

PERENNIAL  BESTSELLER

A Little Princess

The Story of Sara Crewe

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

A classic, heartwarming story.

Thorndike Press®

The Little Princess

Teacher's Guide

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Chapter 1: Sara

Vocabulary

thoroughfares	Pg. 9	busy streets
Bombay	Pg. 10	a seaport in western India on the Arabian Sea
lascars	Pg. 10	sailors native to India
bungalow	Pg. 11	a one-storied house with a wide porch
salaams	Pg. 11	respectful greetings
ayah	Pg. 11	nursemaid or lady's maid
attain	Pg. 12	reach; achieve
resigned	Pg. 13	accepting
quaint	Pg. 13	unusual in a pleasing way
frock	Pg. 13	dress
seminary	Pg. 13	private school for young women
supple	Pg. 16	limber; flexible
elated	Pg. 16	happy; joyful
solicitors	Pg. 22	in England, members of the legal profession who are not members of the bar
Messrs.	Pg. 22	Messieurs; plural of Mr.

Comprehension

1. In the first paragraph, we learn something about the lights of London which make us aware that the setting is not contemporary. What is it?

2. What about India made parents willing to send their children so far away?

3. What metaphor (a comparison made between two unlike objects without the use of *like* or *as*) does Sara use on page 14 to describe her feelings about Miss Minchin's?

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Chapter 2: A French Lesson

Vocabulary

abashed	Pg. 27	ill-at-ease
punctilious	Pg. 30	careful about matters of behavior and manners
imposing	Pg. 31	impressive

Comprehension

1. Why is Sara fluent in French?

2. How does Miss Minchin misinterpret Sara to Monsieur Dufarge?

3. How does Miss Minchin insult Sara about being sent a French maid?

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Chapter 3: Ermengarde

Vocabulary

fray	Pg. 37	quarrel
disconsolately	Pg. 38	unhappily

Comprehension

1. Of Sara, the author writes, “It was a way of hers always to want to spring into any fray in which someone was made uncomfortable or unhappy.” What qualities did Miss St John have that made her a frequent target for Miss Minchin and the students?

2. Why is Sara reluctant to share her lovely playroom?

3. What does Sara decide is the most difficult thing about Ermengarde’s life?

Chapter 4: Lottie

Vocabulary

self-opinionated	Pg. 48	conceited
domineering	Pg. 48	bullying; overbearing
indulged	Pg. 48	spoiled; pampered
indolent	Pg. 48	lazy
amiability	Pg. 49	friendliness
tempestuously	Pg. 54	violently
impotent	Pg. 55	powerless; useless
indignation	Pg. 55	anger
asperity	Pg. 55	harsh temper
consternation	Pg. 56	helpless fear or shock

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Comprehension

1. What do Lottie and Sara have in common?

2. Why did the alphabet class regard Sara as a “goddess and a queen?”

3. What emotion did Lottie rely upon to get her way and turn herself into a very annoying young lady?

Chapter 5: Becky

Vocabulary

scullery-maid	Pg. 67	kitchen-maid
coal-scuttles	Pg. 67	wide-lipped buckets used to pour coal into a fire
diaphanous	Pg. 71	finely dressed in shiny layers
impudently	Pg. 72	boldly
largess	Pg. 77	gifts
populace	Pg. 77	the common people

Comprehension

1. What is Sara’s “greatest power?”

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2. Describe the story that Becky overhears.

3. What does Sara offer to do for Becky to make her life a little more bearable?

Chapter 6: The Diamond Mines

Vocabulary

Arabian Nights	Pg. 79	a collection of ancient tales from India and the surrounding area
indifferent	Pg. 80	lacking curiosity
labyrinthine	Pg. 80	maze-like
deriding	Pg. 86	making fun of
perilously	Pg. 88	dangerously
compass	Pg. 89	space

Comprehension

1. For the parlour-boarders, what is the best part of the day?

2. Sara receives a letter from her father with hints of bad news about what two things?

3. What gift does Becky give Sara for her 11th birthday?

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Chapter 7: The Diamond Mines Again

Vocabulary

meritorious	Pg. 100	meaningful; praiseworthy
garret	Pg. 103	attic
disdained	Pg. 104	scorned; treated as unworthy
decorum	Pg. 104	polite behavior
succinctly	Pg. 105	briefly; concisely
modiste's	Pg. 105	the establishment of a woman engaged in high fashion design
lavishly	Pg. 106	generously
disparagement	Pg. 106	insult
patron	Pg. 106	customer
ejaculated	Pg. 106	exclaimed
brusqueness	Pg. 107	curtness; abrupt speech
delirious	Pg. 108	showing mental confusion; hallucinating
pauper	Pg. 108	a poor person
heiress	Pg. 108	a female who inherits great wealth
irate	Pg. 110	very angry
farthing	Pg. 110	a British coin worth one-fourth of a penny
foisted	Pg. 110	passed
sinister	Pg. 111	threatening
redress	Pg. 112	remedy
proprietors	Pg. 114	business owners
furtively	Pg. 126	secretively

Comprehension

1. What question (Pg. 103) does Lavinia ask Sara that *foreshadows* (hints about future developments) the ending of the chapter?

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2. Why does Becky hide under the tablecloth while Mr Barrow talks with Miss Minchin?

3. What is the one possession Sara is allowed to take with her to the attic?

Chapter 8: In the Attic

Vocabulary

reproachful	Pg. 140	blaming
adversity	Pg. 143	misfortune; poverty

Comprehension

1. How does Miss Minchin justify isolating Sara?

2. What is Sara's new fantasy involving herself and Becky?

3. What does Sara agree to share with Ermengarde?

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Chapter 9: Melchisedec

Vocabulary

reproved	Pg. 145	spoken to in disapproval
hob	Pg. 151	ledge at the back of a fireplace
coax	Pg. 151	persuade; attract

Comprehension

1. What does Sara show Lottie to keep her from crying when Lottie comes to see the attic and finds out how bare and harsh the attic really is?

2. What creatures share the bun Lottie brings in her pocket?

3. What new chapter does Sara add to her story about life in the Bastille when Ermengarde visits?

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Chapter 10: The Indian Gentleman

Vocabulary

perilous	Pg. 162	dangerous
pilgrimages	Pg. 162	religious or spiritual journeys
brougham	Pg. 162	closed, four-wheeled carriage with the driver in an outside seat
perambulators	Pg. 164	baby carriages
pantomime	Pg. 165	a British form of Christmas entertainment involving a harlequin doing mime
affluence	Pg. 166	wealth
benignly	Pg. 167	kindly
thwarted	Pg. 167	stopped; defeated
benevolence	Pg. 167	charitable giving
insinuating	Pg. 170	gradually working into
complacent	Pg. 173	smug
ignominiously	Pg. 174	shamefully
chastising	Pg. 174	scolding
wrought	Pg. 176	worked
shrine	Pg. 177	an altar; a sacred place
tract (trac')	Pg. 178	tract; a propaganda pamphlet to encourage joining a religion
haggard	Pg. 180	gaunt; tired

Comprehension

1. What two different reactions does Sara have when she sees herself in shop windows?

2. How did Sara select the names she gave to the members of the Large Family?

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3. What new nickname does Sara earn and how does she earn it?

Chapter 11: Ram Dass

Vocabulary

invariably	Pg. 182	constantly
vaulted	Pg. 182	built with an arched roof
crimson	Pg. 182	red
amber	Pg. 182	brownish-yellow
chrysoprase-green	Pg. 182	a golden-green
Hindustani	Pg. 185	language of northern India
obeisance	Pg. 187	bowing; gesturing in a way showing respect
admonished	Pg. 189	warned
malicious	Pg. 191	spiteful
neatherd	Pg. 192	cowherd

Comprehension

1. What unexpected visitors does Sara have as she watches the sunset through the window in the roof?

2. What does Sara do when the monkey escapes that surprises the lascar?

3. Sara has her ears boxed by Miss Minchin, but she refuses to apologize for what?

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Chapter 12: The Other Side of the Wall

Vocabulary

surfeit	Pg. 197	excess
lampreys	Pg. 197	fish
brain-fever	Pg. 197	meningitis of the brain
decorous	Pg. 200	showing polite behavior
petulant	Pg. 205	annoyed; impatient
cricket	Pg. 205	an English team sport played outside
reproach	Pg. 205	blame

Comprehension

1. For what reasons had Sara become fond of the Large Family and the Indian gentleman?

2. Who tells Mr Carrisford about Sara?

3. What is the relationship between Mr Carrisford and Sara's father?

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Chapter 13: One of the Populace

Vocabulary

persevered	Pg. 213	persisted
obstinately	Pg. 213	stubbornly
merino	Pg. 213	a fine, soft wool
portmanteau	Pg. 222	suitcase
droshky	Pg. 223	a Russian carriage
Tsar	Pg. 223	a Russian emperor
mujiks	Pg. 223	Russian peasants; poor farmers

Comprehension

1. How do Becky and Sara try to bear the cold winter evenings?

2. What lesson does Sara teach the lady in the bakery?

3. Where is the father of the Large Family going and why?

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Chapter 14: What Melchisedec Heard and Saw

Vocabulary

reconnoitre	Pg. 225	to make a reconnaissance; to seek out information about enemy positions
palpitating	Pg. 226	beating
aperture	Pg. 226	opening
pariah	Pg. 228	outcast; member of the lowest social class or caste within the Indian caste system

Comprehension

1. Who enters the attic through the skylight?

2. Why did Mr Carrisford run away from Ralph Crewe?

3. Why does Mr Carmichael say that Mr Carrisford should forgive himself?

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Chapter 15: The Magic

Vocabulary

conjugations	Pg. 243	the various forms of verbs, as they relate to person and tense
pennons	Pg. 244	flags; pennants
clarions	Pg. 244	trumpets
minstrels	Pg. 244	traveling poet-singer-musicians
chatelaines	Pg. 244	castle mistresses
pillaged	Pg. 245	spoiled; plundered
flagon	Pg. 257	container for liquid or a beverage
alabaster	Pg. 257	a fine, white material used for statues and fine ornaments
tapers	Pg. 259	candles

Comprehension

1. What has happened to the missing half of a meat pie?

2. Who betrays Sara and how?

3. When Sara awakens, she thinks she is dreaming. Why?

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Chapter 16: The Visitor (a rat)

Vocabulary

priggishly	Pg. 275	smugly
hamper	Pg. 275	a basket for carrying food
askance	Pg. 276	with disapproval
deprivation	Pg. 277	denial
audacious	Pg. 279	bold
august	Pg. 279	grand
singular	Pg. 279	remarkable
obstinate	Pg. 279	stubborn; unyielding
haughty	Pg. 286	scornful
sordid	Pg. 288	mean; selfish
eccentric	Pg. 288	odd; unconventional
scathingly	Pg. 290	harshly; acidly
reverence	Pg. 291	respect; honor

Comprehension

1. In addition to all the creature comforts in the attic, what thought gives Sara the greatest comfort?

2. What may have motivated Lavinia to tell Miss Minchin about the banquet the previous day?

3. Why does Miss Minchin worry when Sara receives a package, containing respectable clothing and a promise of more to come, from an unknown source?

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Chapter 17: “It is the Child!”

Vocabulary

astride Pg. 297 straddling

Comprehension

1. What new decision do Mr Carmichael and Mr Carrisford make after Mr Carmichael returns from Russia?

2. Why does Sara go to Mr Carrisford’s house?

3. What word does Sara use that causes Mr Carrisford to inquire in more depth about Sara’s background?

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Chapter 18: ‘I Tried Not to Be’

Vocabulary

infuriated	Pg. 321	enraged; very angry
salts and sal volatile	Pg. 322	smelling salts
indignation	Pg. 322	righteous anger; anger resulting from an injustice
audacity	Pg. 322	boldness
row	Pg. 323	argument
babel	Pg. 324	confusion of voices
plaintively	Pg. 324	sadly

Comprehension

1. Why does Miss Minchin visit Mr Carrisford?

2. Quote Miss Amelia’s statement in which she summarizes her understanding of why Miss Minchin was so cruel to Sara.

3. Describe what Becky’s future looks like, now that Sara is no longer in the household.

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Chapter 19: “Anne”(a monkey)

Vocabulary

waifs

Pg. 336

homeless children

Comprehension

1. Who is Boris?

2. Who is Anne?

3. What will be Anne’s new responsibility?

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Teacher's Page

Conventions of English Point out to students that this novel was published in 1905 by an English-born, American author and that the conventions of British English and American English are not always the same. Use the example of the single quotation, used in the text to indicate dialogue, as opposed to the double quotation, which is standard in American English. And English does not require the use of a period after *Mr* or *Mrs*. Just as areas within the United States have their own dialects, different parts of the world have their own conventions. And these conventions change with time. Point out also that languages borrow from each other. English, for example, has no single word for a person who devotes his life to working with a working elephant, so we borrow the word *mahout* from India. Point out that spellings may be regional, as well. Use the *ou* combination as an example. In American English, we write *labor*, while in British English the word may be written *labour*. And, in British English, the *er* at the end of a word such as *theater* may appear as *theatre*. Ask students to watch for variations of spellings. **You may wish to design a lesson around the time fluctuations and regionalisms of the English language by using old dictionaries and modern ones and comparing/contrasting sections, or by using a British or Irish travel book to consult for variations in language**, such as *petrol* for gas or *underground* for subway. Ask students to notice the words that seem to come from a different era, such as *brougham*, and from different parts of the world. Language is as fluid as those who speak it. You may wish to design a board showing expressions used by young people which may have little meaning to adults. Construct a word board on which students may enter the English spellings they find and the American English alternatives.

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Writing Prompts:

1. Thinking about herself, Sara says to Ermengarde (page 49), “ *I don’t know . . . how I shall ever find out whether I am really a nice child or a horrid one. Perhaps I’m a hideous child, and no one will ever know, just because I never have any trials.*” Write an essay describing whether you think people must be tried by adversity to find out what their true natures are. Use some examples of real people, perhaps even yourself, and/or fictional characters to support your argument.
2. Frances Hodgson Burnett shares this thinking about generosity and laughter on pages 90–91:
If Nature has made you for a Giver, your hands are born open, and so is your heart; and though there may be times when your hands are empty, your heart is always full, and you can give things out of that — warm things, kind things, sweet things — help and comfort and laughter — and sometimes gay, kind laughter is the best help of all.

Write an essay telling about someone you know who is a Giver and the impact this Giver has had on the lives of others.
3. Sara had a very strong attachment to Emily. Write a poem:
 - a) about Sara, from Emily’s “voice”
 - b) about you as a child, from the “voice” of your favorite doll, stuffed animal, or toy.
4. Respond to this thought Sara has as she becomes acquainted with the rat she names Melchisedec (page 154):
Perhaps there is a language which is not made of words and everything in the world understands it. Perhaps there is a soul hidden in everything and it can always speak, without even making a sound, to another soul.

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5. How do you respond to criticism and/or insults? Respond to this piece of advice spoken by Sara in one of her *conversations* with Emily (Pg. 171–172): *When people are insulting you, there is nothing so good for them as not to say a word — just to look at them and think.*
6. Miss Amelia seems to be a rather unimportant character in the novel. When Sara’s fortune is restored and Miss Minchin faces the possibility of financial ruin, Miss Amelia musters the strength to confront her sister, challenging her for over-working and under-feeding Sara. Prepare an essay in which you respond to this thesis: *Miss Amelia is as guilty as Miss Minchin of child abuse.*
7. Many people seem to have an inexplicable interest in princesses. Our fairytales are full of stories about princesses.
 - a. Write an essay explaining why you believe we have this fascination **or**
 - b. Research a famous princess of your choosing and share your findings about what it really means to be royalty.

Integrated Curriculum

This novel can be used in conjunction with a study of the French Revolution because the fantasy world which Sara constructs is based upon her understanding of life in the Bastille. Have students prepare a time line denoting the major developments and profiling the major historical figures associated with the French Revolution. Include research about Marie Antoinette (mentioned in Chapter 11), Louis XVI, the Bastille, Robespierre (mentioned in Chapter 15), and the Princess de Lamballe (also chapter 15).

Scaffolding Image-Building

It may be difficult for students to develop concrete images of Sara’s life because they are unfamiliar with the **clothing, furnishings, carriages, and architecture** of 19th century England. To give them the tools to build crisp images, divide the class into four groups. Assign each group to research and prepare a poster with pictures and captions for each of these four topics.

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A Royal Treasure Hunt *Answer Key follows the game.*

Answer the following questions from the novel to discover a beautiful place you can visit

A Chapter 1 word for a *private school for young women*. (1)

“Her chief trouble was that she had a clever father.” (2)

Chapter 11 word meaning *the language of northern India*. (3)

A Chapter 13 word for *a fine, soft wool*. (4)

Papa seemed to have lost his fortune investing in these mines. (5)

She is Miss Minchin’s sister. (6)

Chapter 4 word for *lazy*. (7)

First name of Mr. Dass. (8)

Chapter 15 word for *candles*. (9)

This unexpected guest slept at Sara’s feet. (10)

A Chapter 4 word for *harsh temper*. (11)

Becky gives Sara this kind of cushion for her birthday. (12)

A Chapter 7 word for *angry*. (13)

A Chapter 11 word for *red*. (14)

Chapter 16 title, *The _____* (15)

2 16 7 19 13 1 9 20 4 18 5 14 17 10 3 15 6 8 11 12