

The Secret Garden

Chapters 16–21

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: condescended, haughtily, hysterics, majesty, morbid, pathetic, recluse, relented, unscrupulous, veil

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 champion **condescended** to play a friendly game with the beginners.

- A. kindly joined in as an equal
- B. stooped to do something beneath him
- C. grudgingly forced himself to act

2. He **haughtily** tossed his coat to the waiter without a word.

- A. in a clumsy, awkward way
- B. in a quick, careless way
- C. in a proud, arrogant way

3. When the lights went out, the child fell into **hysterics**.

- A. a fit of uncontrollable emotion
- B. a deep, gloomy sadness
- C. a stubborn, sulking mood

4. We stared in wonder at the **majesty** of the snow-capped mountains.

- A. grand, awe-inspiring splendor
- B. enormous size and height
- C. harsh, icy coldness

5. He had a **morbid** fascination with graveyards and ghost stories.

- A. focused on gloom and death
- B. lively and curious
- C. calm and detached

6. The lost puppy gave a **pathetic** whimper in the rain.

- A. rude and annoying
- B. arousing pity
- C. weak and feeble

7. The town's famous author lived as a **recluse** up in the hills.

- A. a wealthy landowner
- B. a restless wanderer
- C. a person who avoids society

8. The judge **relented** when he saw the boy's tears.

- A. grew puzzled and unsure
- B. softened and gave way
- C. broke down in tears

9. Reporters described the businessman as **unscrupulous** in all his dealings.

- A. without moral principles
- B. bold and hardworking
- C. careless and disorganized

10. A **veil** of mist drifted across the river at dawn.

- A. a heavy blanket
- B. a faint trace
- C. a thin covering

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

graidely — splendid, grand, first-rate — Dickon and Mary's word for the perfect garden afternoon (Yorkshire dialect)

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	B
2	C
3	A
4	A
5	A
6	B
7	C
8	B
9	A
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 “Colin frowned and condescended to look at her.”

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘condescended’ most nearly suggests that Colin...

- A. lowered himself to notice her
- B. could not bear to look at her
- C. was glad she had come

2 “He turned his head on his pillow and shut his eyes and a big tear was squeezed out and ran down his cheek. He was beginning to feel pathetic and sorry for himself—not for any one else.”

In context, the word ‘pathetic’ emphasizes...

- A. how sorry for himself he felt
- B. how bravely he bore his illness
- C. how angry he was at Mary

3 “‘You can!’ shouted Mary. ‘Half that ails you is hysterics and temper—just hysterics—hysterics—hysterics!’ and she stamped each time she said it.”

It can reasonably be inferred that Mary believes Colin’s suffering is...

- A. caused mostly by runaway emotion
- B. a sign he is truly dying
- C. punishment for his temper

4 “Mary looked at his poor little tired face and swollen eyes and her heart relented.”

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Mary stayed firm against Colin
- B. Mary grew more annoyed with Colin
- C. Mary’s anger gave way to pity

5 “... he was not an unscrupulous man, though he was a weak one, and he did not intend to let him run into actual danger.”

Which detail best supports the claim that Dr. Craven is not an unscrupulous man?

- A. he dreads visiting Colin
- B. he won’t let Colin face real danger
- C. he stands to inherit if Colin dies

6 “And there are flowers uncurling and buds on everything and the green veil has covered nearly all the gray and the birds are in such a hurry about their nests for fear they may be too late that some of them are even fighting for places in the secret garden.”

According to the passage, what has happened to the garden’s gray?

- A. new green has covered it
- B. it has spread over the flowers
- C. it has stayed the same

7 “There was a great deal of joking about the unpopular young recluse who, as the cook said, ‘had found his master, and good for him.’”

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Colin often visits the servants’ hall
- B. Colin is popular with the servants
- C. Colin has kept himself shut away

8 “Shut in and morbid as his life had been, Colin had more imagination than she had and at least he had spent a good deal of time looking at wonderful books and pictures.”

The passage most strongly suggests that Colin’s shut-in life had made him...

- A. long for company
- B. dwell on gloom and sickness
- C. lose interest in books

9 “One knows it sometimes when one gets up at the tender solemn dawn-time ... and one’s heart stands still at the strange unchanging majesty of the rising of the sun—which has been happening every morning for thousands and thousands and thousands of years.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the rising sun fills the watcher with...

- A. a wish to sleep longer
- B. a feeling of dull boredom
- C. a sense of grand wonder

10 “... a young Rajah leaned back in it with royal command in his great black-rimmed eyes and a thin white hand extended haughtily toward him.”

The passage most strongly suggests that Colin is acting like...

- A. a shy, polite guest
- B. a proud, commanding ruler
- C. a frightened, sickly child

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	A	Students know the slang sense of 'pathetic' as weak or contemptible; here it means full of self-pity and inviting pity.
3	A	Event comprehension.
4	C	
5	B	Event comprehension. Dr. Craven would inherit Misselthwaite if Colin died, so refusing to let him face danger is what shows he is not unscrupulous.
6	A	The 'green veil' is the spreading new leaves; 'veil' is figurative for a thin covering, not a literal cloth.
7	C	Character comprehension.
8	B	Character comprehension.
9	C	
10	B	

Teacher Context: Chapters 16–21

Mary stands up to Colin's tantrums, and the cousins' battle of wills gives way to a real bond. As spring arrives the children scheme to bring Colin outdoors, and he is at last wheeled in secret into the awakening garden. The break falls before Chapter 22 to open the final section on the garden's, and Colin's, transformation.