister, whose name was Nolka, would stay behind to tend their camp and prepare any game caught the day before. On the third day, however, while out hunting, the brothers came across a very large set of footprints. Those 10 footprints were over two feet long and ten feet apart. Kneeling down, Awasos, the older of the two brothers, carefully **inspected** each track. **A**

“Great-grandfather told me of a creature that makes tracks like this. It is called a Chenoo.”<sup>2</sup> Awasos lifted his head to scan the forest around them.

“Yes, I remember,” answered Kasko, Awasos’s younger brother. “He said they were giant cannibals<sup>3</sup> with sharp teeth and hearts made of ice. Consuming the spirit of a human being makes them stronger.”

## Analyze Visuals ▶

What **mood** does this photograph convey?

**inspect** (ɪn-spěkt') v.  
to examine carefully

## **A** MAKE INFERENCES

What inference can you make about the footprints?

1. **Moon of Falling Leaves:** In many Native American cultures, the Moon of Falling Leaves is the name given to the tenth of the thirteen cycles of the moon each year. The Moon of Falling Leaves usually begins in October.

2. **Chenoo** (chă'nōō)

3. **cannibals:** people or animals that feed on others of their own kind.



Looking closer at the tracks, the two men realized the huge footprints were headed in the direction of their camp.

“We must return and check on our sister,” said Awasos. Both men  
20 began to run back toward camp.

**M**eanwhile, back at camp, unaware of any danger, Nolka was busy cleaning an elk hide. Several yards away, in a large fire pit, a pile of rocks was being heated up for her brothers’ evening sweat lodge.

Having finished the hide, Nolka slowly stood up to add more wood to the fire. As she did so, she heard a sudden sound of breaking branches. She turned and looked up. There stood a huge Chenoo. Its large gray body was covered with pine pitch<sup>4</sup> and leaves, and it wore a necklace of human skulls. Its legs and arms were as thick as tree stumps. Its open mouth revealed a sharp set of teeth, and its eyes were darker than a starless  
30 night. The Chenoo raised its arms, preparing to grasp Nolka in its long, bony fingers. **B**

Knowing there was nowhere to hide, Nolka thought quickly.

“Grandfather!” she said with a smile. “Where have you been?”

“GRANDFATHER?” the Chenoo growled. It stopped in its tracks and looked confused. No human being had ever dared to speak to it this way before. **C**

“Yes, Grandfather. I have been waiting here all day for you. Don’t you even remember me?” Nolka said. There was a long pause. Nolka did her best to appear calm.

40 “GRANDDAUGHTER?!” roared the Chenoo. “I HAVE A GRANDDAUGHTER?!”

“Yes, of course you do. I have been preparing this sweat lodge for you all day,” Nolka said, motioning toward the large pile of rocks glowing in the fire. She hoped to delay the Chenoo from trying to eat her until her brothers returned from hunting. So far the plan was working. **D**

“Grandfather, please come into the lodge,” she said, lifting up the door flap.

“THANK YOU, GRANDDAUGHTER,” the Chenoo rumbled as it walked over to the sweat lodge and bent down. Crawling in on its hands and knees, the giant squeezed through the door. Sitting down, his legs  
50 around the fire pit, the Chenoo filled the entire lodge.

Walking over to the fire, Nolka picked up a large forked stick and carried one hot rock after another and began placing them in the center of the lodge. She was just pulling another rock out of the fire when she heard someone coming.

## SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION



A sweat lodge, or sweathouse, is a structure used by many Native Americans to induce sweating as a cleansing ritual. It is heated by pouring water over hot stones.

### **B** LEGENDS

What details show how powerful the Chenoo is?

### **C** LEGENDS

Reread lines 32–36. A common stylistic element in traditional stories is the cleverness of a young hero, who may quickly come up with a trick or a plan to deal with an enemy that seems impossible to defeat. Is the Chenoo really Nolka’s grandfather? What is Nolka trying to accomplish here?

### **D** MAKE INFERENCES

Reread lines 37–44. Though Nolka appears calm and in control, what feelings is she probably experiencing?

4. **pine pitch**: the thick, sticky sap of a pine tree.

“Sister, what are you doing?” called Awasos as he and Kasko, both completely out of breath, came running into the **clearing**.

“We saw huge tracks headed toward our camp,” Kasko said. “We were afraid that you—”

Nolka held up a hand to her mouth, and her brothers stopped talking.  
60 She looked over toward the lodge.

“Our grandfather has finally arrived!” Nolka said. “Come and greet him.” Then she picked up another glowing rock. As she walked over to the lodge, her brothers, totally confused, followed her. **E**

“Grandfather, your grandsons have returned to greet you,” said Nolka to the Chenoo, through the door of the lodge.

“GRANDSONS? I HAVE GRANDSONS?” roared the Chenoo. Looking into the lodge, Awasos and Kasko could not believe it. There sat the very same monster whose tracks they had seen headed toward camp.

“HELLO, MY GRANDSONS!” the Chenoo rumbled.

70 “Oh, ah, yes. Hello, grandfather . . . it is good to see you,” Kasko said, after being nudged in the ribs by Nolka.

“THIS LODGE FEELS GOOD. BRING ME MORE ROCKS!”

“Yes, Grandfather,” Kasko said.

The two men and their sister piled one glowing rock after another in the center of the lodge. Then, after placing a large birch-bark bucket

**clearing** (klir'ing) *n.*  
an open area of land, as  
in the middle of a forest

**E LEGENDS**  
What courageous  
qualities does  
Nolka show?



### ◀ Analyze Visuals

In what way is this  
photograph like the  
Chenoo's necklace?

full of water just inside the door of the lodge, they closed the flap. Moments later, a loud hissing sound came from inside the lodge as the Chenoo began to pour water on the rocks.

80 “Now is our chance to make a run for it,” Nolka whispered to her brothers. The three of them began to quietly sneak out of camp. But they had not moved quickly enough.

“MORE ROCKS! BRING ME MORE ROCKS! OPEN THE DOOR!” roared the Chenoo.

Nolka ran over and swung open the flap of the lodge. Awasos and Kasko **proceeded** to bring in four more loads of rocks. Then, after the fourth load, the flap to the lodge was again closed. As soon as the door was closed, the sound of hissing steam came again from within the lodge. And just as before, just when they began to sneak away, the Chenoo shouted for them again.

90 “OPEN THE DOOR. MORE ROCKS, MORE WATER!”

“Yes, Grandfather. We are coming!”

Quickly Awasos and Kasko brought more rocks as Nolka ran to a nearby stream to refill the birch-bark bucket. When they opened the door to the lodge, huge gusts of steam flowed out so thickly that the only thing in the lodge they could see was the Chenoo’s huge arm as it reached out to grab the freshly filled bucket of water.

Closing the flap again, all three **siblings** agreed it was no use trying to run. The Chenoo would only call for them again. And sure enough, it did.

“OPEN THE DOOR. MORE ROCKS. MORE WATER.”

100 This time, they brought in every rock from the fire, even the rocks from the fire circle. They hoped the heat would be so great that the Chenoo would pass out. Standing by the lodge, they listened closely. But, to their surprise, as the hissing sound of the water hitting the rocks got louder and louder, the Chenoo began to sing.

“WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, HOOO!!

WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, HOOO!!”

Then it paused to pour more water on the rocks before it sang again.

“WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, HOOO!!

WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, HOOO!!”

110 This time, as the Chenoo sang, they noticed that its voice did not seem as loud. Again they heard the sounds of steam rising as water was poured on the stones.

“WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, HOOO!!

WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, HOOO!!”

That voice was much softer now, so soft that it sounded like the voice of an old man.

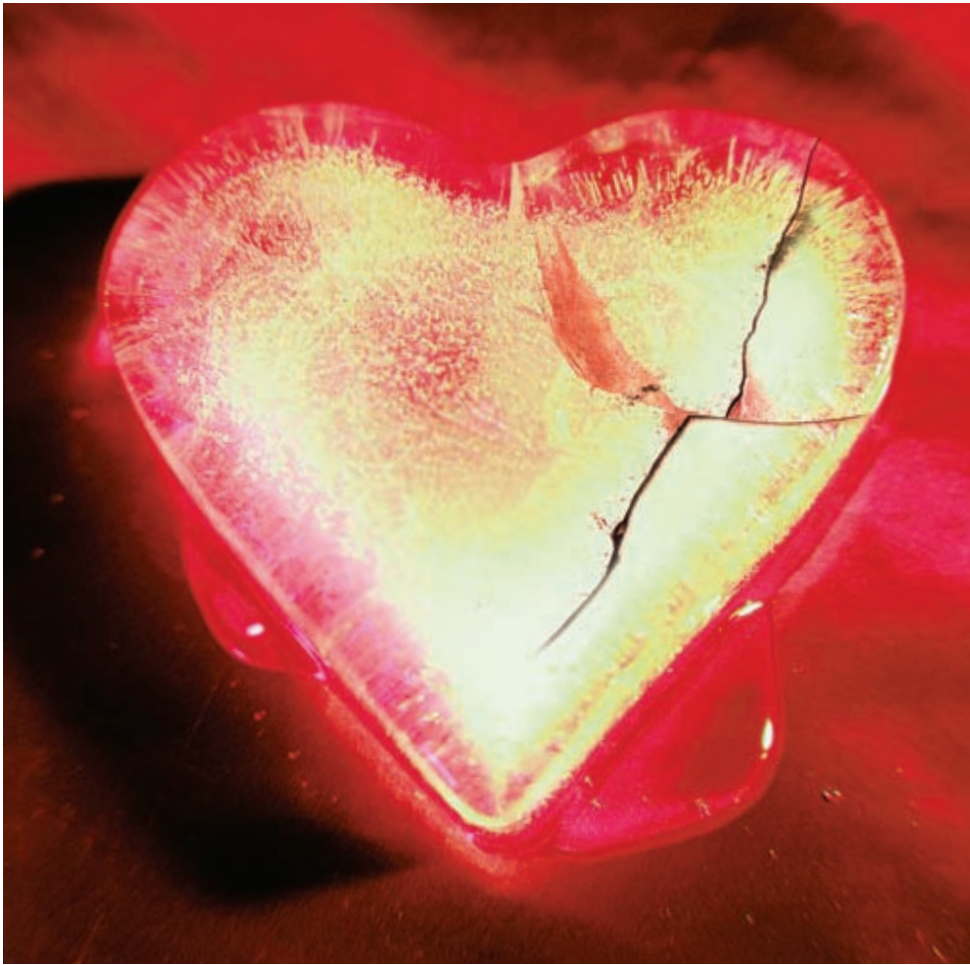
“WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, HOOO!!

**proceed** (prō-sēd') v.  
to go forward or  
onward; continue

**sibling** (sīb'līng) n.  
a brother or sister

### Language Coach

**Onomatopoeia** When writers want to create “sounds” in their work, they use **onomatopoeia**—a word or group of words that imitate the sound being described. The word *hissing* in lines 87 and 103 sounds like what it is describing—the sound of water as it hits fire. Onomatopoeic words like *boom* and *meow* are sometimes similar in different languages, but often they are very different. For example, in English the words *drip drip* might be used to describe the sound of water dripping. In French, however, it would be *plic ploc*; in Korean *tok tok*; and in Tamil *sottu-sottu*.



### ◀ Analyze Visuals

What part of the legend does this photograph represent?

WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, WAY-YAA, HOOO!!”

Then it was silent.

120 “Grandchildren, open the door,” a little voice called from inside the sweat lodge.

Awasos lifted up the door flap. A huge gust of steam blew out from the lodge, knocking him backward. As the steam rose into the air, a little old man crawled out from the lodge. As he stood up, the little old man began to cough. He coughed and coughed until he coughed up a huge piece of ice in the shape of a human heart. Falling to the ground, the heart-shaped piece of ice that was the bad spirit of the Chenoo shattered on a rock.

130 a smile. **F** “Thank you, my grandchildren. You have saved me. I am no longer a monster. Now I am truly your grandfather,” said the old man with

**S**o Nolka and her two brothers took the old man who had been a Chenoo as their grandfather. They brought him back to their village, where he quietly and peacefully lived out the rest of his days. ☹

### **F** LEGENDS

Startling transformations are a stylistic element in many traditional stories. In what other myths, legends, or folk tales have you seen similar transformations, in which a monster becomes human? What theme might such stories express?



## Reading for Information

**ARTICLE** “The Chenoo” is a legend from the Passamaquoddy, a northeast American Indian people. This brief article presents information about the Passamaquoddy. Note the information the map and timeline convey.

# The PASSAMAQUODDY

The legend of “The Chenoo” has been passed down from generation to generation by the Passamaquoddy people of northeastern North America. The early Passamaquoddy moved from place to place throughout the year to follow the herds of animals they hunted.

Despite their frequent movement, the Passamaquoddy remained within one general region. Their eastern location allowed them to be among the first to see the rising sun each day. Because of this, they became known as “People of the Dawn.”

Today, Passamaquoddy reservations are located in eastern Maine in two locations: Pleasant Point and Indian Township. These reservations are within the same region where previous generations of Passamaquoddy people lived and traveled.

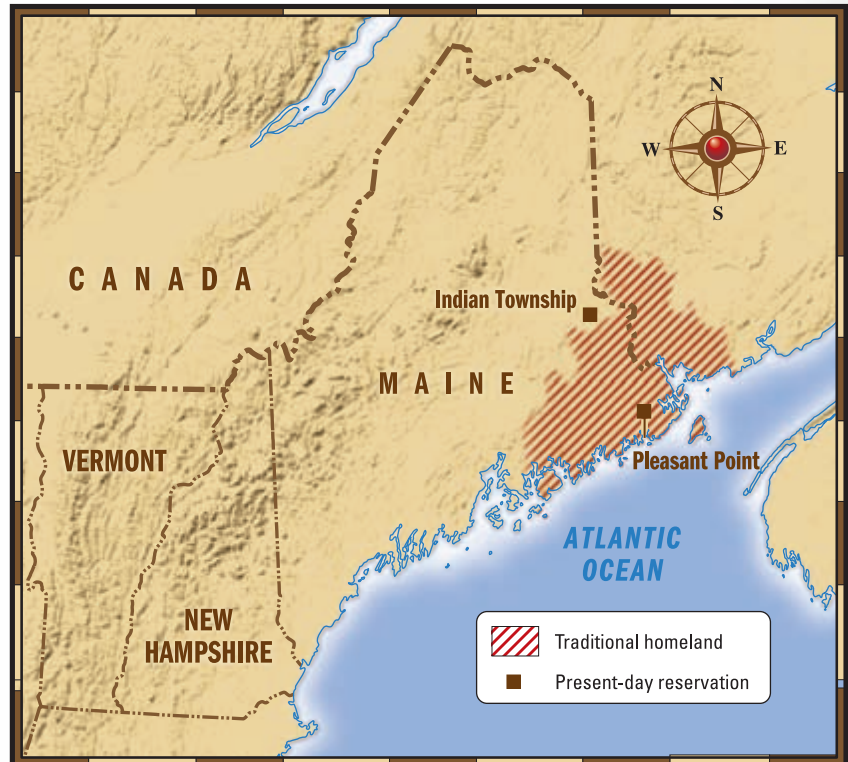


TEKS 12B

### A INTERPRET MAPS

Physical maps illustrate the natural landscape of an area. They often use shading to indicate **relief** (mountains, hills, and valleys). Maps often include a **legend**, or key, that explains symbols, lines, and shadings used on the map. They also often include a **compass rose**, or directional indicator, showing north, south, east, and west. Which of these features does this map include? What information from the article does this map illustrate? What else do you learn about the lands of the Passamaquoddy from this map?

A



**B INTERPRET TIMELINES**

A **timeline** lists events according to their **chronological order** (the order in which they happened). Timelines present a lot of information in a small amount of space. This timeline places events alongside the time period in which they occur. What does this timeline tell you about the Passamaquoddy that you don't learn from the article itself? What important information would you miss if you did not read this timeline?

## Timeline of Passamaquoddy History

**B**

- 1400** □ Passamaquoddy are part of 20,000 Native Americans living in the area now known as Maine.
- 1604** □ French explorer Samuel de Champlain makes contact with Passamaquoddy, opening up period of trade with Europe. Passamaquoddy population is about 2,000.
- 1616** □ European diseases spread among Passamaquoddy and other Maine tribes, causing a pandemic called the "Great Dying." Passamaquoddy population goes down to about 150.
- 1701** □ Passamaquoddy join with other Maine tribes to form Wabanaki Confederacy, a protection against enemies.
- 1776** □ Many Passamaquoddy fight alongside American Colonists against the British in the Revolutionary War.
- 1820** □ Maine becomes a state; Passamaquoddy reservations are created at Indian Township and Pleasant Point.
- 1954** □ Passamaquoddy are granted right to vote in national elections.
- 1972** □ Passamaquoddy, together with Penobscot Nation, file a lawsuit against the Federal government, claiming that over 12 million acres of their land were taken in treaties that violated the law.
- 1980** □ President Jimmy Carter signs Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act. Penobscots and Passamaquoddys are given a 27 million dollar trust fund and 300,000 acres of land.
- Present** □ Passamaquoddy number about 3,500 and own more than 200,000 acres of land in Maine. A strong cultural revival seeks to keep alive the language, stories, and customs of the people.



## Comprehension

- Recall** What does Nolka do while her brothers are hunting?
- Recall** Why do the brothers rush back to camp when they see a set of large footprints?
- Clarify** How do the three siblings plan to escape from the Chenoo?

## Literary Analysis

- Make Inferences** Look at the chart you created as you read. In what ways does Nolka demonstrate the qualities of a heroine?
- Examine Characteristics of Legends** Which details about the characters and events in “The Chenoo” seem real, and which do not? Make a chart like the one shown. Fill in each square using details from the legend.

	<i>Character</i>	<i>Event</i>
<i>Real</i>		
<i>Not Real</i>		

- Identify Theme** In many legends, the hero slays a monster, but in this legend, the hero saves a monster. What lessons about human nature and behavior does this story teach?
- Analyze Characteristics of Legends** What other **stylistic elements** common to traditional stories did you find in this legend? How did they contribute to the theme?
- Analyze Symbol** Reread lines 122–127. What might the heart of ice that the Chenoo coughs up symbolize?

## Extension and Challenge

- SOcial STUDIES CONNECTION** Storytelling has always been an important part of Native American culture. Review the article on 720 about the people who first told the story of the Chenoo. Then choose another Native American legend to read. Share a summary of the story with the class.



**READING 3** Analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural and historical contexts. **3A** Infer the implicit theme of a work of fiction. **3B** Analyze the function of stylistic elements in traditional literature from various cultures. **RC-6(D)** Make inferences about text and use textual evidence to support understanding.

### Is FEAR ever fun?

What was creepy or scary about this story? What made it fun to read? Why do you think people get pleasure from reading stories about monsters and other scary things?

## Vocabulary in Context

### ▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose the letter of the word or phrase that is most closely related to the boldfaced word.

1. **proceed:** (a) continue, (b) halt, (c) pause
2. **sibling:** (a) friend, (b) father, (c) brother
3. **inspect:** (a) ignore, (b) refuse, (c) examine
4. **clearing:** (a) grove of trees, (b) open land, (c) thick jungle



### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN SPEAKING

• circumstance • contribute • element • significant • tradition

“The Chenoo” contains some realistic **elements** and others that are not as believable. Which parts **contribute** to your understanding of the theme of the story? Use at least two Academic Vocabulary words in your discussion.

### VOCABULARY STRATEGY: USE REFERENCE AIDS

To express ideas clearly and correctly, you need to choose your words carefully. Sometimes this means that you need to replace a vague or general word with a more specific synonym. **Synonyms** are words with similar meanings. For example, *gorgeous* is a synonym for *exquisite*. To find a synonym for a word, look in a **reference aid**, or information resource.

- A **dictionary** often lists synonyms after the definition(s) of a word.

**exquisite** (ěk'skwĩ-zĩt) *adj.* of extraordinary beauty or charm: *They watched the exquisite sunset.* **syn** beautiful, gorgeous, flawless, superb

- A reference book of synonyms, such as a **thesaurus** or a synonym finder lists synonyms of words. Many word processing programs feature an electronic thesaurus tool.

**exquisite** *adjective* beautiful, gorgeous, flawless, superb

**PRACTICE** Use a dictionary or thesaurus to find a synonym for each word. Note the synonym as well as the reference aid you used to find it.

1. bravery
2. battle
3. naughty
4. calm



**READING 2E** Use a dictionary or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine the meanings and alternate word choices of words.

Interactive Vocabulary **THINK** central

Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com).  
KEYWORD: HML6-723