

# The Selfish Giant

## Comprehension

Every afternoon, as they were coming home 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 spring-time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat in 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 there?' 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 round it, and put up a notice board.

TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED.

He was a very selfish Giant.

The poor children had nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it. They used to wander round the high wall when their lessons were over and talk about the beautiful garden inside.

'How happy we were there,' they said to each other.



Then the Spring came and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giant it was still winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass but when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost.

'Spring has forgotten this garden,' they cried, 'so we will live here all the year round.' The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak and the Frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs and he roared all day about the garden and blew the chimney pots down.



'This is a delightful spot,' he said, 'we must ask the Hail to visit.' So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.

'I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming,' said the Selfish Giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; 'I hope there will be a change in the weather.'

But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. The Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the Giant's garden she gave none. 'He is too selfish,' she said. So it was always Winter there, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and the Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.



## Questions

1. Find and copy six adjectives used to describe the garden in the second paragraph. (3 marks)

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2. When did the children play in the Giant's garden? (1 mark)

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3. The word 'delicate', as used in the text, is closest in meaning to:

dainty                  elegant                  flimsy                  fragile

4. Where had the Giant been and why did he come back? (2 marks)

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5. Name two things the Giant did to keep the children out. (2 marks)

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6. How do you think the children felt when they could no longer play in the garden and why? (2 marks)

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7. The road was not suitable for playing on. Find and copy a phrase that supports this statement. (2 marks)

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## Questions

8. The Snow and the Frost are personified (given human characteristics). Find two examples in the text that show this. (2 marks)

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9. Find and copy another example of personification. (1 mark)

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10. What damage did the weather cause to the Giant's house? (1 mark)

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11. Explain how you know that it isn't spring in the Giant's garden. Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (3 marks)

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12. Think of 3 synonyms for selfish. (2 marks)

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13. How does the Giant feel about the Spring not arriving in his garden? How do you know? (2 marks)

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14. Why are the types of weather and seasons given capital letters? (1 mark)

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## Answers

1. Find and copy six adjectives used to describe the garden in the second paragraph. (3 marks)

Any six of the following: large, lovely, soft, green, beautiful, delicate, rich, pink, pearl.

2. When did the children play in the Giant's garden? (1 mark)

The children played in the garden on their way home from school.

3. The word 'delicate', as used in the text, is closest in meaning to:

dainty

elegant

flimsy

fragile

4. Where had the Giant been and why did he come back? (2 marks)

Visiting his friend and he came back because they had run out of things to talk about.

5. Name two things the Giant did to keep the children out. (2 marks)

He built a high wall and put up a sign saying: 'Trespassers will be prosecuted'.

6. How do you think the children felt when they could no longer play in the garden and why? (2 marks)

I think they felt sad and disappointed because they were always happy when they were in the garden.

7. The road was not suitable for playing on. Find and copy a phrase that supports this statement. (2 marks)

The road was very dusty and full of hard stones.



## Answers

8. The Snow and the Frost are personified (given human characteristics). Find two examples in the text that show this. (2 marks)

With her great white cloak and the Frost painted all the trees silver.

9. Find and copy another example of personification. (1 mark)

He ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go

He was dressed in grey

10. What damage did the weather cause to the Giant's house? (1 mark)

The roof slates were broken.

11. Explain how you know that it isn't spring in the Giant's garden. Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (3 marks)

I know it isn't spring because the Giant says, "I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming,"

When he looks out of the window, he sees cold and white. The text also says that it is always winter in the garden and that the North Wind, and the Hail, and the Frost, and the Snow danced.

12. Think of 3 synonyms for selfish. (2 marks)

Any 3 suitable words such as: unkind, self-absorbed, nasty, thoughtless, inconsiderate, mean, miserable, greedy.

13. How does the Giant feel about the Spring not arriving in his garden? How do you know? (2 marks)

He feels confused or annoyed. I know this because he says he cannot understand and he is sitting looking out of the window wondering why it is still winter.

14. Why are the types of weather and seasons given capital letters? (1 mark)

They are given capital letters because the author has made them like humans so Snow, Frost, Hail, Autumn etc. are their names. Proper nouns have capital letters.

