



Anne of Green Gables: Discussion Guide #1

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion. **Sample answers**



CHAPTERS 1 – 3

CHAPTER I. Mrs. Rachel Lynde Is Surprised
CHAPTER II. Matthew Cuthbert Is Surprised
CHAPTER III. Marilla Cuthbert Is Surprised

Comprehension:

- What does Mrs. Rachel Lynde see out her window that makes her curious?
Mrs. Lynde sees her neighbor, Matthew Cuthbert, dressed in his best clothes and driving out of town.
- What news does Marilla share with Mrs. Lynde when she comes over?
Marilla tells Mrs. Lynde that she and Matthew have decided to adopt an orphan boy to help Matthew with the farm work.
- What does Mrs. Lynde think about Marilla's idea?
Mrs. Lynde is shocked, and she tells Marilla that adopting an orphan is a bad idea.
- Why is Matthew surprised when he gets to the train station?
Matthew is surprised because he finds a young girl waiting for him instead of a boy.
- What is Matthew's first impression of Anne during the drive home?
Matthew is taken aback at how talkative Anne is, but he finds himself enjoying her company.
- What name does Anne ask Marilla to call her and why? How does Marilla respond to this suggestion?
Anne asks Marilla to call her Cordelia because she thinks it's a more romantic and elegant name than her own. Marilla thinks the request is ridiculous and insists on calling Anne by her true name.
- What does Marilla think she and Matthew must do about Anne?
Marilla thinks that Anne will have to be sent back to the orphan asylum because she and Matthew don't have use for a girl.
- Why is Anne unable to eat her dinner?
Anne is too sad about being unwanted to eat her dinner.



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Analysis:

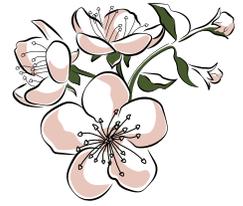
- What can you infer about how orphans were viewed during the time the book is set? Do you think people today have the same perspective about orphaned children? Why or why not? Use examples from the story to support your answers.
Answers will vary but may include details about the chapters implying that this community views orphans primarily through the lens of how useful they would be to their adopted families. Marilla explains that their reason for adopting an orphan is so Matthew can have extra help on the farm. Mrs. Lynde's reaction to the news suggests that many people distrusted orphan children. After Anne arrives and the Cuthberts are deciding what to do, Matthew suggests to Marilla, "We might be some good to her." Marilla reacts with surprise, which suggests that it was uncommon at that time to prioritize an orphaned child's wellbeing over their usefulness to their adopted parents.
- What is Mrs. Lynde's role in the Avonlea community and what seems to be her relationship to her neighbors? Explain your answer with details from the book.
Mrs. Rachel Lynde is a prominent member of the community and either runs or plays an important role in several community organizations. Mrs. Lynde is a busybody who likes to meddle in other people's business. She spends a great deal of time looking out her kitchen window and watching the comings and goings of her neighbors, and she's offended that Marilla and Matthew did not ask for her advice before deciding to adopt an orphan. This suggests that Mrs. Lynde is used to weighing in on other people's decisions. Her reaction to the Cuthberts' choice to adopt an orphan shows that she doesn't hold back from speaking her mind.
- Anne chatted the whole ride to Green Gables, repeatedly mentioning her imagination and the things she imagines. What can you tell about Anne's personality and her outlook on life?
Answers will vary but may include inferences that Anne is optimistic and full of wonder. Anne demonstrates that she's well-aware of the realities of her life, and she can articulate her experiences, feelings, and hopes. Her self-awareness is clear when she says, "Would you rather I didn't talk? If you say so I'll stop. I can STOP when I make up my mind to it, although it's difficult."

Personal Connection:

- When Matthew is driving Anne home from the train station, she shares how figuring out the perfect name for something gives her a thrill. Matthew tells her that seeing grubs in the cucumber bed gives him a thrill. What is something that thrills or excites you?
Student answers will vary.



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CHAPTERS 4 – 8

CHAPTER IV. Morning at Green Gables

CHAPTER V. Anne's History

CHAPTER VI. Marilla Makes Up Her Mind

CHAPTER VII. Anne Says Her Prayers

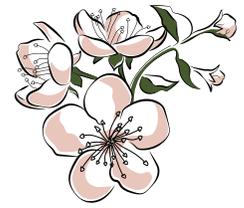
CHAPTER VIII. Anne's Bringing-up Is Begun

Comprehension:

- Why doesn't Anne want to go outside and play?
Anne is afraid she'll get too attached to Green Gables and that leaving will be even harder.
- Summarize Anne's life story. What happened to her before she met the Cuthberts?
Anne was born in Nova Scotia to two high school teachers named Walter and Bertha Shirley, both of whom died of a fever when she was a baby. Mrs. Thomas, a poor woman who scrubbed the Shirleys' house, took in Anne because no one else would. Anne lived with the Thomases until she was eight. Then a neighboring woman named Mrs. Hammond let Anne live with her so Anne could help care for her eight children. Two years later, Anne was sent to the orphan asylum.
- How does Anne respond when Marilla asks if Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Hammond were good to her?
Anne shares that the women "meant to be" good to her. She lists reasons to explain why the women didn't treat her well, as if to justify their actions.
- How does hearing about Anne's history affect Marilla?
Marilla feels pity toward Anne after learning about her past. This makes her start to ask herself if she and Matthew could keep Anne after all.
- What is Mrs. Spencer's suggestion about what could be done about Anne?
Mrs. Spencer suggests that another woman in the neighborhood, Mrs. Blewett, might be interested in adopting Anne instead.
- What does Anne ask for in the prayer she says in front of Marilla?
Anne asks that she be allowed to stay at Green Gables and that she should be beautiful when she grows up.
- How does Anne respond when Marilla tells her she can stay at Green Gables?
Anne bursts into tears of joy.



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Analysis:

- What is the most likely reason why Matthew tells Marilla that he's going to hire Jerry Buote for the summer?
The original reason that Matthew and Marilla wanted to adopt an orphan was to get more help on the farm. If Matthew hires Jerry for the summer, he will have the help he needs. He's likely telling Marilla this to suggest that they could keep Anne rather than adopting a boy instead.
- How does Marilla respond when Mrs. Blewett offers to take Anne? What does this response reveal about how she is feeling about Anne at this point?
Marilla tells Mrs. Spencer and Mrs. Blewett that she and Matthew still haven't decided whether or not they will keep Anne, and she announces that she'll take Anne home so she can discuss the matter more with Matthew. She says this right after she thinks about how guilty she would feel to send Anne home with someone as harsh as Mrs. Blewett. Marilla's insistence that Anne should come back home with her instead of going with Mrs. Blewett shows that Marilla has become more sympathetic with Anne than she was initially. But Marilla's non-committal statement suggests that she is still not completely sure that she wants to keep Anne.
- What does Anne's story about Katie Maurice and Violetta reveal about Anne and what she wishes for?
Anne shares that Katie Maurice and Violetta are imaginary friends that Anne invented before she came to Green Gables. Katie Maurice is what Anne called her reflection in the glass door of a bookcase, and Violetta is an echo in a valley. The fact that Anne made up imaginary friends to talk to shows how lonely she was and how much she wishes for a real friend.

Personal Connection:

- Anne imagines what it would be like to be a bee or a seagull. If you could spend a day as any animal, what animal would you pick and why?
Student answers will vary.