

The Secret Garden

Use Russell Gardens to bring the novel **The Secret Garden** to life and to use the setting and extracts from the novel to inspire their own **creative work**.

Suitable for KS2

At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done, then they begin to hope it can be done, then they say it can be done - then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done centuries ago.

Frances Hodgson Burnett,
'The Secret Garden'



Curriculum areas covered:



English

Spoken language
Reading comprehension
Composition
Non-fiction
Poetry



Art & Design

Sketchbooks
Developing mastery of techniques



History

Continuity and change



Geography

Communicate geographical information in a variety of ways



Physical Education

Sustained activity



Before your visit:

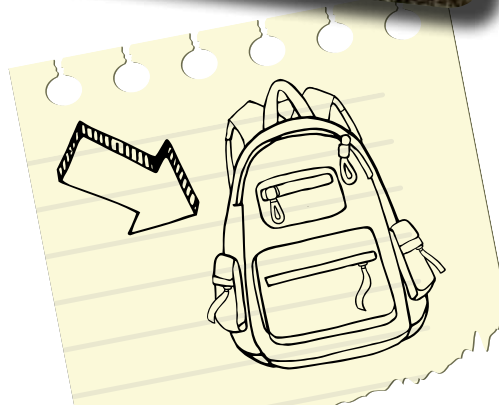
- Pupils will have read *The Secret Garden*, or extracts from the book including the description of the main gardens (middle of Chapter IV) and Mary's discovery of the secret garden (Chapters VII and VIII). These are available on the **Secret Garden resource sheets 1 and 2**.
- You may wish to share photographs with the children of Barbara Barlow, who lived at the house c.1900 (see **Secret Garden resource sheet 1** or view online here):
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/136100065@N03/albums/72157677994858281>

Where to go:

- Collect the **PUPILS' GREY RESOURCE RUCKSACKS** then go to Russell Gardens.

During the visit:

- Take the children for a walk around the gardens, focusing on the formal area including the lake, lily pond and steps to the main house. Discuss features they notice. You could ask them to do annotated sketches or to list them.
- Settle the children near the lily pond and read the description of the main gardens in the middle of Chapter IV of *The Secret Garden* (reproduced in the **Secret Garden resource sheet 1**). Explain that Russell Gardens were laid out at exactly the same time as the novel is set. Ask children if they found any features similar to those mentioned in the extract. Show children photograph(s) of Barbara Barlow, who lived at the house at the time (see **Secret Garden resource sheet 1**). You might want to use the photograph as a stimulus to talk about her clothes, what you imagine her life to have been like, and the different behaviours expected of children from different backgrounds within the book. You might also want to look at the **Time Travellers resource sheet**, which has more photographs.
- Ask children if any of them can see the wall to the kitchen garden.
- Take a walk from the entrance to the park via the lake, lily pond, steps to the house and along to the kitchen-garden wall. Ask children to stop at key features and describe their route as if they were giving someone instructions to find a secret place. They could count paces or use a stopwatch to measure time taken to walk between features and could make a sketch map of their walk.
- Examine the wall, looking at bricks and textures. Imagine there is a secret doorway.
- Read pupils the extract from Chapters VII and VIII (see **Secret Garden resource sheet 2**).
- Ask pupils in pairs to enact finding the secret garden for the first time. Focus on the five senses. Ask them to make notes of what they saw/heard/touched/smelled and the emotions they felt.



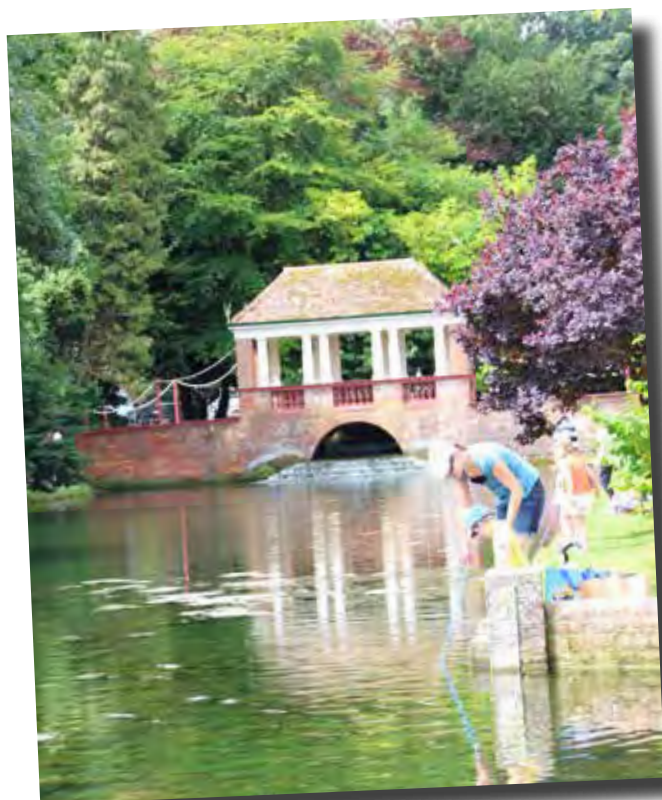


After the visit:

- Ask them to create a brief poem: 'I saw.../I heard.../I touched/I smelled/I tasted (an emotion).../I wished...'.
- Ask them to develop their sketch map and write a full description of how to find the way into the secret garden. They can check or develop the accuracy of their map using the **Sketch Plan resource sheet**. For younger children, this could be a whole-class / small-group exercise.
- Ask pupils to draw the garden they think they might find inside. For younger children, you could focus on creating a rose garden using collaged images of roses.

Resources during visit:

- Use on-site **GREY RESOURCE RUCKSACKS** for clipboards, stopwatches and waterproof mats in case of rain. Pupils may also want to look at the photographs on the **Time Travellers resource sheet**. You will also need the **Secret Garden resource sheets 1 and 2** from the teacher's rucksack.
- **School to supply:** writing and drawing materials (pens/pencils and paper).



Curriculum links:

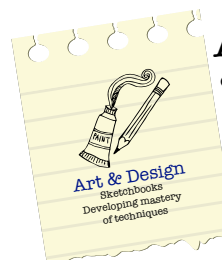
English:

- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Comprehension (both listening and reading).
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas.
- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates.



Art & Design:

- Produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences.
- Become proficient in drawing, painting, sculpture and other art, craft and design techniques.



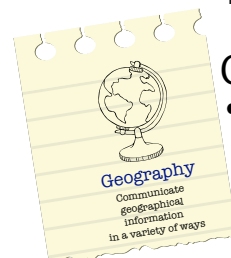
History:

- Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses.



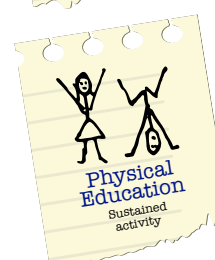
Geography:

- Communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length.



Physical Education:

- Are physically active for sustained periods of time.
- Lead healthy, active lives.



Resource Sheet 1

The Secret Garden

The Secret Garden **by Frances Hodgson Burnett:** **extract from Chapter IV**

When Mary had passed through the shrubbery gate she found herself in great gardens, with wide lawns and winding walks with clipped borders. There were trees, and flower-beds, and evergreens clipped into strange shapes, and a large pool with an old grey fountain in its midst.

But the flower-beds were bare and wintry and the fountain was not playing. This was not the garden which was shut up. How could a garden be shut up? You could always walk into a garden. She was just thinking this when she saw that, at the end of the path she was following, there seemed to be a long wall. She was not familiar enough with England to know that she was coming upon the kitchen-gardens where the vegetables and fruit were growing.



Barbara Barlow, who lived at Kearsney Court with her family, on the gravel path behind the Bastion Garden 1902

Resource Sheet 2

The Secret Garden



The Secret Garden: extracts from Chapters VII and VIII

The flower-bed was not quite bare. It was bare of flowers because the perennial plants had been cut down for their winter rest, but there were tall shrubs and low ones which grew together at the back of the bed, and as the robin hopped about under them she saw him hop over a small pile of freshly turned up earth. He stopped on it to look for a worm. The earth had been turned up because a dog had been trying to dig up a mole and he had scratched quite a deep hole.

Mary looked at it, not really knowing why the hole was there, and as she looked she saw something almost buried in the newly-turned soil. It was something like a ring of rusty iron or brass and when the robin flew up into a tree nearby she put out her hand and picked the ring up. It was more than a ring, however; it was an old key which looked as if it had been buried a long time.

Mistress Mary stood up and looked at it with an almost frightened face as it hung from her finger.

"Perhaps it has been buried for ten years," she said in a whisper. "Perhaps it is the key to the garden!"

She looked at the key quite a long time. She turned it over and over, and thought about it. As I have said before, she was not a child who had been trained to ask permission or consult her elders about things. All she thought about the key was that if it was the key to the closed garden, and she could find out where the door was, she could perhaps open it and see what was inside the walls, and what had happened to the old rose-trees.

It was because it had been shut up so long that she wanted to see it. It seemed as if it must be different from other places and that something strange must have happened to it during ten years. Besides that, if she liked it she could go into it every day and shut the door behind her, and she could make up some play of her own and play it quite alone, because nobody would ever know where she was, but would think the door was still locked and the key buried in the earth. The thought of that pleased her very much...

The robin flew from his swinging spray of ivy on to the top of the wall and he opened his beak and sang a loud, lovely trill, merely to show off. Nothing in the world is quite as adorably lovely as a robin when he shows off - and they are nearly always doing it.

Mary Lennox had heard a great deal about Magic in her Ayah's stories, and she always said that what happened almost at that moment was Magic.

One of the nice little gusts of wind rushed down the walk, and it was a stronger one than the rest. It was strong enough to wave the branches of the trees, and it was more than strong enough to sway the trailing sprays of untrimmed ivy hanging from the wall. Mary had stepped close to the robin, and suddenly the gust of wind swung aside some loose ivy trails, and more suddenly still she jumped toward it and caught it in her hand. This she did because she had seen something under it--a round knob which had been covered by the leaves hanging over it. It was the knob of a door.

She put her hands under the leaves and began to pull and push them aside. Thick as the ivy hung, it nearly all was a loose and swinging curtain, though some had crept over wood and iron. Mary's heart began to thump and her hands to shake a little in her delight and excitement. The robin kept singing and twittering away and tilting his head on one side, as if he were as excited as she was. What was this under her hands which was square and made of iron and which her fingers found a hole in?

It was the lock of the door which had been closed ten years and she put her hand in her pocket, drew out the key and found it fitted the keyhole. She put the key in and turned it. It took two hands to do it, but it did turn.

And then she took a long breath and looked behind her up the long walk to see if any one was coming. No one was coming. No one ever did come, it seemed, and she took another long breath, because she could not help it, and she held back the swinging curtain of ivy and pushed back the door which opened slowly--slowly.

Then she slipped through it, and shut it behind her, and stood with her back against it, looking about her and breathing quite fast with excitement, and wonder, and delight.

She was standing inside the secret garden.

Resource Sheet - Kearsney Parks Sketch Map

