

## Unit 12 - Clowns Can't Dance

### 12A Introduction

This is the story of Kim, a girl who has made too many commitments for the same night. But Kim doesn't get discouraged. She gets creative.

### 12B Song Lyrics

*Here's what you need to know: Kim is filled with happiness when she's asked to the big dance by Devon, a boy she likes. But, later that afternoon, her mother reminds her that on the same night, Kim has promised to dress up like a clown for her brother's 4th birthday. Thus, we begin.*

Kim's sitting in the kitchen and she can't believe,  
Instead of the dance, she has to go to Chuck E. Cheese?  
Kim says, "Mom, this is **akin** to ruining my life,  
It's the same thing; can't I have this one night?"  
Kim's mom says, "Nah, you promised,  
You like dressing like a clown, c'mon be honest."  
That's true; it's not like she wanted it to be her **vocation**,  
Her job, her occupation.  
But she had dressed like a clown on vacation,  
And she kind of liked making kids laugh,  
You know, the big red nose and all of that.  
But now she's feeling **melancholy** and sad.  
But when she looks at the dance ticket, her face changes,  
The party and the dance are at **adjacent** places,  
Right next to each other on the same block,  
And now her brain starts to work and it doesn't stop.  
She **mulls** it over, thinks it through,  
She's like, "Why choose one, when I can do two?"  
She says, "Mom, I won't **shirk** the work,  
Or try to avoid the job like a jerk.  
I'll be a clown like I told you, Mom."  
And then Kim walks away to use her mobile phone.  
She calls up Devon to say, "Yo, it's on.  
I'll be at the dance, boy, with you on my arm."

*Wow! Look at that clown dance,  
With the big red nose and those brown pants.  
She's got crazy moves, like, "Wow, man,"  
She's like, "Bozo and Crusty can't even touch me."  
(x2)*

It's the night of the dance, and it's cool,  
Kim's wearing a dress underneath the clown suit.  
A red nose made by Hasbro,  
And she's rocking a rainbow Afro.  
At Chuck E. Cheese, yeah the kids are **enthralled**,  
Charmed by the clown who is dancing and all.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Yeah, Kim **pampers** her brother, gives him care,  
 Even though not too long ago, dude was in Pampers.  
 Kim goes to the bathroom,  
 Washes off her makeup, slips out of that suit.  
 Sneaks to the back, **nimble** as can be,  
 Light on her feet, yeah, she's moving with ease.  
 Goes to the dance where she **yearns** to be,  
 Wants to be so bad, she's like, "Pardon me."  
 She sees Devon, and now they're laughing and stuff,  
 They dance a little bit, yeah, they're having some fun.  
 Kim doesn't want to go, she's **loath** to leave,  
 But she tells Devon, "Yo, I'll B.R.B."  
 Sneaks back into Chuck E. Cheese,  
 Gets dressed with a pig nose and funny teeth.  
 Her mom asks if she's feeling bad,  
 "You were gone a while there in the back."  
 Kim says, "To be **candid** and honest,  
 I was feeling a little sick to my stomach."  
 She goes back to goofing for her brother and his friends,  
 But now her night starts to feel like a **sham**,  
 A fraud, a hoax, like she's tricking them.  
 She's feeling **overwhelmed**, like it's all too much,  
 But she's like, "I can't stop now and give this up,  
 I got myself into this mess, I need to keep it up."  
 Back to the bathroom, switches clothes quickly,  
 Out of breath, running to the dance in a jiffy.  
 She shows up, and her friends all stop;  
 Her friend Alisha is like, "Yo, Kim, what's up?  
 Why is your face blue, you're wearing a wig?  
 Is that a fake nose, girl? You look like a pig!"  
 Oh snap! Kim had made a mistake;  
 Now she's wearing her dress with a clown face.  
 She feels all her happiness **erode**,  
 Get eaten away; she's like, "Yo, I'm leaving, okay?"  
 Just then, up comes Devon,  
 Looking at Kim like, What's going on?  
 She's tired of the lies, so she describes  
 How she had been a clown for her brother that night.  
 All the kids laugh, except Devon;  
 He steps right up, takes her on his arm.  
 "You got an extra clown nose?" he asks.  
 "C'mon, girl, let's go make your brother laugh."

Hook  
x3

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 12C Words Defined

adjacent / akin / candid / enthrall / erode / loath / melancholy / mull / nimble / overwhelm / pamper / sham / shirk / vocation / yearn

Below you'll find each vocabulary word that was used in the song. Each word is followed by the part of speech, a simple definition and a meaningful sentence. Some words will also have synonyms, antonyms and other forms of the word listed.

### 1. adjacent near, next to

The new Yankee Stadium was built *adjacent* to the old one.

Synonyms: adjoining, close

Antonyms: distant

### 2. akin sharing the same properties

Betty got so upset that night—it was *akin* to going crazy.

Synonyms: similar, related

Antonyms: different

### 3. candid 1. honest and straightforward, without holding back unpleasant truths 2. informal; unposed

1. The movie critic was so *candid* she sometimes made actors cry. 2. US Monthly magazine recently bought a series of *candid* photos, showing two popular young stars running on the beach.

### 4. enthrall to hold the attention of as though under a spell

The audience was *enthralled* by the magician's tricks, especially when he made his head drop down to his stomach.

Synonyms: enchant, entrance

Antonyms: bore

Other forms: The children especially found the magician's show *enthraling* (adj).

### 5. erode to wear away gradually; to eat away

A few months into Dwayne's drug addiction, his health and happiness began to *erode*.

Antonyms: strengthen, reinforce

Other forms: Because of *erosion* (noun), it was hard to even tell that the heap of wood and dust on the bottom of the ocean had once been a pirate ship.

### 6. loath unwilling, reluctant

Tricia was *loath* to admit her mistake, preferring to think that everything was just fine.

Antonyms: willing, eager

### 7. melancholy sad, gloomy, unhappy

Harvey was so *melancholy* that he stopped making eye contact with anyone .

Synonyms: glum, miserable

Other forms: *Melancholy* can also be a noun, as in: Falling into a terrible *melancholy*, the dog refused to eat.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. mull** (verb) to think about something carefully; to consider

Rachel *mulled* over her options for college.

Synonyms: ponder, contemplate

Usage note: *Mull* is often followed by the word *over*, but it doesn't have to be: Rachel *mulled* her options for college.

**9. nimble** (adj) able to move easily and quickly

Sreng wasn't the strongest soccer player, but he was by far the most *nimble*.

Synonyms: agile, swift

Antonyms: clumsy

**10. overwhelm** (verb) 1. to overcome completely in mind or feeling 2. to defeat completely

1. Maria was *overwhelmed* by the number of choices at the breakfast buffet. 2. On their march back to Boston, the British troops were *overwhelmed* by American minutemen.

Synonyms: 1. bewilder, stun 2. conquer

**11. pamper** (verb) to treat with extreme kindness or generosity

Having been *pampered* her whole life, the princess was shocked to learn that she would have to brush her own teeth at her new school.

Synonyms: spoil

**12. sham** (noun) something fake or false

By reading notes that had been left in his locker, Julio thought that Jenny had a crush on him, but it turned out that the whole thing was a *sham*.

Synonyms: hoax, falsehood

Antonyms: truth, reality

Other forms: *Sham* can also be an adjective, as in: The *sham* ads promised a free blender with each order, but the company never sent me anything.

**13. shirk** (verb) to avoid or get out of doing work

*Shirking* his responsibilities, Leonard skipped school and rode his bike to the beach instead.

Synonyms: sneak, slack, cheat

**14. vocation** (noun) a person's employment, job, or calling

It's never too early to think about what *vocation* you might like once you get older.

Synonyms: occupation

**15. yearn** (verb) to have a strong and earnest desire

Having spent 15 years in jail, Brandon *yearned* for the simple pleasure of walking through a park.

Synonyms: be passionate, hunger, long

Antonyms: dislike

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**12D Fix the Mistake**

adjacent / akin / candid / enthrall / erode / loath / melancholy / mull / nimble / overwhelm / pamper / sham / shirk / vocation / yearn

Each of the sentences below has a mistake. The wrong vocabulary words have been used, so the sentences don't make sense. Rewrite each sentence using the correct vocabulary word from this unit.

1. Kwame hated that movie so much, he said it was **adjacent** to being punched in the face repeatedly for two hours straight.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The judge **shirked** over her decision while the accused waited nervously in the courtroom.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The art collector was shocked to learn that the painting he thought was authentic was nothing but a **vocation**.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Although he may not look fast, Koji is surprisingly **melancholy** on the football field.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Tricia's confidence in her singing abilities completely **pampered** when the judges on *American Idol* laughed at her.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Mr. Danvers is **nimble** to acknowledge when he's wrong; he usually tries to convince us we just misheard him.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Brendan got in trouble for **yearning** his homework to play *Halo* instead.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. I think my parents **mull** my sister way too much; she's going to freak out when she learns what a cold, cruel place the world really is.

\_\_\_\_\_

9. The bathroom is **overwhelmed** to the kitchen; just turn right next to the refrigerator and it's right there.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Oh my darling, how I **enthrall** to be back in your arms; to see your face again is my fondest wish.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Melis has the coolest **sham** I've ever heard of: She teaches penguins how to sing for a living!

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Pedro was **loath** by the monster truck rally; he stared at the giant trucks as if hypnotized.

\_\_\_\_\_

13. I don't mean to **erode** you with too much information, but I just learned that your dad's a Martian, your mom has the power to breathe fire and your siblings are all actually baboons.

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Take this camera and try to get an **akin** photo of Brad Pitt as he enters the club.

\_\_\_\_\_

15. A **candid** feeling overcame me as I realized I would probably never see my best friend again.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**12E Pick the Winner**

adjacent / akin / candid / enthrall / erode / loath / melancholy / mull / nimble / overwhelm / pamper / sham / shirk / vocation / yearn

*Circle the word that best fits into the sentence. Then write a sentence below that uses the word you didn't pick in a meaningful way.*

1. I thought the principal might not answer my tough questions honestly, but he was remarkably **(candid OR loath)**.

---

2. When Valerie broke up with Bill, he sat around for days listening to **(nimble OR melancholy)** songs while crying.

---

3. Allan is a reliable employee; I've never known him to **(yearn OR shirk)** his duties.

---

4. Ms. Blake enjoys volunteering at the fire department, but she wouldn't want to make it her **(vocation OR erosion)**.

---

5. My mom's dog is a real **(pampered OR enthralled)** pooch; sometimes he eats better meals than we do!

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**12F Draw the Relationships**

adjacent / akin / candid / enthrall / erode / loath / melancholy / mull / nimble / overwhelm / pamper / sham / shirk / vocation / yearn

*In each grouping of eight words below, draw straight lines between the synonyms (words that mean similar things) and squiggly lines between any antonyms (words that mean nearly opposite things). Every word should have at least one line connected to it. Some may have more.*

**1**

bewilder	shirk	to slack	overwhelm
enthrall	willing	loath	bore

.....

**2**

akin	mull	different	sham
swift	authentic	nimble	consider

.....

**3**

formal	vocation	melancholy	miserable
adjacent	candid	next to	job

.....

**4**

clumsy	erode	nimble	dislike
wear away	pamper	spoil	yearn



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 12G Understanding What You Read

adjacent / akin / candid / enthrall / erode / loath / melancholy / mull / nimble / overwhelm / pamper / sham / shirk / vocation / yearn

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions.

### The Origins of Clown Dancing

Thomas Johnson, a.k.a. Tommy the Clown, never yearned to create a worldwide dance movement. In fact, he never even really wanted to be a clown. But one day in 1992, Johnson's coworker asked him to play a clown at a child's birthday party. Johnson didn't have to mull the request over for long; he loved kids and thought it would be a lot of fun. He didn't know it at the time, but clowning would soon become his full-time vocation.

As Tommy the Clown, Johnson became a popular fixture at birthday parties in his home neighborhood of Compton, Los Angeles. His outgoing personality and sense of humor could liven up even the most melancholy event. Most of all, children were enthralled by Tommy's nimble dance moves. His combination of break dancing and goofy clowning caught on. Kids all over Compton began to imitate Tommy's moves, calling the style "clown dancing."

In short time, Johnson became overwhelmed by work. He needed help. He began hiring local children to join his dance crew and help him run the parties. He called his crew "The Hip-Hop Clowns." Johnson expected his Hip-Hop Clowns to follow certain rules: They could not do drugs or be in gangs; they needed to work hard in school and be good role models in their community. Anyone who shirked these rules would be kicked out of the crew.

The Hip-Hop Clowns were proud to be in Tommy's crew. They showed other kids that they didn't have to get involved with gangs or drugs. The gangs, meanwhile, respected the clowns and left them alone. Clown crews began sprouting up all over Compton.

In 2005, a movie called Rize introduced clown dancing to the rest of America. The movie was a documentary about Tommy the Clown and his dancers. It also followed another type of dancing called krumping that is akin to clown dancing, but is more wild and aggressive. After the movie was released, Thomas Johnson became known all over the world for his unique contribution to dance and his community. And to think it all started with a simple request from a coworker!

#### 1. Based on information in the passage, you can tell that Thomas Johnson

- (A) Makes his living as a clown
- (B) Moved away from Compton
- (C) Studied to be a professional dancer
- (D) Is upset that other people started clown dancing

#### 2. Why did Johnson start his Hip-Hop Clowns crew?

- (A) He needed dancers for the movie he was making.
- (B) He wanted to make his dance moves popular.
- (C) He was getting more work than he could handle.
- (D) He was getting threatened by people in gangs.

#### 3. How is this passage organized?

- (A) Cause and effect
- (B) Question and answer
- (C) Order of importance
- (D) Chronological order

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What type of passage is this?**

- (A) Historical fiction
- (B) Interview
- (C) Persuasive essay
- (D) Biography

**5. According to the passage, what's the difference between clown dancing and krumping?**

- (A) Krumping is sillier than clown dancing.
- (B) Krumping is more aggressive than clown dancing.
- (C) Clown dancing is more similar to break dancing than krumping.
- (D) Clown dancing is more popular than krumping.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 12H Thinking Creatively

Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

adjacent / akin / candid / enthrall / erode / loath / melancholy / mull / nimble / overwhelm / pamper / sham / shirk / vocation / yearn

1. What **vocation** would you like to have when you get older?

---

2. What do you **yearn** to change about the world?

---

3. What is your opinion of **pampered** children?

---

4. What animal do you think is the most **nimble**?

---

5. What kind of power might a supervillain called "The Great **Shirk**" have?

---

### Word Breakdown

The word *akin* can mean either "sharing the same properties" or "related to." For example, you would be *akin* to your mother. The word comes from the ancient word *kin*, which means "family."

Today, *melancholy* is an emotional state. But there was a time, long ago, when *melancholy* was considered a physical medical disease. Ancient doctors thought there were four basic body fluids that were responsible for health—blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. People who suffered from *melancholia* were thought to have too much black bile in their bodies.