

Anne of Green Gables

A study guide by Amelia Johnson
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My Home of Avonlea

Anne comes to live with Matthew and Marilla at Green Gables, set in the fictional town of Avonlea. But what does Avonlea look like? Believe it or not, Anne's hometown is actually based on a real place! The original author of the book series, L. M. Montgomery, based Avonlea off of her own childhood home in Cavendish on Prince Edward Island. The island is Canada's smallest province and lies north of Nova Scotia. Cavendish was founded early in 1790 by three Scottish families and was primarily a farming community. It still retains most of its small country feeling, despite being the largest seasonal resort area on the island. Part of what makes *Anne of Green Gables* special is the strong connection that Anne has with nature. What are some of the ways that Anne connects to her new home through nature?

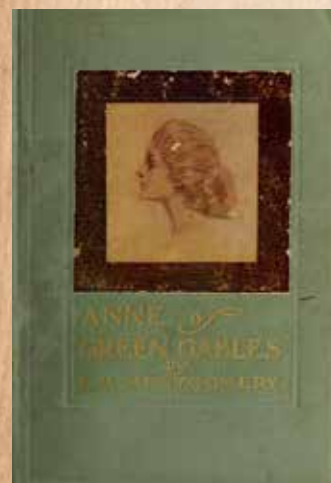


"Green Gables House Backyard", Markus Gregory, 2014, Creative Commons-Share Alike 3.0 Unported

"Cavendish - Canada National Park PEI", rolker, 2010, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported

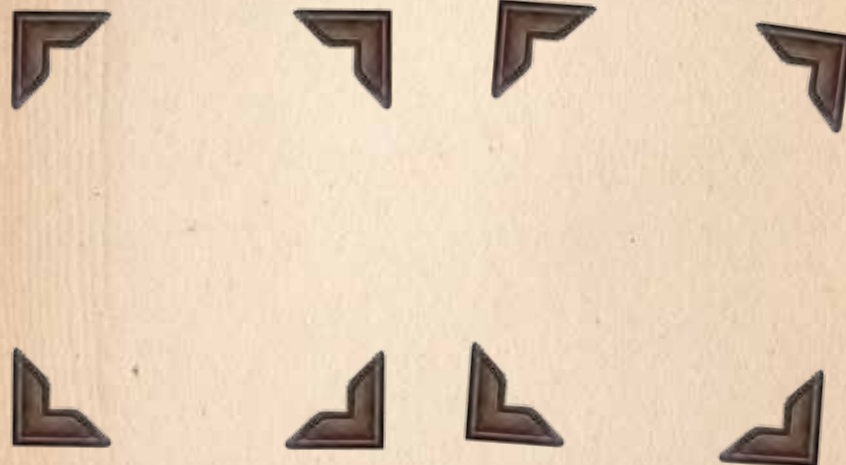
To the Poet, I Give My Heart

The story of *Anne of Green Gables*, as noted by Montgomery, starts with a news article the author read as a young girl: a couple was mistakenly sent an orphan girl after they had asked for a boy, but they decided to keep the girl. Sound familiar? In addition to this link to Montgomery's own childhood, there are many interesting parallels between the author's own life and that of Anne herself.



Lucy Maud Montgomery was born in 1874 on Prince Edward Island. Her mother died when Montgomery was only about 21 months old. Her grief-stricken father sent her to live with her grandparents in Cavendish, where she spent most of her growing-up years. Although her childhood was quite lonely, as Montgomery recalled later in her numerous journals, it was a time that she had to develop her imagination. She spent as much time as she could reading, and at the time she was confined to mostly poetry. This influenced her later writing style and possibly accounts for Anne's own fascination with verse and poetry.

Montgomery herself studied and received a teaching degree in Charlottetown in one year and then studied literature in Halifax. *Anne of Green Gables* became her first published book and the start of her legacy. Since its publication in 1908, the book has sold more than 50 million copies worldwide and has been translated into more than 35 different languages. Montgomery herself wrote 20 novels, 500 poems, and over 500 short stories!

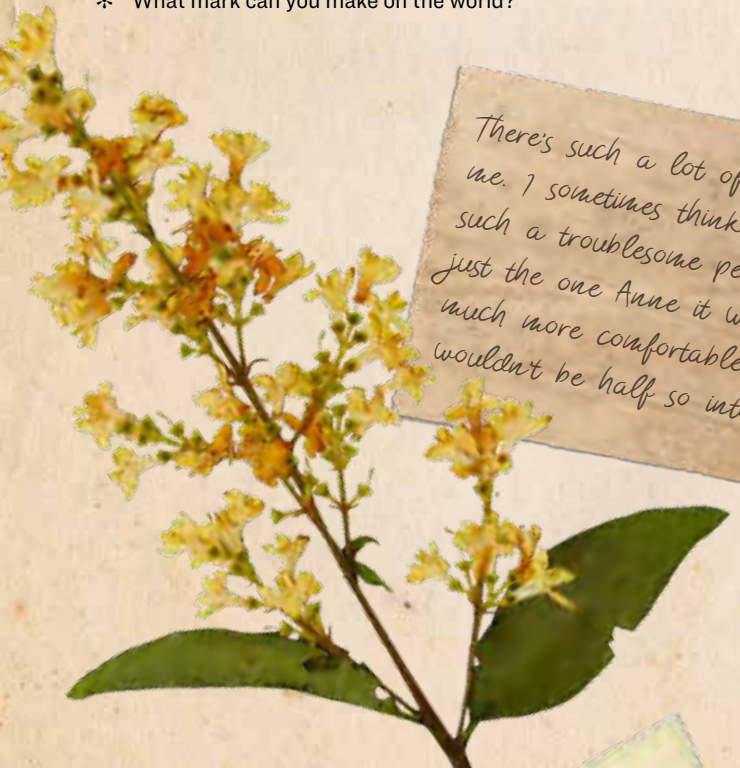


Discovering Identity

It is not uncommon for people to question their identities. In fact, many stories deal with the discovery of who one is. Having that understanding can influence a person's immediate decisions as well as their future.

In *Anne of Green Gables* there are many moments in which Anne explores her identity. The way others perceive Anne is very important to her. She wishes to be called *Cordelia*, and when this request is denied, she makes sure that at the very least her name is properly spelled with an e at the end. Anne also worries about her appearance, believing that her red hair and freckles are ugly. However through the course of her story, she finds that her value lies in much more than her looks.

- * What are some of the things that make you unique? What are the strengths of those attributes?
- * What is something you've always wanted to do? What is something about you that makes it possible to do this?
- * Turn to a friend. What are some of the things they love about you? Tell them what you love about them as well.
- * What mark can you make on the world?



There's such a lot of different Annes in me. I sometimes think that is why I'm such a troublesome person. If I was just the one Anne it would be ever so much more comfortable, but then it wouldn't be half so interesting.

Imagine Something Worthwhile

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, there are basic needs that must be met for people to progress to other needs. Once basic psychological and safety needs are met, the following needs are based on *identity*. Though Anne's circumstances have often been unstable, she has grown up with her basic needs met and has relied on her imagination to create an identity. Once she comes to Green Gables, her sense of identity becomes more grounded in her circumstances. She is Anne of Green Gables. She has a home and community where she belongs. Though her imagination and creativity are still a part of her, Avonlea and those in it become a part of her as well.

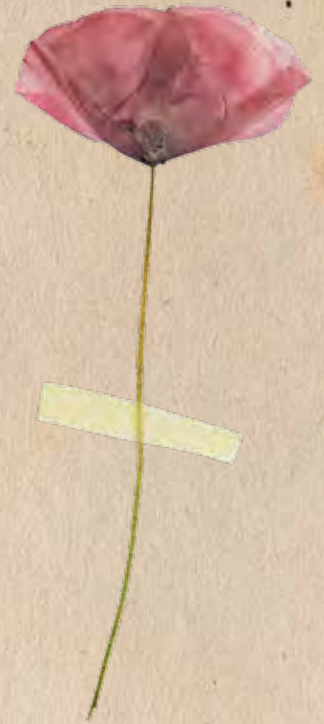
Anne can **see** beauty in everything, use her imagination, and make up incredible stories.

Anne **has** a home in Avonlea, a good friend in Diana Barry.

Anne **likes** to daydream.

Anne **is** a creative and intelligent young woman.

What defines YOUR identity?



Because when you are imagining, you might as well imagine something worthwhile. It's delightful when your imaginations come true, isn't it?

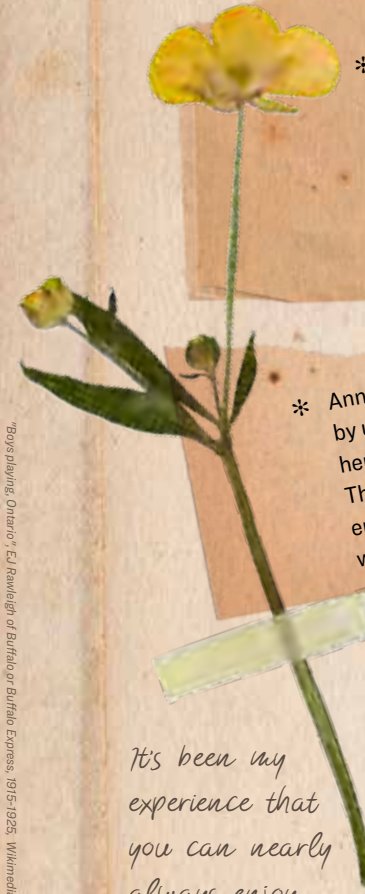
To Host a Proper Tea

One of the most memorable scenes in *Anne of Green Gables* is when the tea party that Anne and Diana had been looking forward to goes awry. Although having tea parties has fallen out of favor since World War II, the practice of afternoon tea has very recently become quite popular again. Afternoon tea was historically meant to be a light meal to stave off hunger between dinner (lunch) and supper and was characterized by fine china, exquisite manners, and polite conversation. Canada's afternoon tea tradition still follows many of the rituals that began in the UK, and understanding the rules of social etiquette is important to the Canadians. Here are some tips for hosting your own tea party.

- * A traditional afternoon tea menu usually has savories, like small sandwiches, scones served with clotted cream and jams, and sweets. They are all presented together on a multi-tiered serving platter that separates each of the courses.
- * The tea is ideally kept loose leaf (make sure to keep steeping instructions for each type of tea close!).
- * When you are holding the party in a home, the first cup of tea should be served by the hostess or host. At a restaurant, however, the tea is usually poured by the wait staff.
- * When enjoying your tea, never blow on it to cool it down.
- * Do not clink your cup as you stir.
- * Pinkies should never be up, and the cup should be held firmly by its handle.
- * When savoring your scone, it should be torn like bread with your hands (never sliced) and then dressed with clotted cream and jam before taking a bite.

The Power of Play

Playing is an essential part of childhood. It allows children to better understand their senses as well as the world around them. Children use play as a way to let out their emotions, explore different circumstances, and learn where they may lie in the grand scheme of things. Play allows children to see the results of action without long-term consequences and learn the importance of certain behaviors. In addition to this, it allows for children to learn to interact with others and develop different motor skills. Play can be a release for adults as well. Besides being a great source of enjoyment, play gives everyone a break from the stresses of everyday life and allows us to reconnect with ourselves.



- * Through self-directed play, children can follow their interests, explore the unknown, link outcomes with choices, conquer their fears, and make friends. Play also has important links to developing key skills that serve as a foundation for lifelong success, including critical thinking, communication, problem solving, and collaboration. - Boston Children's Museum.

* Anne certainly finds time to play and does this primarily by using her imagination. This allows her to exercise her creativity and allow for the idea of new possibilities. Though we often see Anne's imagination as a way for her to entertain herself, having a firm vision of something coupled with a passion for it helps make dreams reality.

It's been my experience that you can nearly always enjoy things if you make up your mind firmly that you will.



"Afternoon tea party at Beinn", 1915, Wikimedia Commons public domain
"Boys playing, Ontario", [LJ Rawleigh] of Buffalo or Buffalo Express, 1915-1925, Wikimedia Commons public domain

Try Your Hand

Both Anne Shirley and L. M. Montgomery loved poetry, often dabbling in it themselves. Written below is part of the poem Anne recites at the White Sands Hotel. Try your hand at making your own poetic masterpiece!

The Maiden's Vow

By Carolina Oliphant (and you!)

I've made a _____, I'll keep it _____,

I'll never married be;

For the only _____ that I think on

Will never think o' _____.

Now gone to _____,

Their face no more I'll see;

But often will I think o' _____,

That would not think o' _____.

Stop, stop now, good _____,

Oh, do not _____ me;

For the only _____ I ere _____ on,

Lies _____ in the _____.

Oh, it's delightful to have ambitions. I'm so glad I have such a lot. And there never seems to be any end to them that's the best of it. Just as soon as you attain to one ambition you see another one glittering higher up still. It does make life so interesting.

Autographs

People laugh at me because I use big words. But if you have big ideas, you have to use big words to express them, haven't you?

