

The Secret Garden

Chapters 1–5

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: appalling, contrary, desolate, imperious, imploringly, involuntary, moor, obsequious, singular, tyrannical

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 • Chapters 1–5 • Mary Lennox leaves India for England

Section 2 • Chapters 6–11 • Searching for the secret garden

Section 3 • Chapters 12–15 • Mary asks for a bit of earth

Section 4 • Chapters 16–21 • A contest of wills with Colin

Section 5 • Chapters 22–27 • Secret afternoons in the garden

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com
(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. The **appalling** smell from the dumpster made everyone step back.

- A. shocking and dreadful
- B. strong and bitter
- C. strange and unfamiliar

2. He was so **contrary** that he scowled at every plan we made.

- A. rude and impatient
- B. stubbornly uncooperative
- C. gloomy and pessimistic

3. She felt **desolate** when she returned to the empty, silent house.

- A. lonely and miserable
- B. tired and restless
- C. nervous and uneasy

4. In an **imperious** tone, the queen ordered the guards to open the gates.

- A. worried and uncertain
- B. calm and patient
- C. commanding and arrogant

5. She looked **imploringly** at her father, hoping he would change his mind.

- A. in a pleading manner
- B. in a thoughtful manner
- C. in a curious manner

6. When the doctor tapped his knee, his leg gave an **involuntary** kick.

- A. done with great force
- B. done without intention
- C. done out of fear

7. The hikers crossed the windswept **moor**, miles from the nearest town.

- A. a wild, open upland
- B. a thick green forest
- C. a dry, sandy desert

8. The **obsequious** waiter bowed and agreed with every word the guests said.

- A. calm and professional
- B. nervous and clumsy
- C. overly eager to please

9. The old clock made a **singular** noise that none of us could explain.

- A. single and only
- B. strange and remarkable
- C. faint and soothing

10. The **tyrannical** coach made the team run laps until they collapsed.

- A. loud and excitable
- B. proud and boastful
- C. cruel and domineering

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

marred — spoiled and bad-tempered (in Yorkshire dialect)

wuthering — blowing fiercely with a loud, rushing sound (in Yorkshire dialect)

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	A
2	B
3	A
4	C
5	A
6	B
7	A
8	C
9	B
10	C

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 "... by the time she was six years old she was as tyrannical and selfish a little pig as ever lived."

As it is used in the passage, the word 'tyrannical' most nearly suggests that Mary...

- A. forced others to obey her
- B. refused to share anything
- C. often sulked and cried

2 "... her eyes were not laughing at all. They were large and scared and lifted imploringly to the fair boy officer's face."

It can reasonably be inferred that Mary's mother...

- A. was scolding him over the news
- B. was ordering him to leave
- C. was begging him for reassurance

3 "After that, appalling things happened, and the mysteriousness of the morning was explained to Mary. The cholera had broken out in its most fatal form and people were dying like flies."

Which detail from the passage best supports the idea that the events were truly appalling?

- A. people were dying like flies
- B. the morning had felt mysterious
- C. Mary was left alone that morning

4 "Mistress Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells, and cockle shells,
And marigolds all in a row."

The passage most strongly suggests that the children called Mary 'contrary' because she...

- A. grew bright marigolds in rows
- B. opposed whatever others wanted
- C. sang about bells and seashells

5 "Mary gave a little involuntary jump. 'Oh! did she die!' she exclaimed, quite without meaning to."

According to the passage, Mary's little jump was...

- A. a sign she feared Mrs. Medlock
- B. a deliberate interruption
- C. something she did not intend

6 "A wind was rising and making a singular, wild, low, rushing sound."

The passage most strongly suggests that the wind's sound was...

- A. the only sound in the night
- B. soft and barely noticeable
- C. strange and out of the ordinary

7 "Mary felt as if the drive would never come to an end and that the wide, bleak moor was a wide expanse of black ocean through which she was passing on a strip of dry land."

According to the passage, the moor struck Mary as...

- A. a vast, bleak stretch of land
- B. a calm and pretty countryside
- C. a real sea she had to cross

8 "The native servants she had been used to in India were not in the least like this. They were obsequious and servile and did not presume to talk to their masters as if they were their equals."

As it is used in the passage, the word 'obsequious' most nearly describes servants who...

- A. argued openly with their masters
- B. fawned and never acted as equals
- C. worked slowly and carelessly

9 "... even though she was 'Mistress Mary Quite Contrary' she was desolate, and the bright-breasted little bird brought a look into her sour little face which was almost a smile."

It can reasonably be inferred that, despite her sour nature, Mary...

- A. had grown to love the manor
- B. felt utterly alone and unhappy
- C. was glad to have no one near

10 "... in her imperious Indian voice, but in a tone so soft and eager and coaxing that Ben Weatherstaff was as surprised as she had been when she heard him whistle."

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Mary usually expects quick obedience
- B. Mary is usually too shy to speak
- C. Mary rarely gives anyone orders

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	C	
3	A	
4	B	
5	C	
6	C	The 'only sound' choice targets the common 'single' misreading; here the word means 'strange, out of the ordinary.'
7	A	
8	B	
9	B	Character comprehension.
10	A	Character comprehension.

Teacher Context: Chapters 1–5

Mary Lennox, a sickly, spoiled child, is orphaned by a cholera outbreak in India and sent to live with her uncle at Misselthwaite Manor on the Yorkshire moor. She meets the servant Martha, hears of a locked hidden garden, and one night is woken by distant crying in the corridors. The break falls before Chapter 6 to hold the mystery of the crying as a hook into the next section.