

The Secret Garden



By

Frances Hodgson Burnett

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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Suggestions and Expectations

This 73 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of **The Secret Garden** and is comprised of four different sections:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Activities

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include the Yorkshire Moors; importance of friendship; perseverance; magic; positive thinking; finding beauty in the midst of ugliness; self-acceptance; family and family responsibilities; the power of love.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms & antonyms
3. Identifying / creating *onomatopoeia*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Listing compound words
7. Identifying / creating *similes*
8. Identifying/creating *personification*
9. Use of singular / plural nouns
10. Using content clues: *analogies*
11. Identifying parts of speech
12. Determining alphabetical order
13. Identification of root words
14. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
15. Identifying *anagrams*
16. Identifying *sarcasm*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting
2. Map skills

Plot Activities

1. Complete a 5 W's Chart
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify *cliffhanger*
4. Identify the climax of a novel
5. Write a synopsis
6. Predict an outcome
7. Complete a Sequence Chart
8. Identify *foreshadowing*

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Compare two characters
3. Understand concepts such as *meeting a challenge*
4. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper article
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Create a journal entry
7. Write a Book Review
8. Create *Found Poetry*

Art Activities

1. Design a cover for the novel
2. Draw a picture of a flower
3. Create a Storyboard.
4. Create a collector's card

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Synopsis

When orphaned Mary Lennox comes to live at her uncle's great house on the Yorkshire Moors, she finds it full of mysterious secrets. There are nearly one hundred rooms, most of which are locked, and the house is filled with creepy old portraits and suits of armor. Mary rarely sees her uncle, and perhaps most unsettling of all is that at night she hears the sound of someone crying down one of the long corridors.

The gardens surrounding the odd property are Mary's escape and she explores every inch of them - all except for the mysterious walled-in, locked garden. Then one day Mary discovers a key. Could it open the door to the garden? (The Publisher)

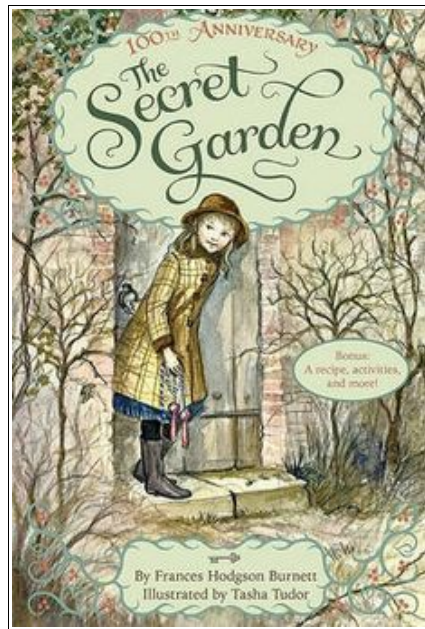
Author Biography

Madeleine L'Engle

Born in Manchester, England on November 24 1849, Frances Eliza Hodgson was the eldest daughter in a family of two boys and three girls. After her father's death when she was three years old, the Hodgsons experienced financial difficulties. As a young girl, she would scrawl little stories on sheets of old notebooks, as she was unable to afford proper writing materials. In 1865 the family moved to Tennessee where they lived in a log cabin and the teenage Frances set up a little school. She began submitting stories to women's magazines and soon became quite a successful writer. In 1873 she married Dr. Swan Burnett and they had two sons -- Lionel, born 1874, and Vivian, born 1876 -- but the marriage was not a happy one. Her younger son, Vivian, clamored for something to read, so Frances wrote "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and modeled the main character after him. In 1890 tragedy struck when her eldest son, Lionel, died of influenza. Frances and Swan separated and finally divorced in 1898, and she went on to remarry Stephen Townshend. Frances moved to Long Island, New York in 1901 and there began to write her two most famous stories -- "A Little Princess" and "The Secret Garden", inspired by her poor childhood and her love for gardening. Frances Hodgson Burnett died on 29 October 1924. [<http://www.imdb.com>]



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Name:

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Chapter 1-2



Before you read the chapter:

Every good novel needs an interesting **protagonist** (the novel's main character). In Chapter One we meet a character that you will probably instinctively dislike. Why is it unusual for an author to create a protagonist who is not likeable? What might be the danger of doing this? How might it be a good idea?

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Vocabulary:

Match each word with its definition.

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| 1. | passion |
| 2. | fretful |
| 3. | appalling |
| 4. | bungalow |
| 5. | imploring |
| 6. | desolation |
| 7. | affectionate |
| 8. | contrary |
| 9. | intention |
| 10. | frocks |
| 11. | discomfit |
| 12. | apparent |

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|----|--------------------------|
| a. | a one-story home |
| b. | obvious |
| c. | ruin |
| d. | impudent |
| e. | meaning |
| f. | causing dismay or horror |
| g. | a gown or dress |
| h. | strong feeling |
| i. | fond of |
| j. | frustrate |
| k. | irritable |
| l. | beseeking |

Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of Chapter One..

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2. Think of four appropriate words to describe the personality of Mary Lennox.

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3. How effective do you think Mary's parents were at raising her? Support your answer with examples from Chapter One.

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4. Why hadn't Mrs. Lennox gone to the hills two weeks previously? What was the result? What does this tell the reader about her?

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5. Why had Mary been completely forgotten and abandoned for a time?

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6. Mary's nurse had been called Missie _____.

7. What made Mary's stay with the family of the English clergyman difficult?

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8. What upsetting pieces of news did Basil tell Mary about where she was going to live and with whom?

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9. Her uncle's name was _____.

10. Describe the personality of Mrs. Medlock.

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11. What did Mrs. Medlock tell Mary about her uncle's past that intrigued Mary? Why do you think she found this so interesting?

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