

# English Literature Activities



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## *The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde*

Every afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant's garden. It was a large lovely garden, with soft green grass. Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were twelve peach-trees that in the springtime broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them. "How happy we are here!" they cried to each other.

One day the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend the Cornish ogre, and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over he had said all that he had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle. When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.

"What are you doing here?" he cried in a very gruff voice, and the children ran away.

"My own garden is my own garden," said the Giant; "anyone can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself." So he built a high wall all around it, and put up a notice-board.

### **TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED**

He was a very selfish Giant.



**After reading the beginning of the story, decide if the sentences below are True or False and correct the false ones:**

1. The children played in the Giant's garden every morning before school.
2. The garden had soft green grass and twelve peach-trees.
3. The flowers in the garden were shaped like animals.
4. The Giant had been visiting his friend, a Cornish ogre, for seven years.
5. When the Giant returned, he was happy to see the children playing in his garden.
6. The Giant built a high wall around his garden to keep the children out.
7. The notice-board in the garden said, 'Children are welcome to play.'





**Read the text about the writer's life and decide if the sentences that follow are True or False. Correct the false ones:**

Oscar Wilde was a well-known Irish writer and poet born on October 16, 1854, in Dublin, Ireland. He was a brilliant student and attended Trinity College, where he studied classics. Later, he went to Oxford University, where he became famous for his sharp wit and humor. Wilde was known for his charming personality and ability to make people laugh.



Wilde is best remembered for his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which tells the story of a young man who wishes to remain forever young while his portrait ages. He also wrote popular plays, such as *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a comedy that satirizes Victorian society. He wrote many stories for children, one of which is “The Selfish Giant”.

His writing often explored themes of love, beauty, and the limits of society, challenging what was thought to be normal at the time. Wilde had a unique style and was famous for his clever quotes, such as “Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”

Despite his success, Wilde faced many difficulties in his personal life. In 1895, he was arrested and imprisoned for two years because of his sexuality, which was illegal in England at the time. After his release from prison, he lived in France, where he continued to write but had many problems with his health and financial situation. Oscar Wilde died on November 30, 1900, in Paris. His works remain popular today, showing what a brilliant author he was.

1. Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin, Ireland.
2. He studied mathematics at Trinity College.
3. Wilde is famous for his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.
4. He was arrested in 1895 for his writing.
5. Oscar Wilde spent two years in prison for his sexuality.
6. After he was free again, Wilde moved to Italy.
7. Oscar Wilde died in Paris on November 30, 1900.
8. His works are still popular and inspire readers today.



**Express your ideas and feelings about the author in a few lines:**

Now read another part from "The Selfish Giant" and answer the

questions that follow:



"I cannot understand why the spring is so late," said the Giant. "I hope the children will come to play in my garden again. I will not be selfish anymore."

He thought of the children and how happy they had been playing in his garden. He remembered their laughter and their joy. He had made them sad by being selfish, and he wanted to make it right.

The next morning, the Giant woke up early and went out into the garden. The sun was shining, and the flowers were blooming. He noticed that the children were playing outside the garden wall, looking longingly at the beautiful garden.

"I will let them in," he said to himself. "I will not be selfish anymore. They can come and play in my garden whenever they want."

The Giant opened the gate, and the children rushed in, laughing with joy. They danced and played among the flowers, and the Giant watched them with a happy heart. He was really very sorry for what he had done.

**1 What was the problem that the Giant wanted to solve?**

**2 What did he decide to do and what happened after that?**

**3 How do you feel about the Giant's new decision? Why is that?**

**How do you think this story will end? Write the last paragraph:**



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## Text True/False:

1. **False** – The children played in the garden every afternoon after school.
2. **True**
3. **False** – The flowers were described as being like stars, not animals.
4. **True**
5. **False** – The Giant was angry to see the children playing in his garden.
6. **True**
7. **False** – The notice-board said, 'Trespassers will be prosecuted.'

## Biography True/False:

1. **True**
2. **False** (He studied classics.)
3. **True**
4. **False** (He was arrested for his sexuality.)
5. **True**
6. **False** (He moved to France.)
7. **True**
8. **True**

## Answers to the questions about the second text:

### **1 What was the problem that the Giant wanted to solve?**

He couldn't understand why spring was so late to come to his garden

### **2 What did he decide to do and what happened after that?**

He decided to let the children come and play in his garden. After that, the children came in very happy and started playing and dancing. The Giant felt very happy now and he was sorry for what he had done previously.

### **3 How do you feel about the Giant's new decision? Why is that?**



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