

The Secret Garden

Chapters 12–15

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: conceited, faltered, indifferently, invalid, passion, quavered, rapture, thrives, vexed, wretched

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. He gave a **conceited** smile as he walked past us.

- A. overly proud and vain
- B. warm and friendly
- C. shy and uncertain

2. He **faltered** as he tried to explain why he was late.

- A. spoke proudly
- B. spoke hesitantly
- C. spoke angrily

3. She shrugged **indifferently** when we asked her to choose.

- A. in a nervous way
- B. in an uncaring way
- C. in a cheerful way

4. The old **invalid** spent his days resting by the window.

- A. a sick, weak person
- B. a quiet, lonely person
- C. a rich, retired person

5. A sudden **passion** seized him, and his face went red.

- A. a feeling of joy
- B. a rush of fear
- C. a fit of rage

6. His voice **quavered** as he stood up to give his speech.

- A. grew loud and clear
- B. turned sharp and cold
- C. trembled and shook

7. She watched the fireworks in pure **rapture**.

- A. deep concentration
- B. joy and delight
- C. total surprise

8. The little plant **thrives** on the sunny windowsill.

- A. needs daily watering
- B. leans toward the light
- C. grows strong and healthy

9. The constant noise next door left her **vexed** all day.

- A. annoyed and irritated
- B. tired and sleepy
- C. bored and restless

10. After losing everything, he felt **wretched** for weeks.

- A. deeply miserable
- B. extremely tired
- C. slightly embarrassed

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

agate gray eyes — the milky, gray, banded color of agate stone; here, describing Colins' eyes

Rajah — an Indian king or prince; here Mary's image for Colin, who commands everyone as a young Rajah does

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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

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 “I cannot give you time or attention. I am too ill, and wretched and distracted; but I wish you to be happy and comfortable.”

In context, the word “wretched” emphasizes that Mr. Craven feels...

- A. deeply miserable and distressed
- B. annoyed by Mary’s visit
- C. guilty about neglecting Mary

2 “Might I,” quavered Mary, “might I have a bit of earth?”

The passage most strongly suggests that, as she asks her question, Mary feels...

- A. impatient and irritable
- B. nervous and timid
- C. eager and excited

3 “To plant seeds in—to make things grow—to see them come alive,” Mary faltered.

It can reasonably be inferred that Mary “faltered” because she was...

- A. losing interest in the idea
- B. changing her mind about asking
- C. searching for how to explain it

4 “She found out that because he had been an invalid he had not learned things as other children had.”

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Long illness had kept Colin shut away
- B. Colin chose not to study
- C. Colin had no books to read

5 “Everyone is obliged to do what pleases me,” he said indifferently. “It makes me ill to be angry.”

The passage most strongly suggests that Colin speaks “indifferently” because he...

- A. assumes he will always be obeyed
- B. is too tired to raise his voice
- C. is hiding how frightened he feels

6 “Tha’ doesn’t know what he’s like when anything vexes him.”

According to Martha, what is Colin like when something vexes him?

- A. He calmly insists on his way
- B. He sulks quietly to himself
- C. He screams to frighten everyone

7 “He threw himself into a passion an’ he said he’d looked at him because he was going to be a hunchback.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “passion” most nearly suggests that Colin...

- A. flew into an uncontrollable rage
- B. grew deeply enthusiastic
- C. felt a sudden rush of love

8 “They put their eager young noses close to the earth and sniffed its warmed springtime breathing; they dug and pulled and laughed low with rapture ...”

It can reasonably be inferred that, as they worked in the garden, Mary and Dickon felt...

- A. relief that the work was over
- B. intense joy and delight
- C. quiet pride in their work

9 “No, but he wishes he’d never been born. Mother she says that’s th’ worst thing on earth for a child. Them as is not wanted scarce ever thrives.”

According to the passage, what does Dickon’s mother say about children who are not wanted?

- A. They grow up too quickly
- B. They rarely grow up strong
- C. They must learn to be alone

10 “Ben Weatherstaff says he is so conceited he would rather have stones thrown at him than not be noticed.”

Which statement about the robin is best supported by the passage?

- A. It is timid around people
- B. It prefers to be left alone
- C. It craves attention above all

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	B	
3	C	
4	A	Uses the older noun sense of 'invalid' – a person weakened by chronic illness.
5	A	Character comprehension.
6	C	Character comprehension.
7	A	Tests the older sense of 'passion' as a fit of rage, not love or enthusiasm.
8	B	
9	B	
10	C	

Teacher Context: Chapters 12–15

Mary persuades her uncle to grant her a bit of earth, and that night, following more crying, she discovers her bedridden cousin Colin hidden away in the manor. The two children form a wary friendship as Mary and Dickon's secret work in the garden takes root. The break falls before Chapter 16, where the friendship between Mary and Colin turns to open conflict.