**Our Garden**

**SUMMARY** This is a story about how a group of kids transforms an empty urban lot into a beautiful garden. They get the entire community involved, which brings both beauty and a fresh community spirit to the town.

**LESSON VOCABULARY**
- bottom
- cheat
- clever
- crops
- lazy
- partners
- wealth

**INTRODUCE THE BOOK**

**INTRODUCE THE TITLE AND AUTHOR** Discuss with students the title and the author of *Our Garden*. Based on the title, ask students to describe any images they may have about the story. Suggest students also look at the cover illustration. Ask: How does this picture relate to the title?

**BUILD BACKGROUND** Discuss with students what they know about planting. Ask them if they understand what is involved in growing plants. Discuss any projects students have done in groups, such as decorating the classroom for a holiday or preparing a group report, and whether it was easier to complete the project when everyone worked together.

Invite students to share words from their home languages related to planting or gardens. Post these words on a bulletin board beside the English words.

**PREVIEW/USE ILLUSTRATIONS** As students preview the book, suggest that they notice how the artwork shows groups of people, rather than individuals. Discuss why students think the artist did this. Ask them to note the title of the story, *Our Garden*, and to discuss how it connects to the illustrations.

**READ THE BOOK**

**SET PURPOSE** Have students set a purpose for reading *Our Garden*. Students' interest in gardening or plants should guide this purpose. Suggest that students also consider how working together for a common good can help their own community.

**STRATEGY SUPPORT: PREDICT** As students read about the group working to transform the lot into a community garden, tell them that predicting can give them a chance to use what they already know to make connections with what will happen next. Predicting also allows them to make sense of the story and gives them a stake in the outcome. Encourage students to write their predictions and to check them against what happens in the story.

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

**PAGE 4** Why would a garden give the old lot new life? (Possible response: A garden is full of growing, living things.)

**PAGE 5** Why do you think Mayor Smith is so excited about the garden? (Possible response: He knows the children’s garden will benefit the whole community.)

**PAGE 9** How do the workers at City Hall help with the garden? (They collect money and pay for the plants, seeds, and soil needed for the garden.)

**PAGE 15** What is the author’s purpose in writing a story about a whole community getting involved in a project? (Possible response: He wants to show how everyone has fun and benefits from working together.)
REVISIT THE BOOK
READER RESPONSE
1. Possible response: to show how rundown the lot had become and how much work the kids needed to do
2. Possible response: People will see what a lovely spot the lot has become and will help take care of the garden.
3. Possible response: crops as a verb means “to shorten.” Possible sentence: The haircutter crops five inches off the child’s hair.
4. Possible response: don’t litter, no loud music, no fighting, no dogs allowed in the garden

EXTEND UNDERSTANDING Remind students that the setting is the time and the place where a story takes place, and that the setting can affect what happens in the story and why. Discuss with students whether this particular story could have happened in any other time or place. If so, would it have had the same end results? Discuss with students how the story would be different if it had happened in a very small country village, for example, or in the year 2233.

RESPONSE OPTIONS
WORD WORK Discuss with students their reaction to the word community. In this story, the community is a town and its people. Ask students if they know any other kinds of communities or organizations. Make a diagram with students about the class community. The diagram should show who is in the community and how they work together for the common good of the whole classroom.

SCIENCE CONNECTION
Students can learn more about how plants grow by growing their own bean plants from seeds in the classroom. Suggest that students make a chart with assigned jobs for watering, tracking growth, cleaning up loose soil, and other gardening tasks. Post the chart in the classroom.

Skill Work
TEACH/REVIEW VOCABULARY
To reinforce the contextual meaning of the vocabulary words, ask students to write sentences using each word. Then invite students to build a word wall where they will come up with other words that have to do with plants. Suggest that students position these words on the wall so that they form a picture that resembles a growing plant with many leaves and branches.

TARGET SKILL AND STRATEGY
AUTHOR’S PURPOSE Remind students that every author writes a story for a purpose, or reason, such as to entertain, give information, persuade, or teach. Ask students why they think the author wrote this story. Suggest that as students read, they track and make note of any story details that might support their answers.

PREDICT Remind students that to predict means to guess what you think might happen next in a story based on what has already happened. Suggest that students pause once or twice while they read the story to make predictions about what is going to happen. Then they can see whether their predictions were right, as they continue to read.

ADDITIONAL SKILL INSTRUCTION
PLOT Remind students that plot is the series of events in a story. Instruct students that as they read, they should look for a problem or conflict that the story is posing. Then they can figure out what is happening in the beginning of the story, the middle of the story, and at the end of the story, when the conflict is resolved.
Name ____________________________________________

Our Garden

Author's Purpose

• The **author's purpose** is the reason or reasons the author has for writing.
• To **inform**, **persuade**, **entertain**, or **express** are common reasons for writing.

**Directions**  Answer the questions.

1. Why do you think the author gave so many details about how everyone cleaned up the empty lot?

2. Why do you think the author wrote a book about a group of people building a garden rather than just one person?

3. Explain why one of the purposes the author may have had was to inform.

4. How did the author show she also wanted to entertain?

5. In what way did the author try to persuade?

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Our Garden
Vocabulary

Directions  Find the vocabulary word that matches each clue below.

Check the Words You Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bottom</th>
<th>lazy</th>
<th>cheat</th>
<th>partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clever</td>
<td>wealth</td>
<td>crops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. It means a large amount of something, usually money. _______________________
2. It means the opposite of hardworking. _______________________
3. It means the opposite of top. _______________________
4. If someone is dishonest, he or she might do this. _______________________
5. We use this word to describe a person who likes to lie around all day. _______________________
6. We use this word to describe kinds of plants you grow to eat. _______________________
7. This word is used to describe someone who is smart. _______________________
8. If you and somebody else are these, you work together toward a goal. _______________________

Directions  Write a sentence that uses two of the vocabulary words.

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