

# THE SECRET GARDEN

## Classroom Favorites

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To use prior knowledge and apply literal, interpretive, and critical levels of thinking
2. To respond to a variety of readings
3. To communicate through discussion
4. To employ a variety of forms of writing in response to literature
5. To comprehend through reading (sequence, cause and effect, compare and contrast, details, main idea, context clues, character traits, predicting outcomes, author's purpose, author's style, author's opinion)
6. To expand vocabulary (context clues, signal words, definitions, similes, metaphors)
7. To identify characteristics of literature (plot, setting, theme, characters, conflicts, climax)
8. To discuss figurative language and its place in the novel
9. To recognize elements of style in literature (flashback, foreshadowing, point of view)

### NOTE TO TEACHERS

This guide is designed specifically to incorporate listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking skills into the study of literature.

Each chapter of the novel is introduced by a synopsis and several prereading activities. The vocabulary sections show the words listed in the context of the phrase, clause, or sentence in which they appear in the book. The meanings of the words should be clear through the use of context clues; however, if the meaning is not clear, a dictionary may be used. In each Before Reading section, there is also a predicting activity. These activities may take the form of class discussion or writing. The significance of the predicting activities is to allow students the opportunity to apply their prior knowledge of the subject matter even before reading begins.

The next section, labeled During Reading, frequently can be implemented after the student begins reading but before he actually completes the chapter. These activities are an extension of the earlier predicting activities and help students to become better strategic readers. Finally, the After Reading section provides more discussion questions and writing activities which expand concepts encountered in the chapter.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Frances Hodgson Burnett was born in Manchester, England in 1849. Due to hard times, her family moved to Tennessee at the end of the American Civil War. They moved into her uncle's log cabin in Knoxville in 1865.

It was here that Frances, at age 17, began writing stories and selling them successfully.

Her first literary success came with the publication of *That Lass o'Lowrie's* in 1877. In 1896, her most famous work, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, was published. The novel caused a national stir with mothers throughout the country dressing their sons just like the boy pictured on the cover of the book. She patterned the title character after her own son Vivian. In 1911, she wrote *The Secret Garden*. Her writing was an obvious success. She was known to say in later life that she never had an unaccepted manuscript.

After two disastrous marriages, Frances moved from country to country and finally settled on Long Island, New York. She died at the age of seventy-four in 1924. After her death, her son Vivian wrote her biography entitled *The Romantick Lady*.

Mrs. Burnett was known to always live in a sort of dream world where all was sweet and lovely. She shut her eyes to reality and refused to acknowledge the hardships and ugliness in the world. Children loved her and she was kind and generous to them.

### CRITIC'S CORNER

Throughout the years, the critics have not been very kind to Frances Burnett. They have criticized her fiction as being too dreamlike and overly sentimental. Her symbolism is often regarded as naively simplistic and blatantly allegorical. Burnett relied heavily on her own life in Tennessee as a source of inspiration for her fiction, but she was considered to be too cosmopolitan to be associated with the local color writers of her time period. In spite of the critics, Burnett enjoyed tremendous popularity and success during her lifetime. *The Secret Garden* is currently enjoying a revival as a children's classic.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Cavalcade of the American Novel* by Edward Wagenknecht.

*The Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature* by Max J. Herzberg

*The Secret Garden* by Frances H. Burnett.

*Twentieth Century Authors* by Kunitz and Haycraft.

### PREREADING DISCUSSION

1. (Predicting) Look at the picture on the front of the book and the title *The Secret Garden*. What do you think this novel will be about? Who do you think is the main character in the novel? Why?

*(The novel will probably be about a garden that no one knows about or is a secret. Other answers will vary.)*

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2. (Prior Knowledge) By looking at the picture on the front of the book, when do you think the novel takes place? How do you know this?  
(*It probably takes place in the late 1800s / early 1900s. The style of dress indicates the era.*)
3. (Prior Knowledge) What do you know about India in the late 1800s? What was happening there?  
(*The British ruled in India at this time. This was during the height of the British Colonial Empire. The British who were stationed in India were treated as royalty and they treated the people of India as servants.*)

### CHAPTER ONE "There's No One Left"

**Synopsis:** Mary Lennox, a selfish, self-centered 10-year-old girl, is raised in India. Her father, Captain Lennox, holds a position there for the English government. Mary is used to being on her own here with only her Ayah while her parents attend to "adult" things. A cholera epidemic breaks out and both her parents die from the disease. After the servants flee, Colonel McGrew finds her alone in the house. Mary feels little sorrow at the death of her parents since she barely knew them and spent very little time with them.

#### Before Reading:

##### Vocabulary

1. So when she was a sickly, *fretful*, ugly little baby she was kept out of the way, and when she became a sickly, fretful, *toddling* thing she was kept out of the way also.
2. ... by the time she was six years old she was as *tyrannical* and selfish a little pig as ever lived.
3. She was actually left alone as the morning went on, and at last she wandered out into the garden and began to play by herself under a tree near the *veranda*.
4. Her hair was like curly silk and she had a *delicate* little nose which seemed to be *disdaining* things, and she had large laughing eyes.
5. The *cholera* had broken out in its most fatal form and people were dying like flies.
6. During the confusion and *bewilderment* of the second day Mary hid herself in the nursery and was forgotten by everybody.
7. She looked an ugly, *cross* little thing and was frowning because she was beginning to be hungry and feel *disgracefully* neglected.

##### Predicting

1. What is a secret? Could the secret garden named in the title of the book be a hiding place? Or could the secret garden be a state of mind? Why do people have secret places? (Answers will vary.)
2. Does the chapter title "There's No One Left" suggest what might happen in this chapter? If no one is left, where did everyone go? (Answers will vary.)

#### During Reading:

1. Early in the chapter, the narrator describes Mary as "tyrannical and selfish a pig as ever lived." Then Mary calls out to Saidie, "Pig! Pig! Daughter of Pigs!" In India, "to call a native a pig is the worst insult of all." What is the narrator really saying about Mary? Does the narrator dislike Mary? Why? Why not? (Answers will vary. Students may note that Mary has been neglected and may seek attention in whatever way possible. She may also be feeling powerless and using Saidie to vent her feelings of frustration.)
2. Why doesn't Ayah come to take care of Mary? (She is the first of the household to come down with the cholera and die.)

#### After Reading:

1. Mary sees a "little snake gliding across the floor." How are Mary and the snake alike? (Mary and the snake are alike not only because they are the only ones left in the house — they are also alike because at first glance both appear fearsome but are really quite harmless.)
2. Mary is a "Tyrannical and selfish" child. How does her appearance reflect her inner self? (Her outward appearance mirrors her inner self. She feels sick and ugly and she looks sick and ugly.)
3. Although Mary's mother is a "tall, slim, pretty person" and Mary is not, they do share one physical similarity. What is it and how does it reflect their personalities? (Mary's mother had a delicate little nose that seemed to be disdaining things.)
4. Crying plays a major role in chapter one ("a loud sound of wailing"). Do you think it might continue to be an important theme throughout the novel? Why? Why not? (Answers will vary.)
5. Why did no one realize that Mary was in the house by herself? (They were too busy taking care of the sick and tending to those who died. Mary was "kept out of the way," so when Ayah was gone no one gave a second thought to Mary.)

### CHAPTER TWO "Mistress Mary Quite Contrary"

**Synopsis:** Mary is staying in the home of Mr. Crawford, an English clergyman and she is not getting along with the Crawford children. Basil Crawford, a seven-year-old boy, teases Mary and nicknames her "Mistress Mary, Quite Contrary." She soon learns from Basil that she is to sail to England and live with her hunchbacked uncle, Archibald Craven. After the long voyage to England, Mrs. Medlock, Craven's housekeeper, meets her in London. On a dark and rainy night, they travel to Thwaite by train. The rain finally lulls Mary to sleep.

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### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. She did not miss her at all, in fact, and as she was a *self-absorbed* child she gave her entire thought to herself, as she had always done.
2. The English clergyman was poor and he had five children nearly all the same age and they wore *shabby* clothes and were always *quarreling* and snatching toys from each other.
3. . . . and the crosser Mary got, the more they sang "Mistress Mary, quite *contrary*" . . .
4. "He's a *hunchback*, and he's *horrid*."
5. She was a *stout* woman, with very red cheeks and sharp black eyes.
6. "If she were not so *sallow* and had a nicer expression . . . her features are rather good. Children alter so much."
7. "A more *marred-looking* young one I never saw in my life," Mrs. Medlock thought. (*Marred* is a Yorkshire word that means *spoiled* and *pettish*.)

#### Predicting

The title of the second chapter is "Mistress Mary Quite Contrary." Apply what you have learned about Mary from the first chapter. Discuss if you feel this chapter title aptly describes the central character in this novel.

### During Reading:

1. How did Mary feel about her mother's death? (*Although she admired her mother's beauty, she did not miss her when she died. She never spent time with her mother while she was alive. Mary resents the change in her life, not her mother's death.*)
2. Why did the children nickname Mary "Mistress Mary Quite Contrary"? (*They named her this from the nursery rhyme about a girl who was always angry and at odds with every one — just as Mary is.*)
3. Mary learns that she is going to England. Basil tells Mary that her uncle Archibald Craven is a hunchback. What is a hunchback? Will he be "horrid" as Basil says? Remember how Mary's appearance mirrors her inner self. Will Mr. Craven's appearance mirror his inner self? (*Answers will vary.*)

### After Reading:

1. Mary recalls reading a French fairytale called "Riquet a la Houppe." The story is about a hunchback and a beautiful princess. Could Mrs. Craven have been a beautiful princess? What other stories have paired beautiful women with hunchbacks? (*Mention Victor Hugo's The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Edgar Allan Poe's "Hop Frog," and Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. Students may cite other stories.*)

2. Although Mary's exterior reflects her personality, does a person's appearance always reflect his/her inner self? Why? Why not? (*Here the teacher might want to discuss "The Frog Prince" and "Beauty and the Beast."*)
3. What did the officer's wife mean by her statement, "children alter so much"? Is Mary going to change during this novel? Why? Why not? (*Answers will vary, but the teacher should note this example of foreshadowing. After all, the theme of "growing up" is central to this novel.*)

## CHAPTER THREE "Across the Moor"

**Synopsis:** At the Thwaite Station, a carriage meets Mrs. Medlock and Mary and they travel the five miles across the moor to Misselthwaite Manor. Mrs. Medlock discusses the moor with Mary during the journey. When they arrive at the manorhouse, a manservant opens the huge oak door. Mary stares into the great hall gazing at row after row of old paintings of men in armour. Mr. Pitcher instructs Mrs. Medlock to take Mary to the nursery.

### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. The rain seemed to be streaming down more heavily than ever and everybody in the station wore wet and glistening *waterproofs*.
2. . . . she herself fell asleep once more in the corner of the carriage, *lulled* by the splashing of the rain against the windows.
3. A *brougham* stood on the road before the little outside platform. Mary saw that it was a smart carriage and that it was a smart footman who helped her in.
4. And then Mary Lennox was led up a broad staircase and down a long *corridor* and up a short flight of steps and through another corridor and another, until a door opened in the wall and she found herself in a room with a fire in it and a supper on the table.

#### Predicting

What does the title of this chapter suggest to you? What is a moor? How would you feel crossing a moor on a dark, rainy night? What secrets could the moor hold? Could the moor be someone's secret garden? (*Answers may vary.*)

### During Reading:

1. Mrs. Medlock describes the moor as "a wild, dreary enough place to my mind, though there's plenty that likes it — particularly when the heather's in bloom." Do you think Mary will grow to like the moor? Remember her first view of the moor is on a dark and dreary night. Do things look different in the daylight? Are first impressions sometimes wrong? Could the moor be Mary's secret garden? (*Answers will vary, but the teacher should point out that different people will have different preferences.*)

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2. Did Mary's uncle greet her when she arrived? Why do you think this is so? (*Mary's uncle did not greet her. He does not like children or wish to have them around. He only agreed to keep Mary because he felt a family obligation to do so.*)

### After Reading:

Why do the suits of armour make Mary feel "small and lost and odd"? How is this feeling confirmed by the end of the chapter? (*Answers will vary on the first question, but Mary's feelings are confirmed by Mr. Pitcher's comments that Mr. Craven does not wish to see her — ever.*)

## CHAPTER FOUR "Martha"

*Synopsis:* When Mary awakens, she sees Martha, a young housemaid, lighting the fire in her room. The walls of the room are covered with a curious tapestry with a forest scene embroidered on it. After Mary looks out the window at the moor, Martha begins to explain the joy and the beauty that the moor provides to her. They discuss the differences between Indian servants and Yorkshire servants. In the vegetable garden, Mary meets Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener. After hearing a robin sing, Ben begins to whistle and the expression on his hard face changes. Ben explains the secrets of the mysterious bird to Mary.

### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. The walls were covered with *tapestry* with a forest scene embroidered on it.
2. They were *obsequious* and *servile* and did not presume to talk to their masters as if they were their equals.
3. They made *salaams* and called them "protector of the poor" and names of that sort.
4. "You are a strange servant," she said from her pillows, rather *haughtily*.
5. "You needn't be so *vexed*. That's not th' way for a young lady to talk."
6. If Martha had been a well-trained fine young lady's maid she would have been more *subservient* and respectful.
7. "I don't know what it is to be hungry," said Mary, with the *indifference* of ignorance.
8. To her surprise the *surlly* old weather-beaten face actually changed its expression.

#### Predicting

Who is Martha? Could she be the lady of the house? Could she be the ghost of the deceased Mrs. Craven? (*Answers will vary.*)

### During Reading:

1. How is Martha different from Mary's Ayah? What are Mary's expectations of a servant? (*Martha refuses to do every-*

*thing that Mary asks and tells Mary that she should learn to do such things as dress herself and take care of her personal needs. Mary is used to being dressed and fed as if she were a doll.*)

2. Mary states, "I don't know what it is to be hungry." But earlier in the book the narrator tells us that "she was beginning to be hungry." Is Mary being honest with Martha? Is she being honest with herself? If she is being dishonest, why? (*Answers will vary.*)
3. Who is Dickon? How does Martha describe him? (*Dickon is Martha's brother. He is a boy who loves and respects all things in nature. In return, all things in nature love and respond to Dickon.*)

### After Reading:

1. Discuss the difference between Yorkshire and Indian servants. (*Yorkshire servants seem to speak their minds; they are less inhibited than the Indian servants. Ben and Martha are much more straightforward with Mary; whereas, Indian servants are more "obsequious and servile and . . . [do] not presume to talk to their masters as if they were their equals."*)
2. How are Mary and Ben alike? (*Ben says, "Tha' an' me are a good bit alike. . . . We was wove out of th' same cloth. We're neither of us good lookin' an' we're both of us as sour as we look. We've got the same nasty tempers, both of us, I'll warrant."*)
3. What does Mary learn about the secret garden from Ben? (*He tells her that the robin lived there and there were rose trees in the garden but that no one had entered it for ten years. He also told her that no one could find the door and that she should forget about the garden.*)

## CHAPTER FIVE "The Cry in the Corridor"

*Synopsis:* After Mary spends several days "almost entirely out of doors," she starts to lose some of her yellow coloring and her "dull eyes" begin to brighten. To Mary's delight the robin returns and they play together in Mr. Weatherstaff's vegetable garden until the robin flies off into Mrs. Craven's garden. That night Martha explains the mystery of the locked garden. Mary hears the sound of someone crying in the house. Martha refuses to acknowledge it. She says it is only the wind. Mary does not believe her.

### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. . . . when she sat down to her breakfast she did not glance *disdainfully* at her *porridge* and push it away . . .
2. . . . there was the robin just finishing his song and beginning to *preen* his feathers with his beak.
3. In India she had always felt hot and too *languid* to care much about anything.
4. She did not know what it was, because at first she could scarcely *distinguish* it from the wind itself.

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### Predicting

What is a corridor? Do only people cry? What are some reasons people cry? Who do you think is crying in the hallway? (*Answers will vary.*)

### During Reading:

Mary realizes that "wutherin" is "... that hollow shuddering sort of roar which rushed round and round the house as if the giant no one could see were buffeting it and beating the walls and windows to try to break in." What do you think is trying to break into the manor house? Could something good be trying to break into the house? Could life be trying to break into the house again? (*Answers will vary, but the teacher might wish to mention the novel Wuthering Heights.*)

### After Reading:

1. Do you believe it is Betty Butterworth crying? Is Martha telling Mary the truth? Why might she lie to Mary? (*Answers will vary.*)
2. Make a list of adjectives to describe Martha. Make a list of adjectives to describe Mary. Which of the characters are you more like? (*Answers will vary.*)
3. Mary remembers that Ben told her there "was no door and there is no door" to the garden. If there never was a door, why would Mr. Craven have buried a key? Why are Ben and Martha lying to Mary? (*Answers will vary.*)

### CHAPTER SIX "There Was Some One Crying — There Was"

*Synopsis:* During a dismal rainy day, Mary explores the manor house. Although she sees many pictures of children on the walls, she is especially curious about one picture of a "stiff, plain little girl like herself." She also discovers a cabinet filled with ivory elephants and a family of seven mice. Mary hears the crying again, she is closer this time. Mrs. Medlock finds Mary wandering around the house and drags her back to the nursery.

### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. The next day the rain poured down in *torrents* again, and when Mary looked out of her window the moor was almost hidden by gray mist and cloud.
2. "mother's a good-tempered woman but she gets fair *moithered*."
3. In fact, there was no one to see but the servants, and when their master was away they lived a *luxurious* life below stairs.
4. Her eyes had a sharp *curious* look.
5. They were of different sizes, and some had their *mahouts* or *palanquins* on their backs.
6. "... or I'll *box* your ears."

### Predicting

What would you do if you were locked up in the manor house on a rainy day? (*Answers will vary.*)

### During Reading:

1. How did Mary decide to amuse herself when she could not go outside into the gardens? (*She decided to explore the house and see what was in all the rooms that no one ever entered. She used the excuse of looking for the library so that she could get a book to read.*)
2. Mary sees a picture of a "stiff plain little girl rather like herself." What about the girl's eyes remind you of Mary? (*The narrator tells us that "her eyes had a sharp, curious look."*)
3. What live things did Mary discover on her first trip to explore Misselthwaite Manor? (*She found the mice, Mrs. Medlock, and she heard someone crying.*)

### After Reading:

Why does Mrs. Medlock drag Mary to the nursery? What is she afraid Mary will see? How does the name Medlock describe her personality? How is she like the house? (*Both are "locked up."*)

### CHAPTER SEVEN "The Key of the Garden"

*Synopsis:* After the rainstorm ends, Mary sees how beautiful the moor is in the sunshine. Martha reveals more information about her brother Dickon's adventures on the moor. Both Martha and Ben mention that spring is coming. Mary desperately wants to enter the secret garden and find out what is there. One day the robin leads her to a spot of ground where she finds a key buried in the soil.

### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. ... this was of a deep cool blue which almost seemed to sparkle like the waters of some lovely bottomless lake, and here and there, high, high in the arched *blueness* floated small clouds of snow-white *fleece*.
2. In India the natives spoke different *dialects* which only a few people understood, so she was not surprised when Martha used words she did not know.
3. He was very *pert* and lively, and hopped about so close to her feet ...
4. The flower-bed was not quite bare. It was bare of flowers because *perennial* plants had been cut down for their winter rest.

### Predicting

What is the function of the key? Can a key be other than a metal object? Can a person be a key? Does the chapter title answer Mary's question about the existence of a gate? Why did Ben lie to her?

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During Reading:

Why does Martha ask Mary if she likes herself? How does Mary respond? Would you like someone like Mary? Why or why not? (*Mary says that she does not like herself. Martha wants Mary to understand that she must like herself before she can like other people and other people can like her in return. Other answers will vary.*)

After Reading:

1. How did Mary discover the key to the secret garden? (*The robin led her to it. When he stopped to look for a worm, Mary discovered the key buried in the ground.*)
2. Is there any significance to the garden being locked for ten years? How old is Mary? Is Mary like the garden? If nurturing and sunlight help the garden to grow, will they also help Mary to grow both physically and emotionally? (*Answers will vary.*)

### CHAPTER EIGHT "The Robin Who Showed the Way"

*Synopsis:* Martha gives Mary a "skippin' rope." While Mary is jumping rope, the wind blows the ivy away from the garden wall revealing the door to the secret garden. Mary unlocks the gate, enters, and stands inside the garden.

Before Reading:

*Vocabulary*

1. As I have said before, she was not a child who had been trained to ask permission or *consult* her elders about things.
2. She brought it out from under her apron and *exhibited* it quite proudly.
3. The ivy was the *baffling* thing.
4. ... this little cottager had the *impudence* to be doing under their very noses.

*Predicting*

What does the chapter title suggest might happen? (*Answers will vary.*)

During Reading:

1. How did Mary feel about the garden and what she would do if she discovered it? (*She felt there must be mysteries in it and if she discovered it she would tell no one. She would go in the garden every day and explore it by herself. It would be her secret place.*)
2. When Martha gives her the jump rope, Mary shakes her hand. Martha says "Lizabeth Ellen would have kissed her. What does this suggest about Mary's degree of emotional growth? (*Just as weeds stifle the growth of flowers, Mary's selfish personality stifles her emotional growth and development.*)
3. How did Mary find the door to the secret garden? (*She was following the robin and jumping rope when a gust of wind*

*came up and blew away the ivy. Under the ivy was the door to the secret garden.*)

After Reading

1. What do you learn about Martha's mother and Martha from the fact that they bought Mary a skipping rope? (*Both Martha and her mother were willing to sacrifice food for themselves so that they could buy Mary something they thought she needed and would like.*)
2. Describe Ben's robin. Compare the robin to the key. How are they alike? How are they different? Could the robin be the key to the garden? Explain. (*Answers will vary.*)

### CHAPTER NINE "The Strangest House"

*Synopsis:* Mary explores the garden. She thinks it is dead with no apparent sign of life. Yet, as she looks closer, she finds green shoots pushing their way up through the earth. For three hours she weeds and tends the flowerbeds. With Martha's help, she writes a letter to Dickon asking him to buy her flower seeds and a set of garden tools.

Before Reading:

*Vocabulary*

1. ... climbing roses had run all over them and swung down long *tendrils* which made light swaying curtains ...
2. ... there were *alcoves* of evergreen with stone seats or tall moss-covered flower *urns* in them.
3. Mary looked at the fire and *pondered* a little.
4. Mrs. Medlock said I was to have a *shilling* a week to spend.
5. ... said Mary *drowsily*, as she dropped her head on the cushioned seat of the armchair near her.

*Predicting*

Does the chapter title refer to the garden? the manor house? a bird's nest?

During Reading:

1. Describe the secret garden. (*The garden is a sweet, mysterious place. The walls are covered with leafless roses, and the ground is covered with brown grass. There are lots of trees with roses climbing over them. The garden is very quiet and still.*)
2. What did Mary do her first time in the secret garden? She skipped rope and dug and weeded to help those things which were living in the garden.)
3. Mary asks Martha, "what are those white roots that look like onions?" Martha tells her they are flowerbulbs. Do you think Mary is more like an onion or a flowerbulb? (*Although both start out looking the same, the end products are very different. At this point in the story Mary is probably more like an onion than a flowerbulb ... but as the Colonel's wife said, "children alter so much."*)

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After Reading:

1. Why did Mary call Misselthwaite Manor the "strangest house any one ever lived in"? (*It is strange because of the cry which no one acknowledged and the secret garden which no one except Mary had entered for years.*)
2. Have you ever met anyone like Mary? Describe them both physically and emotionally.

### CHAPTER TEN "Dickon"

**Synopsis:** During a week of sunshine, Mary becomes good friends with Ben Weatherstaff. After he compares her to the robin, he admits (indirectly) to occasionally pruning the roses in Mrs. Craven's garden. Mary finally gets to meet Martha's brother Dickon. She is charmed by him. His skill with growing things and his ease with animals and all living things convinces Mary to tell him about the secret garden.

Before Reading:

**Vocabulary**

1. He stood up and rested one *hobnailed* boot on top of his *spade* while he looked her over.
2. But Ben was *sarcastic*.
3. . . . two rabbits sitting up and sniffing with *tremulous* noses . . .
4. She knew she felt *contrary* again, and *obstinate*, and she did not care at all.

**Predicting**

1. Mary starts to nurture the flower beds. How is Mary like the flowerbulbs? Are the bright sunshine and fresh air nurturing her? Is there any significance to the narrator describing Mary surprising Ben ". . . by seeming to start up beside him as if she sprang out of the earth"? (*Answers will vary, but the teacher should note the parallel between Mary and the flowers springing from the earth.*)
2. Why do you think Mary told Dickon about the garden? (*She needed his help to make the garden grow. Also, she trusted Dickon and knew that he would keep her secret.*)

After Reading:

1. Describe Mary's relationship with Ben. (*They have a sort of respect for each other due to the fact that the robin likes both of them. Ben feels sorry for Mary at times because she is alone. He also warns her not to be so curious. Mary likes Ben because he knows about many things.*)
2. How did Dickon tell Mary he would help her with the garden? (*He told her that he would come every day that he possibly could and work in the garden making old things come alive and planting seeds so that new things would grow.*)
3. Mary notes Dickon's "curly, rust-colored" hair. She also finds a rusty key. The robin's chest is red. How are Dickon, the key, and the robin similar? How do all three help Mary grow? (*Answers will vary.*)

### CHAPTER ELEVEN "The Nest of the Missel Thrush"

**Synopsis:** Dickon and Mary inspect the secret garden. Dickon discovers that the rose bushes are still alive. Throughout the entire afternoon, the two children work at pruning and weeding the garden. Dickon promises to keep Mary's secret.

Before Reading:

**Vocabulary**

1. . . . an old, old one with gray *lichen* all over its bark . . .
2. "There!" he said *exultantly*.
3. "When it looks a bit greenish an' juicy like that, it's *wick*," he explained.
1. "Run on an' get thy *victuals*," he said.

**Predicting**

What is a missel thrush? Why would it be necessary to never tell the location of a bird's nest? How is an egg like a flower bulb? How is a bird's nest like a secret?

### CHAPTER TWELVE "Might I Have a Bit of Earth?"

**Synopsis:** Mary finally meets Mr. Craven. He is not nearly as horrible as she had imagined. She asks him for a "bit of earth," a place to make plants grow. He tells her, "When you see a bit of earth you want, take it, child, and make it come alive." When she returns to the garden, Dickon is gone.

Before Reading:

**Vocabulary**

1. Martha *beamed* with satisfaction.
2. He seemed to *rouse* himself.

**Predicting**

In chapter 10, the narrator describes Mary as springing "out of the earth." The title of this chapter is in the form of a quotation. Who is the speaker? Could it be a seed asking for the "earth" to nourish it? Could it be Mary asking for a garden to nourish her?

During Reading:

1. Describe Mr. Craven. (*Mr. Craven was not ugly, but was miserable and this showed in his face. He looked worried and fretful and had an unhappy face. He had crooked shoulders but was not a hunchback.*)
1. Mr. Craven says Mary reminds him of "someone else who loved the earth and things that grow." Of whom does Mary remind him? Mrs. Craven? (*Mr. Craven's reaction seems to be an emotional one. Judging from the generosity of his answer, it is safe to guess that Mary reminds him of his late wife.*)

After Reading:

1. Why did Mary ask Mr. Craven for a "bit of earth"? How did he respond? (*Mary asked for a bit of earth so that she*

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would have permission to dig in the secret garden. She did not tell Mr. Craven where she wanted the earth. He responded by saying that she could have any bit of earth she wanted.)

2. Dickon draws a picture on his note to Mary. Explain the significance of the bird sitting on the nest. Is Dickon the bird? Is Mary the bird? Is the garden the nest? (Answers will vary.)

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN "I Am Colin"

**Synopsis:** On an especially rainy night, Mary again hears crying in a distant part of the house. She boldly traces the sound to a bedroom down a long corridor. She finds a young boy crying on the bed. She learns that he is Colin, her cousin, the son of Mr. Craven and his dead wife. Colin had been bedridden since he was born and has seldom ventured outside this bedroom. He believes that he is an invalid and will not live to grow up.

Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. The door of her room was *ajar* and the sound came down the corridor, a far-off faint sound of fretful crying.
2. Perhaps the fact that she was in a *rebellious* mood made her bold.
3. "My mother died when I was born and it makes him *wretched* to look at me . . ."

#### Predicting

Colin is obviously the name of a new character. Who is he? Could he be the one who is crying down the corridor?

During Reading:

1. The boy asks Mary if she is a ghost. What is a ghost? In some ways people who are still alive can be ghosts. How is Mary like a ghost? Explain. (Answers will vary.)
2. Who is Colin? (Mary's cousin, Mr. Craven's son, and son of the late Mrs. Craven who loved the secret garden.)
3. What did Mary tell Colin about the garden? (She told him that it was a secret place, locked away and that it was his mother's. However, she did not tell Colin that she had discovered the garden.)

After Reading:

1. Why does Colin keep a curtain in front of the picture of his mother? Could the picture of his mother serve as a mirror? Could the curtain be over the picture to protect it or to protect Colin? (Often people cover things that frighten or hurt them. Note that although Colin's eyes mirror his mother's, his personality seems to be the opposite of hers.)
2. How are Mary and Colin alike? (They are both alone, dislike the outdoors, and dislike most people. They both are us-

ed to servants who do what they ask, but parents who pay no attention to them. They are never made to do anything they don't want to do.)

3. How did Colin react to Mary? (He liked her and wanted her to continue to visit him.)

### CHAPTER FOURTEEN "A Young Rajah"

**Synopsis:** After Mary tells Martha about meeting Colin, Martha is frightened that she will lose her job. All the servants at the manor must obey young Colin's commands. Colin tells Dr. Craven, his physician, and Mrs. Medlock that he wishes to see Miss Mary every day.

Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. "If he'd been like he is most times he'd have thrown himself into one of his *tantrums* and *roused* th' house."
2. "Thank you, sir," *bobbing a curtsy*, "I want to do my duty, sir."
3. Once in India I saw a boy who was a *Rajah*."
4. "I only drove over it in the dark. I thought it was *hideous*."

#### Predicting

What is a Rajah? Who is being described in the title of this chapter?

During Reading:

Mary notices how different Colin is from Dickon. How are the two boys different? physically? emotionally? (Answers will vary.)

After Reading:

1. Adults frequently talk about "spoiled" children. What does the word "spoiled" mean? Is Colin a spoiled child? Why? Why not? Is Dickon a spoiled child? Why? Why not? (Answers will vary.)
2. How did Mary influence Colin? (She made him laugh, get excited, and want to eat. She made him forget about dying.)

### CHAPTER FIFTEEN "Nest Building"

**Synopsis:** After a week of rain, the blue sky shines above the moor. As Mary tells Colin about Dickon and the garden, Colin's appearance and attitude seem to improve. Mary runs to the garden and finds Dickon already at work with Soot (a crow) on his shoulder and Captain (a fox) at his feet. Mary tells Dickon about seeing Colin. They agree that the fresh air and natural beauty of the garden would be good for him. Ben's robin begins building a nest.

Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. When he was amused and interested she thought he *scarcely* looked like an *invalid* at all, except that his face was so colorless and he was always on the sofa.



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2. Them as is not wanted scarce ever *thrives*.
3. "Ben Weatherstaff says he is so *conceited* he would rather have stones thrown at him than not be noticed."

### Predicting

Who is building a nest? the robin? Mary? Colin? Dickon? What is the purpose of a nest? (*Answers will vary.*)

### During Reading:

1. How did Dickon know about Colin? (*He knew about him from Mrs. Medlock who talked to Dickon's mother about him.*)
2. Dickon suggests that the garden might be healthful for Colin. The two children wonder if they can get Colin to visit the garden. Do you think he will visit the garden? Why? Why not? (*Answers will vary.*)

### After Reading:

Dickon tells the robin, "Us is nest buildin' too." What does he mean by nest building? Could he mean they are building a nest for Colin? A nest for themselves? (*Answers will vary.*)

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN "I won't!" Said Mary"

*Synopsis:* Rather than visit with Colin, Mary goes to work in the garden with Dickon. When she finally does visit with Colin, they have a shouting match — each accusing the other of being selfish. Vowing never to talk to Colin again, she leaves his room. Mary receives a package from Mr. Craven.

### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. But Mary was not as afraid of him as other people were and she was not a *self-sacrificing* person.
2. So it was not very pleasant when she opened the door of her room, to see Martha standing waiting for her with a *doleful* face.
3. Colin frowned and *condescended* to look at her.
4. She just grew *sour* and *obstinate* and did not care what happened.

### Predicting

What will Mary not do? Why does she refuse to do it?

### During Reading:

1. Mary decides to go and see Dickon in the garden rather than visiting Colin. Is there a difference between a person who is not "self-sacrificing" and a person who is selfish? Explain. Is Mary still growing emotionally?
2. Exactly why did Mary and Colin fight? (*They fought because Mary did not come when Colin bade her, and she would not do exactly as he told her.*)

### After Reading:

1. Why did the nurse laugh over Mary and Colin's fight? (*The nurse realized that they were both acting as normal children when they fought and it pleased her to see them acting in such a manner.*)
2. Who won the argument between Mary and Colin? Did anyone really win? What happened in this chapter to show a change in Mr. Craven? Does Mr. Craven's gift affect the outcome of the story?

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN "A Tantrum"

*Synopsis:* Colin has a tantrum in the middle of the night. After the nurse gets Mary, she enters Colin's room and tells him to stop. She asks the nurse to pull up his shirt and let her see his back. Mary tells him that there are no lumps on his back. Colin regains his composure and Mary agrees to tell him her good news (about the garden) in the morning.

### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. A nice *sympathetic* child could neither have thought nor said such things.
2. "You can!" shouted Mary. "Half that ails you is *hysterics* and temper . . ."
3. . . he began to *writhe* again and turn on his face and sobbed and wailed but he didn't scream.

### Predicting

What is a tantrum? Who is throwing the tantrum? Mary? Colin? Dickon?

### During Reading:

1. Mary says, "I'm going and I won't be back!" Is she telling the truth? Does she really mean it at the time? If she doesn't mean it, why does she say it?
2. How did Mary stop Colin's temper tantrum? (*She yelled back at him and would not accept his crying.*)

### After Reading:

1. Before the end of the chapter, Mary is thinking about visiting Colin. What has softened her anger? Mr. Craven's thoughtfulness? (*"Everything was so nice that her pleasure began to crowd her anger out of her mind. She had not expected him to remember her at all and her hard little heart grew quite warm."*)
2. What did Mary tell Colin about his back? How did the nurse support Mary's claim? (*Mary told him that he had no lump. She examined his back and found nothing. She told him that if he ever talked about his lump again she would laugh at him. The nurse said that he never had a lump and that the doctors said he would grow up if he got plenty of fresh air and stopped having tantrums.*)

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### CHAPTER EIGHTEEN "Tha' Munnot Waste No Time"

*Synopsis:* After Mary visits with Colin, she joins Dickon in the garden. She meets Shell and Nut, Dickon's squirrel friends. Dickon agrees to bring his creatures to see Colin the next day.

Before Reading:

*Vocabulary*

1. ... though at other times he tried to *modify* his dialect so that Mary could better understand.
2. "He said he'd *warrant* we'd both got the same nasty tempers.

*Predicting*

Why is time so important?

During Reading:

Mary suggests that Colin, Ben and she are alike. Do you agree? How are they alike? Will the three of them continue to grow and then always be alike? (*Answers will vary.*)

After Reading:

1. Dickon is very interested in getting Colin out into the garden. Since Colin cannot yet go into the garden (nature), Dickon brings a part of nature to him. Why is Dickon so concerned with Colin? (*Answers will vary. Accept any answers the students can justify.*)
2. Why does Mary finally tell Colin about the garden? (*Answers will vary. Students may note that Mary trusts Colin, she is worried about his health, or she may be happy just to share a wonderful secret with him.*)

### CHAPTER NINETEEN "It Has Come"

*Synopsis:* When Dr. Craven arrives to examine Colin, he agrees to let him visit outdoors with Mary and Dickon. Dickon brings his pets and a new-born lamb to visit with Colin.

Before Reading:

*Vocabulary*

1. ... Dr. Craven said a *trifle* nervously.
2. As there had been occasions when this same young gentleman had *shrieked* aloud with *rage* and had insisted that fresh air would give him cold and kill him ...

*Predicting*

What has come? the robin? another package? a letter? spring?

After Reading:

1. What was Colin's reaction to Dickon? (*Colin liked Dickon and could feel his friendliness immediately.*)
2. Dickon rescues a new-born lamb from the moor. Young children are frequently called lambs. Why? Can you think

of any children he has rescued? How does he rescue them? (*Answers will vary.*)

### CHAPTER TWENTY "I Shall Live Forever"

*Synopsis:* After Colin asks to see Mr. Roach, he gives him specific instructions to keep all of the servants away from the long walkway. As Colin hides his eyes, Dickon pushes Colin's wheelchair toward the garden. When the chair stops, Colin opens his eyes and sees the garden.

Before Reading:

1. But they were *obliged* to wait more than a week because first there came some very windy days and then Colin was threatened with a cold ...
2. The most *absorbing* thing, however, was the preparations to be made before Colin could be *transported* with *sufficient* secrecy to the garden.

*Predicting*

Which character is making the statement, "I shall live forever"? Mary? Colin? Dickon?

During Reading:

What did Mr. Roach say about Dickon? (*Mr. Roach said that Dickon was a fine lad who could be at home in a palace or a coal mine.*)

After Reading:

Why did Colin tell Mr. Roach to have all of the gardeners stay away when he went into the gardens? (*The children did not want any of the gardeners to know that they had discovered the secret garden.*)

### CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE "Ben Weatherstaff"

*Synopsis:* Dickon and Mary take Colin to the garden. They drink tea, eat crumpets, and admire the garden. Mary and Dickon do some work while Colin looks on. Looking over the garden wall from the top step of his ladder, Ben Weatherstaff discovers the children in the garden. When he scolds Mary, Colin stands upright. Ben begins to cry.

Before Reading:

*Vocabulary*

1. ... and watches the pale sky slowly changing and *flushing* and marvelous unknown things happening.
2. "He's been *foragin'* for his mate."

*Predicting*

Frequently if a character's name serves as the title of a chapter, that character is the central focus of the chapter. Do you think this chapter is mainly about Ben? Previously we have discussed how characters' names can help reveal their personality. How does "Weatherstaff" reveal Ben's personality? (*Answers will vary.*)

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### During Reading:

1. Colin sees a tree that "looks as if a big branch had broken off." Will he realize the significance of his own observation? Will the other characters reveal the significance of the tree? If he learns the significance of the tree, will it affect his feelings about the garden? (*Answers will vary, but these questions supply an excellent opportunity for the teacher to introduce a discussion of irony.*)
2. Why did Colin attempt to stand and walk? (*He wanted to prove to Ben Weatherstaff that he was not a cripple and that all the rumors about him were wrong.*)

### After Reading:

1. Colin says, "I'm going to see everything grow here. I'm going to grow here myself." How is Colin similar to Mary? Does the author use flower imagery to describe Colin? (*Answers will vary.*)
2. Write a letter to Colin from his mother. (*Responses will vary.*)
3. Describe Colin's growth from Ben's point of view. (*Responses will vary. Students should note that Ben was very fond of Colin's mother and she trusted him.*)

### CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO "When the Sun Went Down"

*Synopsis:* While Colin is still standing, Ben enters the garden. The children make him promise to keep the secret of the garden. Ben reveals that he has been climbing over the wall for years to prune the roses. Colin plants a small rose bush. He stands to watch the sun set.

### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. She was *uplifted* by a sudden feeling that he looked quite beautiful in spite of his thinness.
2. He fixed his eyes on Ben Weatherstaff in his funny *imperious* way.
3. There was a *queer* mixture of crabbed tenderness and *shrewd* understanding in his manner.

#### Predicting

What do you think will happen when the sun goes down? (*Answers will vary.*)

### During Reading:

1. Ben reveals that he has been pruning the garden. Why did Ben disobey his orders not to enter the garden? (*Mrs. Craven said, "If ever I'm ill or if I go away you must take care of my roses."*) Are Mrs. Craven's words ironic? Explain.
2. Why do you think Colin planted a rose in the garden? (*Accept any answers students can justify. It may have been to show his love of the garden, to show he could get something to grow (as a true Yorkshire lad), or to show that he is his mother's son.*)

### After Reading:

1. Write a letter from Ben to Mrs. Craven telling her about the garden. (*Responses will vary.*)
2. Throughout the story, we meet several characters with seemingly rough exteriors, but inside they are really quite kind. List some of these characters and cite examples of their kindness. (*Ben Weatherstaff [his trimming the rose bushes], Mr. Craven [his sending the gifts to Mary], and Colin [his love of the garden, Mary, Dickon, Martha and Mrs. Sowerby].*)

### CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE "Magic"

*Synopsis:* In the garden Colin gives a speech on the Magic inside each person. Ben and the three children walk slowly around the garden.

### Before Reading:

#### Vocabulary

1. "You should not have stayed so long," he said. "You must not overexert yourself."
2. One of his darkest miseries in the unhealthy morbid past days has been his hatred of being a sickly weak-backed boy whose father was afraid to look at him.
3. Mistress Mary felt solemnly enraptured.

#### Predicting

What is "magic"? Are there different types of magic? Is magic real or is it imagined? (*Answers will vary.*)

### During Reading:

1. How does Mary explain to Colin that he is a rude boy? (*She explains that she feels sorry for Dr. Craven who has had to be polite to an impolite boy for ten years. Colin begins to understand that because he believes he is well, he need not treat other people in a rude manner.*)
2. Mary tells Colin, "You were such a poor thing." Is this statement ironic? Explain. (*Colin was materially a rich little boy, but spiritually and physically he was very poor.*)

### After Reading:

1. Give Colin's definition of Magic.
2. "He did not mind being snubbed since the snubbing meant that the lad was gaining strength and spirit." The above statement is the last sentence in the chapter. How does this statement characterize Ben? (*Answers will vary.*)

### CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR "Let Them Laugh"

*Synopsis:* Dickon relates the recent events regarding Colin and Mary to his mother. She sends the children milk and buns. Colin and Mary start refusing meals in the manor house and give their shillings to Mrs. Sowerby to help pay for the food. They are planning a surprise for Mr. Craven. Dr. Craven suspects someone is sneaking them food.

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Before Reading:

### Vocabulary

1. The low wall was one of the prettiest things in Yorkshire because he had tucked moorland *foxglove* into every *crevice* until only here and there glimpses of the stones were to be seen.
2. It was in these *twilight* hours that Mrs. Sowerby heard of all that happened at Misselthwaite Manor.
3. . . . and Mister Colin's sudden *indignant* strength . . .

### Predicting

Who is laughing? Why are they laughing? The title of the chapter is in quotation marks, who is speaking? (*Answers will vary.*)

During Reading:

How did Mrs. Sowerby help the children keep the secret? (*She sent food so they would not let the servants know how much they were eating. In this way, the servants were led to believe that neither child was eating much or having more healthy appetites.*)

After Reading:

Describe the secret garden. Explain why it is so special to the children and Ben. (*Answers will vary.*)

### CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE "The Curtain"

*Synopsis:* The robin carefully watches Colin and Mary and guards his eggs in the garden. The next day is rainy and Mary and Colin explore the house. Colin decides to keep the curtain over his mother's picture open.

Before Reading:

### Vocabulary

1. The robin used to *secrete* himself in a bush and watch this anxiously . . .
2. The robin thought he spoke this *gibberish* to them . . .
3. . . . Colin was beginning to feel a little *restive* as he was obliged to remain on his sofa . . .

### Predicting

What is the purpose of a curtain? Where do you think this curtain is located? in the house? in the garden? (*Answers will vary.*)

During Reading:

How do you know that Colin is changing his feelings about his mother (*He left her picture in his room uncovered at all times.*)

After Reading:

1. Why is the robin suspicious of Colin and Mary? Why isn't the robin suspicious of Dickon? (*Whereas Colin and Mary are "becoming" parts of nature, Dickon already is a part.*)
2. Why is Mrs. Sowerby so interested in the happenings of Misselthwaite Manor? (*Answers will vary. Students should note that her daughter works there and her son is spending most of his time there.*)

### CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX "It's Mother"

*Synopsis:* Colin grows stronger and stronger each day. He states, "I'm well! I'm well! I feel — I feel as if I want to shout out something — something thankful, joyful." Ben suggests singing the Doxology. As Ben and the children are singing, they see Dickon's mother standing in the garden gate. They briefly discuss their plans and the Magic.

Before Reading:

### Vocabulary

1. But when Colin held forth under his tree old Ben fixed *devouring* eyes on him and kept them there.
2. He looked him over with *critical* affection.

### Predicting

The chapter title declares, "It's Mother!" Whose mother is it? Mary's? Colin's? Dickon's? Who is the speaker?

During Reading

1. Ben looks affectionately at Colin. Does he admire Colin's determination? Did Ben love Mrs. Craven? Is Ben sentimental? (*Answers will vary.*)
2. How does Colin react to Dickon's mother? (*He loved her and her kindness. He always wanted to see her even when he was ill. He wanted to be her son.*)

After Reading:

How does Mrs. Sowerby explain the Magic? (*She explains that it is a good thing that makes the sun shine and plants grow. It makes all good things and one should never stop believing in it.*)

### CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN "In the Garden"

*Synopsis:* Susan Sowerby writes Mr. Craven a letter asking him to return home. He stops at her cottage on the way to the manor and gives her children a gold coin to share. As Mr. Craven is walking towards the garden gate, he sees Colin win a race. Mr. Craven and Colin walk together to the manor house.

Before Reading:

### Vocabulary

1. . . . and his *detestation* of people who looked at him . . .
2. He smiled at their friendly grins and took a golden *sovereign* from his pocket . . .

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3. She came to him somewhat excited and curious and flustered.

### Predicting

The chapter title is "In the Garden." Who or what is in the garden? the robin? Mary? Dickon? Mr. Craven? Ben? Colin? Everyone? Why are they in the garden? Does the garden bring unity? growth? kindness? love? (*Answers will vary.*)

### During Reading:

How did Colin's father change while he was away from Misselthwaite Manor? (*He began to come alive and not have such dark thoughts.*)

### After Reading:

The garden helps nurture Mary. She matures as she cares for the plants in the garden. What other characters are nurtured by the garden? (*Everyone who enters the garden is nurtured in some manner.*)

## EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Before beginning the novel, plant a flowerbox garden in the classroom window. As the students watch the characters grow, they will also view the growth of nature.
2. Trace Mary's growth through the novel. She is constantly described in terms of a plant. When is she a seed with a hard shell needing to be planted and nurtured? When does the earth begin to nourish her? When does she bloom? Who are her gardeners? (*Ben, Martha, Mrs. Sowerby, Dickon, Mr. Craven, and Colin*)
3. How is Mr. Craven more like the rosebushes than any of the children are? (*Although during most of the novel Mr. Craven is in a state of nongrowth, before the action of the novel begins, when Mrs. Craven was alive, he knew life and joy. She nourished his growth just as she nourished the rosebushes in her garden. For ten years his growth lay dormant until the children pruned his branches and brought him back to life. Whereas Colin and Mary, like the flower seeds, are blooming for the first time.*)
4. Mr. Craven, Mary, and Colin show tremendous growth in the novel. Their characters expand and burst into bloom by the novel's end. However, does Dickon's character change? If he doesn't, why doesn't he change?
5. Write a letter from Mrs. Craven to Mr. Craven at the beginning of the novel. How would that letter change by the end of the novel? (*The first letter would certainly register her concern about the mental state of her husband and son, while the second letter probably would relate her joy at their growth and happiness.*)

## CROSS-CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

### Figurative Language and Art

Reread the following pages from the novel. With a friend, discuss the figures of speech found on these pages and what they mean in the novel. Page 30 ("He's the head gardener, he is."), pg. 35 ("she was stirring her slow blood and making herself stronger by fighting with the wind which swept down from the moor"), pg. 38 ("the fresh wind . . . had begun to blow the cobwebs out of her young brain"), pg. 46 ("I'll box your ears"), pg. 47 ("floated small clouds of snow-white fleece"), pg. 80 ("It's like as if a body was in a dream."), pg. 124 ("Mistress Mary would not have seen how the world was waking up . . ."), pg. 189 ("The seeds Dickon and Mary had planted grew as if fairies had tended them."). Make a book by drawing pictures of the literal meaning of each of these quotations.

### Social Studies

Remind students that India provided the setting for the first part of the novel. The British rule represented a long and complex chapter in India's history. Divide the class into small groups to research and report on the following topics:

- why Great Britain took control of India
- cholera and how epidemics of this disease affected people
- lingering influences of British culture in India today

### Art

Have students research Indian art, architecture, and music. Students should be able to find books on Indian art and architecture at the library. Using what they collect, they might create a display of the art of India for the classroom.

### Independent Reading

Have students read *The Jungle Books* and *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi* by Rudyard Kipling.

### Science

1. Remind students of the changes in the garden that took place during the novel. Have students research and report back to the class on why these changes took place. This may concern the tending of the plants, the sunlight that was let in, and the human care. They may want to experiment with growing plants to see how much care is needed to have a plant grow properly.
2. Read about and then write a report on the following birds that were mentioned in the novel: robin, missel, and crow.

### Writing

Have students work in cooperative groups to write the next chapter for this novel. Title this chapter "Winter is Coming." In this chapter they would tell what happened to Mary, Colin, and Mr. Craven as winter approached Misselthwaite Manor again. They might include such things as what they would do to amuse themselves, how would the garden figure into their plans, and how they would treat Dickon.

**THE SECRET GARDEN**

**VOCABULARY TEST**

To solve the puzzle, look at the definitions below. Think of a word which fits the definition, has the same number of letters as the number of spaces provided in the corresponding line, and has the given letter in the same position as the words from the list below the puzzle. You will have words left over when you finish.

- 1.            \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.                    \_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.            \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.                    \_\_\_\_\_ S \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.                    \_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.            \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.            \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.                    \_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_
- 9.            \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_
- 10.            \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_
- 11.                    \_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_\_
- 12.            \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_
- 13.                    \_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_
- 14.            \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_
- 15.            \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_

---

pert	recluse	writhe	desolate
gibberish	moor	testily	foraging
dialects	stagnant	impudence	indignant
rook	torrents	overexact	alcoves
languid	herbaceous	obstinate	imperious
wretched	hideous	doleful	cholera

---

- 1. to twist with violent pain
- 2. an acute disease with intestinal disorders
- 3. abundant flows
- 4. deserted, abandoned
- 5. one who lives in seclusion
- 6. a variation of the pronunciation of a language
- 7. domineering
- 8. unhappy
- 9. stubborn
- 10. searching for food
- 11. a recess
- 12. a tract of wasteland often covered with heather
- 13. very ugly
- 14. speech unable to be understood
- 15. boldness

## THE SECRET GARDEN

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Select the answer that completes each of the following statements. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mary Lennox is (a) selfish (b) self-centered (c) ten years old (d) all of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Mary's parents died of (a) malaria (b) cholera (c) both a and b (d) none of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Mrs. Medlock is (a) a clergyman's wife (b) Dickon's mother (c) Mr. Craven's housekeeper (d) none of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Mary makes friends with (a) Dickon (b) Ben (c) Colin (d) all of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Martha gives Mary (a) a skippin'-rope (b) a robin (c) a sweater (d) all of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Behind a curtain, Colin keeps a picture of (a) his mother (b) Mary (c) his father (d) none of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Ben has a pet (a) squirrel (b) fox (c) robin (d) crow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Mrs. Craven died from (a) childbirth (b) a fall (c) old age (d) cholera.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Ben secretly (a) pruned the rosebushes (b) gave food to the children (c) grew a fern (d) all of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Mr. Craven gives Mary (a) books (b) games (c) a writing set (d) all of the above.

#### Part II: Matching (30 points)

Match the character with his or her description by placing the letter of the character's name in the blank in front of the description.

- |           |                 |                  |        |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------|--------|
| A. Mary   | D. Mrs. Medlock | G. Mr. Roach     | J. Ben |
| B. Colin  | E. Mr. Craven   | H. Susan Sowerby |        |
| C. Martha | F. Dickon       | I. Dr. Craven    |        |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The housemaid at Misselthwaite who taught Mary about life
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Martha's brother who loved nature
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. An orphan who learned the meaning of life after she discovered a secret garden
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The brother of Colin's father and the man who looked after Colin
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A sickly, invalid boy who regained his health with Mary's help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The head gardener at Misselthwaite Manor
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. A gardener at Misselthwaite who once tended the secret garden
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The housekeeper of Misselthwaite Manor and a friend of Susan Sowerby
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Dickon's mother and friend to Mary and Colin
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. A very unhappy man who was Mary's uncle

## THE SECRET GARDEN

### Part III: True or False (20 points)

Respond to the following statements either **T** for true or **F** for false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Dickon buys seeds and garden tools for Mary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Mary moves to India when she is ten years old.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Ben shows Mary the entrance to the secret garden.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Mary's parents died from cholera.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In India, to call a native a pig is the worst insult of all.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. As Mary's mental health improves, she grows "fatter."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Mrs. Sowerby writes a letter to Mrs. Medlock.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Ben Weatherstaff is a gardener.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Dickon calls his pet squirrels Nut and Shell.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Colin plants a rosebush in the garden.

### Essay Questions (30 points)

1. Describe the changes that took place in Mary during the course of the novel. Include why you think these changes took place.

2. An allegory is a tale that uses the surface meaning figuratively to teach a lesson or explain something about life. Could the *Secret Garden* be an allegory? If it is an allegory, what lesson is it trying to teach? If it isn't an allegory, why did the author write the novel?



## THE SECRET GARDEN

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose the best answer for each question. Write the letter of that answer in the blank in front of the question.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. How did Mary get to Misselthwaite Manor with Mrs. Medlock?  
A) by horse B) by train C) by car D) by boat
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Who took care of Mary at Misselthwaite?  
A) Martha B) Susan C) Dickon D) Ben
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Who helped Mary find the key to the garden?  
A) Dickon B) a squirrel C) Ben D) the robin
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. During what time of the year did the story end?  
A) fall B) spring C) winter D) summer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which word best describes Colin?  
A) loving B) obstinate C) subtle D) happy
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Who tended the secret garden ten years ago?  
A) Mr. Roach B) Susan C) Mr. Craven D) Ben
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Where was Misselthwaite Manor located?  
A) in India B) on an island C) in England D) next to the ocean
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. How old is Mary?  
A) eleven B) ten C) nine D) thirteen
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. How did Mrs. Craven die?  
A) of cholera B) in childbirth C) a fall caused by a broken branch D) in a horseback riding accident
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Who found the door to the secret garden?  
A) Mary B) Colin C) Dickon D) Ben

#### Part II: Matching (30 points)

Match each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at the left.

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| _____ 1. meets Mary in London.                           | A. Mrs. Sowerby    |
| _____ 2. is Dickon's younger sister.                     | B. Mr. Craven      |
| _____ 3. is Mary's mother.                               | C. Soot            |
| _____ 4. buys garden tools for Mary.                     | D. Mr. Crawford    |
| _____ 5. hides picture of his mother behind a curtain.   | E. Mrs. Lennox     |
| _____ 6. prunes rosebushes for eight years.              | F. Robin           |
| _____ 7. gives 'Lizabeth Ellen a sovereign.              | G. Ayah            |
| _____ 8. teaches Mary to skip rope.                      | H. Colonel McGrew  |
| _____ 9. flies in and out of Colin's window.             | I. Mrs. Medlock    |
| _____ 10. finds Mary alone in the house in India.        | J. Basil           |
| _____ 11. is Mary's Indian nurse.                        | K. Dickon          |
| _____ 12. nicknames Mary "Mistress Mary Quite Contrary." | L. Martha          |
| _____ 13. is a clergyman.                                | M. 'Lizabeth Ellen |
| _____ 14. is Martha's mother.                            | N. Ben             |
| _____ 15. shows Mary the key to the garden.              | O. Colin           |

## THE SECRET GARDEN

### Part III: True or False (20 points)

Write **T** in front of the sentence if it is true. Write **F** in front of the sentence if any part is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mary missed her parents very much after their death.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Mr. Craven was kind to Mary and welcomed her to Misselthwaite Manor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Ben felt sorry for Mary the first time he met her and agreed to help her plant a garden.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Mary and Colin were cousins and were alike in many ways.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Dickon convinced Mary not to tell the spoiled Colin about the secret garden.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Dickon's mother sacrificed in order to buy Mary a skipping rope.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The secret garden was a place of mystery and life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Dickon's pet, the squirrel, showed Dickon and Mary where the key to the garden was buried.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Colin grew to love the garden just as his mother had.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Susan Sowerby wrote to Mr. Craven and told him of the need to come home.

### Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. Why did Colin change from a sickly, mean child to a loving, happy child?

2. Throughout this novel, the difference between the way things often appear and the way things actually are causes numerous difficulties for the characters. Discuss how the outward appearances and mannerisms of some of the characters are inaccurate representations of the inner self of the characters. Be specific and cite examples (Ben, Colin, Mr. Craven, Mary).

## THE SECRET GARDEN

### ANSWER KEY

#### Vocabulary Test

1.           wriT he
2.           cH olera
3.           torrE nts
4.           deS olate
5.           rE cluse
6.           dialeC ts
7.           impeR ious
8.           wrE tched
9.           obsT inate
10.          foraG ing
11.          A lcoves
12.          mooR
13.          hiD deous
14.          gibbE rish
15.          impudeN ce

#### COMPREHENSION TEST A

##### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. D | 4. D | 7. C | 10. D |
| 2. B | 5. A | 8. B |       |
| 3. C | 6. A | 9. A |       |

##### Part II: Matching (30 points)

- |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. C | 4. I | 7. J | 10. E |
| 2. F | 5. B | 8. D |       |
| 3. A | 6. G | 9. H |       |

##### Part III: True or False (20 points)

- |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. T | 4. T | 7. F | 10. T |
| 2. F | 5. T | 8. T |       |
| 3. F | 6. T | 9. T |       |

##### Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST B

##### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. B | 4. A | 7. C | 10. A |
| 2. A | 5. B | 8. B |       |
| 3. D | 6. D | 9. C |       |

##### Part II: Matching (30 points)

- |      |      |      |       |       |
|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. I | 4. K | 7. B | 10. H | 13. D |
| 2. M | 5. O | 8. L | 11. G | 14. A |
| 3. E | 6. N | 9. C | 12. J | 15. F |

##### Part III: True or False (20 points)

- |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. F | 4. T | 7. T | 10. T |
| 2. F | 5. F | 8. F |       |
| 3. F | 6. T | 9. T |       |

##### Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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