

Lesson Plans for Literature

A Little Princess and *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Both are stories about little girls born in India, who find themselves orphaned in an unfamiliar place. We can find out a lot about an author from the books they write. As we compare and contrast these stories, we will discover thoughts and opinions of Frances Hodgson Burnett.

Questions for Discussion (Make two columns and answer the questions for each book)

1. *The Secret Garden*

A Little Princess

Who is the protagonist (main character)?

What do we know about her?

Who are other main characters (a major character who helps the protagonist is called the foil)?

With whom does the protagonist have the most conflict (the antagonist)?

What is the setting/circumstances at the beginning of the story?

What is the main plot of the story?

When does the climax take place (the point at which the tension is the most intense)?

How does the story end (the resolution)?

What is the role of 'magic' in the story?

2. Empathy means putting yourself in someone else's place and imagining how they feel. If we were to empathize with a character in the books we read, with whom would you empathize? What would you have done if you were that character?
3. Poetic justice is a term which describes a character getting what she deserves – which often means punishment. The purest form of poetic justice is when the antagonist gets

Lesson Plans for Literature

caught in their own evil trap. Was there an instance of poetic justice in *A Little Princess* or *The Secret Garden*?

4. Frances Hodgson Burnett is an accomplished descriptive writer. She paints a picture with words which enable us to see, feel, smell, and even hear the events in her books. (Read the following description of Dickon:

A boy was sitting under a tree, with his back against it, laying on a rough wooden pipe. He was a funny looking boy about twelve. He looked very clean and his nose turned up and his cheeks were as red as poppies and never had Mistress Mary seen such a round and such blue eyes in any boy's face. And on the trunk of the tree he leaned against, a brown squirrel was clinging and watching him, and from behind a bush nearby a cock pheasant was delicately stretching his neck to peep out, and quite near him were two rabbits sitting up and sniffing with tremulous noses – and actually it appeared as if they were all drawing near to watch him and listen to the strange low little call his pipe seemed to make...She wished she could talk as he did. His speech was so quick and easy. It sounded as if he liked her and was not in the least afraid she would not like him, though he was only a common moor boy, in patched clothes and with a funny and a rough, rusty-red head. As she came closer to him she noticed that there was a clean fresh scent of heather and grass and leaves about him, almost as if her were made of them. She liked it very much and when she looked into his funny face with the red cheeks and round blue eyes she forgot that she had felt shy.

Tell me what you know about Dickon.

5. Authors describe the world as they see it, or as they wish to see it. Sara, in *A Little Princess*, created realms of enchantment. Miss Minchin's world was bleak and unjust.

Lesson Plans for Literature

Sara said, “Somehow, something always happens just before things get to the very worst. It is as if the Magic did it. The worst thing never quite comes.”

Collin chanted, “The sun is shining – that is Magic. The flowers are growing – the roots are stirring. That is Magic. Being alive is Magic – being strong is Magic. The Magic is in me – it’s in every one of us.”

What can we deduce about Frances Hodgson Burnett from these books?

(Frances Hodgson Burnett believed God and the laws of the universe and the force of nature were one and the same – and used the term Magic to express this belief.)

6. How does the author’s perspective differ from the Christian? (God is the creator of nature and the laws therein.)

What is the danger of agreeing with Frances Hodgson Burnett?

Frances Hodgson Burnett was born in Manchester, England in 1849. Her father died when she was only five years old and it plunged her family into poverty. They lived in a tenement district but kept separate from the slum children. In 1865, they moved to the United States hoping for a better life. Frances was married two times and had two sons – they elder died at the age of sixteen years old. Burnett lived on Long Island in New York and was known to be a fervent gardener. She died at the age of seventy-five in 1924.

Lesson Plans for Literature

Activity/Game: **Scene It!**

(Divide group into two teams. Questions will be based on the film clips alone. Questions answered correctly get five points. If the team misses and the other team guesses correctly, they receive 3 points. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins!

*Feel free to choose your own scenes and questions and play your own **Scene It!** game.*

[https://www.amazon.com/Secret-Garden-Kate-](https://www.amazon.com/Secret-Garden-Kate-Maberly/dp/B004LPLU4K/ref=sr_1_1?s=movies-tv&ie=UTF8&qid=1532897681&sr=1-1&keywords=the+secret+garden)

[Maberly/dp/B004LPLU4K/ref=sr_1_1?s=movies-tv&ie=UTF8&qid=1532897681&sr=1-1&keywords=the+secret+garden](https://www.amazon.com/Secret-Garden-Kate-Maberly/dp/B004LPLU4K/ref=sr_1_1?s=movies-tv&ie=UTF8&qid=1532897681&sr=1-1&keywords=the+secret+garden)

The Secret Garden – **Scene It!** (DVD)

Scene 3

1. What was Mary Lenox's number at the dock in London?
2. What dock number did the Indian orphans go to when they got off the ship?

Scene 8

3. How many bird heads were on Ben's hat?
4. We saw two of Dickon's pets – name the animals.

Scene 14

5. What song is Cook singing as she makes bread?
6. How was it thought that Colin's mother died?

Lesson Plans for Literature

Scene 16

7. How many dogs were on the stairs?
8. When does Uncle Craven intend on returning home?

Scene 20

9. What do you say in India when you want servants to leave?
10. What is the name of Dickon's goose?

Scene 24

11. Where did Mary find the photos?
12. What were Colin's parents doing in the photos?

Scene 29

13. What two things did Mary bring to life?
14. What two things weren't wanted?

Scene 14! (Answer Key)

1. #43
2. #2
3. Three
4. Fox and Horse
5. Greensleeves
6. Fell off a swing
7. Six
8. Winter
9. "I have spoken. All depart."
10. Honker
11. Desk drawer
12. Swinging
13. The Garden and Mr. Craven
14. The Garden and Mary