

Year 7 – The Secret Garden – English Knowledge Organiser

Expectations and content

What is this unit about and why do we teach it?

- This classic children's story teaches students about not only the dangers of loneliness and neglect, but also the many benefits of caring for and tending to the natural world. This is primarily a writing skills unit, with a focus on speech accuracy, as this is an area most of our students struggle to get right.

Key Vocabulary taught:

- Furtive
- Archetypical
- Dubious
- Adroit
- Audacious
- Overlooked
- Obnoxious
- Amicable
- Exuberant
- Persisted
- Imperious
- Inquisitive

Key terminology taught:

- Punctuation
- Extended metaphor
- Pathetic fallacy
- Empathy
- Symbolism
- Accent
- Dialect
- Motif
- Bildungsroman

If your child needs support

Suggested activities to help:

- One way to improve creative writing is through vocabulary. Try to use the vocabulary to the left in sentences either about the novel or other contexts.
- Practise using some of the key techniques in your own creative writing (look at the key terminology list to the left). You can find examples of these on the MEGA MAP which we use in lessons.
- An understanding of the British Empire and India under British rule is needed for the context of this novel. If your child has struggled to understand this in lesson, then going through this period in history with them may be beneficial.
- There are several film versions of this story you could watch to better your child's understanding of the plot. We watch the 1993 version in class, but there is a new 2020 adaptation too. Encourage your child to make comparisons between the films and the original novel.

If your child needs extension

Questions to discuss with your child:

- Why is it important to explore family relationships in novels?
- Can you see any gothic elements in the story?
- How do you think a Victorian reader would have reacted to this story?

Challenging activities to complete:

- Research why some novels are called children's classics. What do they have that other novels don't?
- Write a letter to Frances Hodgson Burnett asking her about her beliefs in Christian Science while explaining your own thoughts.

Suggested further reading:

- **The Railway Children – Edith Nesbit**
The Waterbury children are living a happy life in London until their father is accused of being a spy. The children move to rural Yorkshire and find that the railway becomes their most useful ally in finding their father.
- **A Little Princess – Frances Hodgson Burnett**
Another classic from the same author: wealthy Sara Crewe is enrolled in a frightening boarding school while her father is in the British Army stationed in India. When news of his death arrives during Sara's birthday party, she finds herself suddenly penniless and in debt to the headmistress...
- **The BBC Sounds website or app has lots of other children's classic audiobooks:**
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06w4v4x>