

Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

by Alisa Thomas

*For the novel by
L. M. Montgomery*



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Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

A Progeny Press Study Guide

by Alisa Thomas

edited by Rebecca Gilleland and Michael S. Gilleland

cover design by Michael S. Gilleland

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Table of Contents

Study Guide Author	3
Peer Review Panel	4
Note to Instructor	6
Synopsis	7
About the Novel’s Author	8
Optional Pre-reading Activities	9
Chapters 1–4	10
Chapters 5–10	17
Chapters 11–15	25
Chapters 16–22	30
Chapters 23–29	37
Chapters 30–38	47
Essay Projects	56
Supplemental Resources	59
Answer Key	62

Synopsis

When Marilla Cuthbert and her brother Matthew send for an orphan boy to help Matthew on the farm, Anne Shirley, a skinny, red-headed girl who never stops talking, arrives instead.

From the beginning, Matthew's heart is captured by this "kindred spirit" and he decides he wants to keep her. Marilla reluctantly agrees to this, but eventually finds herself absorbed by Anne's chatter, amused by the scrapes Anne gets herself into, and frustrated with Anne always having her head in the clouds.

As Anne grows, Marilla finds her a "genius for getting into trouble"; yet, as Anne says, "have you ever noticed one encouraging thing about me, Marilla? I never make the same mistake twice." Despite her many predicaments, life at Green Gables is happy.

Anne becomes wiser and steadier with age, making Marilla and Matthew proud of her many accomplishments. Only when tragedy strikes Green Gables does Marilla finally admit how much Anne is part of her life, and how very much she loves her.

Chapters 5–10

Vocabulary:

Define each word, then use it in a sentence.

1. **benevolent**

Definition:

Sentence:

2. **blight**

Definition:

Sentence:

3. **harrowed**

Definition:

Sentence:

4. **tremulous**

Definition:

Sentence:

Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

5. **penitent**

Definition:

Sentence:

6. **deprecation**

Definition:

Sentence:

7. **indignation**

Definition:

Sentence:

8. **amiable**

Definition:

Sentence:

9. **abasement**

Definition:

Sentence:

10. **plaintive**

Definition:

Sentence:

Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

Questions:

1. Anne tells Marilla, “It’s been my experience that you can nearly always enjoy things if you make up your mind firmly that you will.” Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. When Marilla asks Anne if Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Hammond were good to her, how does Anne respond?
3. Why doesn’t Anne speak ill of Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Hammond when she would be justified in saying they were not good to her?
4. Anne states that she desires to pray in “a great big field all alone or into the deep, deep woods. . . .” Why do you think Anne favors this location? Where is your favorite place to pray?
5. Who were the two friends from Anne’s past that she tells Marilla about? Where did she “see” them?

Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

6. Why does Anne finally agree to apologize to Rachel?

7. Is Anne genuinely sorry for her behavior? Explain why you think she was or was not.

Think About the Story:

8. When Anne asks Marilla whether she ever imagines things “different from what they really are,” Marilla responds, “I don’t believe in imagining things different from what they really are. . . . When the Lord puts us in certain circumstances He doesn’t mean for us to imagine them away.” Do you agree with Marilla that God does not want us to ever imagine things different from the way they are? Why or why not? Are there appropriate and inappropriate times for imagining things different?

9. Marilla tells Anne that they will keep her “provided she tries to be good and grateful.” Do you think this leaves Anne feeling very secure? Why or why not? How good or grateful does she have to be for them to keep her?

Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

10. Marilla realizes that Anne “cares nothing about God’s love since she has never had it translated to her through the medium of human love.” Read Matthew 25:34–40; Colossians 3:12–17; 1 John 3:16–18; 4:10, 11. How are we to demonstrate God’s love to others?

11. Compare and contrast the wagon ride Matthew takes with Anne in Chapter 2 with the wagon ride Anne takes with Marilla in Chapters 5 and 6. What happens on the rides and what is the result of the rides?

12. An *allusion* is a reference to historical or fictional people, places, events, or statements that the author assumes will be recognized by the reader. In the middle of Chapter 8, Montgomery alludes to a duchess:

Marilla was as fond of morals as the Duchess in Wonderland, and was firmly convinced that one should be tacked on to every remark made to a child who was being brought up.

Who is the “Duchess in Wonderland”? What was she like, and what might Montgomery be saying about Marilla by alluding to the Duchess?

Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

Dig Deeper:

13. Anne has not had a very stable or secure life so far; sometimes life can be very insecure. Read Psalm 18:1–2; Romans 8:31, 35, 37–39. In what can we always feel secure?

14. When Rachel first meets Anne, she says, “She’s terrible skinny and homely, Marilla. Come here, child, and let me have a look at you. Lawful heart, did any one ever see such freckles? And hair as red as carrots!” Why does Rachel feel free to “speak her mind” in Anne’s presence?

15. Read Ephesians 4:15, 29, and 32. According to these verses, how should we speak truth to others? Does what Rachel says to Anne fit these verse? Why or why not?

16. Marilla tells Anne that although Rachel was too outspoken, it did *not* excuse Anne’s behavior. What reasons did she give for demanding that Anne respect Rachel? Read Luke 6:27–36. Paraphrase these verses. How do these verses compare with Marilla’s requirements?

Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

17. Think of a time when someone hurt your feelings. How did you respond to the situation? How should you have responded?

18. At the end of Chapter 10 Anne says, "Saying one's prayers isn't exactly the same thing as praying." What do you think she means by this? Do you agree with her?

Optional Activities:

1. L.M. Montgomery wrote of her deep affection for Prince Edward Island. The following passage comes from a journal entry dated June 1, 1909.

The tall slender firs along the moist red road came out against it in a grace and beauty that made me ache for joy; and behind me a full moon deepened until the white radiance mingled with the gold and flame of the west.

Anne also finds delight and inspiration in the natural wonders of Prince Edward Island.

Anne had made good use of every waking moment of that fortnight. Already she was acquainted with every tree and shrub about the place. She had discovered that a lane opened out below the apple orchard and ran up through a belt of woodland; and she had explored it to its farthest end in all its delicious vagaries of brook and bridge, fir coppice and wild cherry arch, corners thick with fern, and branching byways of maple and mountain ash.

Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

Write a paragraph describing your favorite place. Use vivid descriptive language to bring this scene to life. Why is this location meaningful to you?

2. Imagine you are Anne at the end of Chapter 10 and you are praying at the gable window. What would you pray? Write down your prayer. You may wish to decorate the margins of your page in an appropriate manner to match the prayer.
3. There are a number of scenes in these chapters that could be very funny (for instance, when Anne prays for the first time, “Poor Marilla was only preserved from complete collapse by remembering that it was not irreverence, but simply spiritual ignorance . . . that was responsible for this extraordinary petition.”). Look through Chapters 5–10 and find such a scene to act out. Make the most of the humor.

Anne of Green Gables Study Guide

16. Marilla demands that Anne speak respectfully to Rachel because “she is a stranger and an elderly person and my visitor.” Paraphrases will vary but should be similar to this: “Love those who are your enemies and who do bad things to you. Pray for them. Do not fight back. Treat others the way you want to be treated.” They are similar to Marilla’s statement, but they are even more inclusive. We are to do good to enemies and those who hurt us, treating *everyone* as we would want them to treat us.

17. Answers will vary.

18. Answers will vary. She probably is referring to a kind of rote prayer or recitation versus actually praying what is on one’s heart and mind.

Chapters 11–15

Vocabulary:

1. mortified; 2. sallow; 3. sublime; 4. tantalize; 5. beguiled; 6. disdainfully; 7. resolute; 8. bequeathed; 9. brusquely; 10. candidly; 11. vindictive; 12. contritely

Questions:

1. Marilla gives Anne practical dresses that are not pretty. Anne imagines one of them is white muslin with lace frills and puffed sleeves. She also displays her creativity by placing flowers on her plain hat.

2. Marilla recognizes that she feels the same as Anne, she just never admitted it to herself.

3. When Matthew gives chocolates to Anne, she eats one that night and saves the rest to share evenly with her new friend Diana. She finds it “delightful” to be able to offer Diana a gift.

4. Marilla is unable to find her beloved amethyst brooch and blames Anne for its loss. Anne denies losing the brooch, but Marilla decides Anne is lying. Believing that Marilla will allow her to attend the picnic if she confesses, Anne does so. However, she so angers Marilla that Marilla still will not allow her to attend.

5. Gilbert Blythe calls Anne, or her hair, “carrots” to get her attention. Anne hits him over his head with her slate.

Think About the Story:

6. Answers will vary. Anne is feeling the need to fit in, look like the others, belong to a group. She seems to be feeling an unstated peer pressure. The desire to fit in is not wrong, but Anne’s statement seems to hint at being willing to do a little too much to fit in: “I’d rather look ridiculous [with] everyone else.” On the other hand, the sleeves do *not* look ridiculous to Anne, they look fine. Anne and Marilla seem to be having trouble seeing the other’s perspective.

7. Answers will vary. Either idea, taken to its extreme is bad, but both have their merits, too.

8. When Anne is ignoring Gilbert Blythe, he calls her “Carrots.” Since Anne is very sensitive about her red hair, she considers the comment a mortal insult. In response, Anne strikes Gilbert in the head with her slate. Earlier Anne lost her temper when Mrs. Lynde said she was skinny, freckled, homely, and had hair as red as carrots.

9. Answers will vary. It could be argued that while Anne may not be vain about her actual appearance, she may be vain about her self-image. This is where paradox would lie, that Anne is so concerned about protecting the image she wishes to portray that she behaves exactly as if she were proud and, as Marilla points out, thinks too much about her looks.

Dig Deeper:

10. People start telling stories about Anne. Mrs. Lynde shares details about Anne’s “awful temper,” and Jerry Buote labels her “crazy” because she talks to trees and flowers. These tales create negative impressions of Anne. No one at Sunday School makes any friendly advances toward Anne at all.

11. Answers will vary. Sometimes people gossip to make themselves seem important or “in the know”; sometimes to put others down; sometimes just because they want to know everything that is going on; sometimes they have other reasons. Proverbs 11:13: A person who gossips cannot be trusted. Proverbs 16:28: Gossip can ruin close friendships. Proverbs 26:20: Lack of gossip quiets arguments and misunderstandings.

12. Anne refused to forgive or even speak to Gilbert, yet after a short period of anger, she completely forgave Mrs. Lynde.

13. We must forgive others over and over again, with love and peace. We must forgive completely just as God forgives us.

14. Answers will vary. Marilla does not seem very sympathetic and she has a difficult time seeing other people’s points of view, particularly Anne’s. She seems to view things in very black and white terms, and can appear or act almost cold and hard. However, she clearly loves Anne and is touched by her, though she has a difficult time showing her affection. She is just, though she makes mistakes. She also willingly admits her mistakes and tries to make up for them.