

Plan a circle: “The Secret Garden”

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911) · public-domain novel (selected chapters or whole) · grades 5–7 · ~2–3 weeks.

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Kit section 5 (group agreement & calendar) filled in for one text — a finished plan students see before writing their own. *Tinted italic* = sample answers.

Preview note: Preview colonial attitudes and racist language toward Indian servants, the disability portrayal of Colin, and deaths (cholera, parents); plan context and support.

Text, group, and target

Text / author / edition	<i>“The Secret Garden” — Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911). Public-domain novel (selected chapters or whole).</i>
Group / period / dates	<i>Priya’s group · Period __ · Meetings __ & __</i>
Grade / TEKS target (p. 3)	Grade 6 · §110.22 — 7(A): multiple themes within/across texts; 6(C,D): support inferences, summary; 1(D): student-led discussion.
Learning intention	We are learning to explain how Mary’s and Colin’s changes reveal a theme about renewal and belonging.
Success criteria	I bring one open question, cite two details with chapter/page, respond to a peer, and name how my thinking changed.

Reading map & calendar

Chun k	Read through	Meeting date · leader
1	<i>Ch. 1–8: Mary orphaned in India → Misselthwaite → finding the key and the garden.</i>	<i>Wk 1 · Leader: Priya</i>
2	<i>Ch. 9–20: reviving the garden, meeting Dickon, discovering Colin.</i>	<i>Wk 2 · Leader: Sam</i>
3	<i>Ch. 21–27: Colin’s recovery, the garden restored, Mr. Craven’s return.</i>	<i>Wk 3 · Leader: Aida</i>

Members & first-meeting jobs (p. 7 roles)

Member	First job	Rotates to (next meeting)
<i>Priya</i>	<i>Questioner</i>	<i>Summarizer</i>
<i>Sam</i>	<i>Summarizer</i>	<i>Clarifier</i>
<i>Aida</i>	<i>Clarifier</i>	<i>Evidence tracker</i>
<i>Ken</i>	<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Questioner</i>

Text-specific discussion questions (open — more than one answer)

- **Predict:** A sour, lonely Mary arrives at a house of secrets — what might the locked garden change in her?
- **Question:** Why might Burnett tie the garden’s revival to the children’s health?
- **Clarify:** What does “Magic” mean to Colin — supernatural, or something else?
- **Summarize:** Trace Mary’s change from the opening to the garden’s bloom, without opinion.
- **Interpret the theme:** How do the garden and the friendships reveal a theme about renewal or belonging? Use two details.

Optional Jigsaw lenses (p. 4): *Character* (Mary and Colin) · *Symbol* (the garden) · *Theme* (renewal and nature) · *Plot* (secrets revealed) · *Context* (Edwardian England — preview colonial attitudes).

Sample 3–2–1 notes: Aida, symbol lens

Name: *Aida* · Home group: *Priya's group* · Period ____ · Meetings ____ & ____ · Section: *"The Secret Garden," Chunk 2* · Expert lens: *Symbol*

What a finished prep looks like. Kit section 6 / Organizer A completed for one reader, so students can compare their notes to a strong model.

Questions <i>Is the "Magic" nature, effort, or belief?</i> <i>Who is healed more — Mary or Colin?</i>	3 · Important ideas <i>1. Mary finds a hidden, neglected garden and begins to tend it.</i> <i>2. Caring for it changes her mood and her health.</i> <i>3. Colin, believed a hopeless invalid, grows stronger outdoors.</i>
Vocabulary <i>contrary = stubbornly opposed.</i> <i>moor = open, rolling upland.</i>	2 · Supporting details <i>1. The first green shoots appear (mid-novel). → Mirror Mary's warming heart.</i> <i>2. Colin stands and walks in the garden (late). → Shows the garden's healing effect.</i>

1 · Summary in my own words

A neglected girl restores a locked garden and, with it, herself and a sickly boy.

Bring to the circle

My interpretation: *Care for living things heals the one who gives the care.*

Synthesis (two lenses): *The garden (symbol) embodies renewal (theme): as it revives, so do Mary and Colin. Text points: the first shoots (Chunk 2) and Colin walking (Chunk 3).*

After discussion: *My thinking became clearer once the group compared evidence.*

TEKS evidence: 6(C,D) supported inference; 7(A) theme through characters/events; 1(D) response to a peer.