

The Secret Garden

Chapters 22–27

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: brooded, crabbed, detestation, devoured, forsaken, hypochondriac, shrewd, stagnant, unfurl, wilderness

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. Dark clouds **brooded** over the quiet valley all afternoon.

- A. gathered and then broke apart
- B. hung heavily and gloomily
- C. raced swiftly across the sky

2. No one wanted to sit beside the **crabbed** old clerk at the meeting.

- A. grumpy and ill-tempered
- B. stiff and formal
- C. dull and forgetful

3. She could not hide her **detestation** of cruelty toward animals.

- A. mild distrust
- B. intense hatred
- C. growing fear

4. Her eyes **devoured** every line of the letter from home.

- A. studied with suspicion
- B. skimmed over quickly
- C. took in hungrily

5. The **forsaken** cabin stood alone deep in the woods.

- A. abandoned and deserted
- B. haunted and feared
- C. hidden and overgrown

6. Ever since he read that medical book, my cousin has become a real **hypochondriac**.

- A. one who imagines he is ill
- B. one who is truly seriously ill
- C. one obsessed with germs and dirt

7. The **shrewd** merchant knew exactly when to buy low and sell high.

- A. bold and quick to take risks
- B. sharp and clever in judgment
- C. honest and fair in dealings

8. Mosquitoes bred in the **stagnant** water of the old ditch.

- A. warm and muddy
- B. deep and cold
- C. still and stale

9. The crew watched the great sail **unfurl** as the wind picked up.

- A. to flap and snap loudly
- B. to rise toward the sky
- C. to open out or unroll

10. By late summer the old garden had become a **wilderness**.

- A. an overflowing profusion
- B. a neat, tidy plot
- C. a bare, empty waste

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

fakir — a Hindu or Muslim holy man

Doxology — a short Christian hymn of praise to God

power of thoughts — thoughts “are as good for one as sunlight is, or as bad for one as poison”

tend — to care for — “Where you tend a rose, my lad, / A thistle cannot grow”

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	B
2	A
3	B
4	C
5	A
6	A
7	B
8	C
9	C
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 “There was a queer mixture of crabbed tenderness and shrewd understanding in his manner.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “crabbed” most nearly describes a manner that is:

- A. Gruff and ill-tempered
- B. Sharp and quick-witted
- C. Timid and soft-spoken

2 “Then the green things began to show buds and the buds began to unfurl and show color ...”

According to the passage, when the buds “unfurl,” they:

- A. Open out and show color
- B. Shrink back and close up
- C. Scatter seeds on the wind

3 “Ben Weatherstaff chuckled and there was shrewd admiration in his little old eyes.”

Which statement about Ben’s “shrewd admiration” is best supported by the passage?

- A. He is mildly amused by Colin
- B. He is gently teasing Colin
- C. He sharply sees Colin is clever

4 “Colin held out his hand with a sort of flushed royal shyness but his eyes quite devoured her face.”

In context, the word “devoured” emphasizes how Colin’s eyes:

- A. Glanced away in embarrassment
- B. Studied her with cold suspicion
- C. Took her in with hungry longing

5 “... thought only of his fears and weakness and his detestation of people who looked at him ...”

According to the passage, how did the old Colin feel about people who looked at him?

- A. Cool, distant dislike
- B. Mild, passing annoyance
- C. Deep, burning hatred

6 “... he was a hysterical half-crazy little hypochondriac who knew nothing of the sunshine and the spring ...”

It can reasonably be inferred that calling the old Colin a “hypochondriac” means he:

- A. Thought himself ill but was not
- B. Faked illness for attention
- C. Had a real, deadly illness

7 “When he traveled about, darkness so brooded over him that the sight of him was a wrong done to other people ...”

Which statement about Mr. Craven is best supported by the way darkness “brooded over him”?

- A. He felt lighter as he traveled
- B. He was weighed down by gloom
- C. He hid a shameful crime

8 “It was as if a sweet clear spring had begun to rise in a stagnant pool and had risen and risen until at last it swept the dark water away.”

The passage most strongly suggests that the “stagnant pool” stands for:

- A. Mr. Craven’s frozen, lifeless grief
- B. A real pond in the valley
- C. The garden left to die

9 “He felt as if he were being drawn back to the place he had so long forsaken, and he did not know why.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the place Mr. Craven had “so long forsaken” is:

- A. A place he often visited
- B. His own home, left for years
- C. A town he had never seen

10 “The place was a wilderness of autumn gold and purple and violet blue and flaming scarlet ...”

In context, the word “wilderness” emphasizes that the garden is:

- A. Barren and lifeless
- B. Wildly overflowing with growth
- C. Neat and carefully ordered

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	A	
3	C	
4	C	
5	C	
6	A	Character comprehension. A hypochondriac truly believes he is ill rather than faking; Colin was convinced he would die, though he was never truly sick.
7	B	
8	A	Theme comprehension. The 'stagnant pool' is figurative – Mr. Craven's stalled, grief-frozen inner life, swept clean by the rising 'spring' of new, hopeful thought.
9	B	Event comprehension.
10	B	'Wilderness' here means a lush, overflowing profusion of growth, not the usual barren waste – worth flagging the reversed sense.

Teacher Context: Chapters 22–27

Hidden from the adults, Colin grows stronger through the children's Magic and the life of the garden, with Ben Weatherstaff and Dickon's mother let into the secret. Meanwhile Mr. Craven, traveling abroad in his grief, is gradually drawn home. Section runs to the end of the novel.