

Read the passages "from *Bridge to Terabithia*" and "from *The Secret Garden*" and then answer Numbers 1 through 5.

## Passage 1: from *Bridge to Terabithia*

by Katherine Paterson

*In this excerpt from Bridge to Terabithia, a young boy remembers the first time he brought his best friend to a favorite place in the woods.*

1 Terabithia was their secret, which was a good thing, for how could Jess have ever explained it to an outsider? Just walking down the hill toward the woods made something warm and liquid steal through his body. The closer he came to the dry creek bed and the crab apple tree rope the more he could feel the beating of his heart. He grabbed the end of the rope and swung out toward the other bank with a kind of wild exhilaration and landed gently on his feet, taller and stronger and wiser in that mysterious land.

2 Leslie's favorite place besides the castle stronghold was the pine forest. There the trees grew so thick at the top that the sunshine was veiled. No low bush or grass could grow in that dim light, so the group was carpeted with golden needles.

3 "I used to think this place was haunted," Jess had confessed to Leslie the first afternoon he had revved up his courage to bring her there.

4 "Oh, but it is," she said. "But you don't have to be scared. It's not haunted with evil things."

5 "How do you know?"

6 "I can just feel it. Listen."

7 At first he heard only the stillness. It was the stillness that had always frightened him before, but this time it was like the moment after Miss Edmunds finished a song, just after the chords hummed down to silence. Leslie was right. They stood there, not moving, not wanting the swish of dry needles beneath their feet to break the spell. Far away from their former world came the cry of geese heading southward.

- 8 Leslie took a deep breath. "This is not an ordinary place," she whispered. "Even the rulers of Terabithia come into it only at times of greatest sorrow or greatest joy. We must strive to keep it sacred. It would not do to disturb the Spirits."
- 9 He nodded, and without speaking, they went back to the creek bank where they shared together a solemn meal of crackers and dry fruit.

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## Passage 2: from *The Secret Garden*

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

- 10 She was standing inside the secret garden.
- 11 It was the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place any one could imagine. The high walls which shut it in were covered with the leafless stems of climbing roses which were so thick that they were matted together. Mary Lennox knew they were roses because she had seen a great many roses in India. All the ground was covered with grass of a wintry brown and out of it grew clumps of bushes which were surely rosebushes if they were alive. There were numbers of standard roses which had so spread their branches that they were like little trees. There were other trees in the garden, and one of the things which made the place look strangest and loveliest was that climbing roses had run all over them and here and there they had caught at each other or at a far-reaching branch and had crept from one tree to another and made lovely bridges of themselves. It was this hazy tangle from tree to tree which made it all look so mysterious. Mary had thought it must be different from other gardens which had not been left all by themselves so long; and indeed it was different from any other place she had ever seen in her life.
- 12 "How still it is!" she whispered. "How still!"
- 13 Then she waited a moment and listened at the stillness. The robin, who had flown to his treetop, was still as all the rest. He did not even flutter his wings; he sat without stirring, and looked at Mary.
- 14 "No wonder it is still," she whispered again. "I am the first person who has spoken in here for ten years."

## FSA ELA Reading Practice Test Questions

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- 15 She moved away from the door, stepping as softly as if she were afraid of awakening some one. She was glad that there was grass under her feet and that her steps made no sounds. She walked under one of the fairy-like gray arches between the trees and looked up at the sprays and tendrils which formed them. "I wonder if they are all quite dead," she said. "Is it all a quite dead garden? I wish it wasn't."
- 16 If she had been Ben Weatherstaff she could have told whether the wood was alive by looking at it, but she could only see that there were only gray or brown sprays and branches and none showed any signs of even a tiny leaf-bud anywhere.
- 17 But she was inside the wonderful garden and she could come through the door under the ivy any time and she felt as if she had found a world all her own.

Excerpt from *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. In the public domain.

## Comparing and Contrasting Checklist

**Directions:** Read both passages and answer the following questions. A separate piece of paper may be used.

1. What is the main character like?
2. How does the main character react to situations and other characters?
3. What is the setting?
4. What are the plot events?
5. What is the theme?
6. What kind of style does the author use?