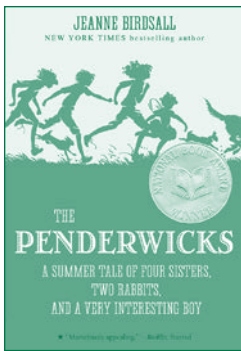


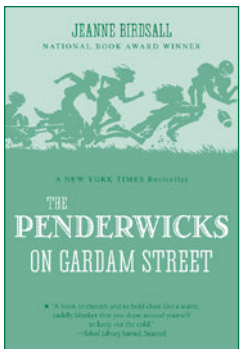
THE PENDERWICKS

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

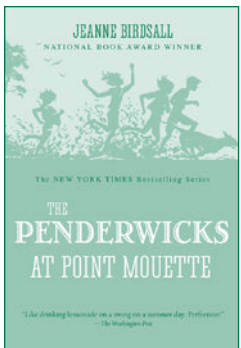
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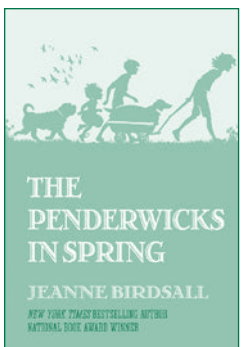
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ABOUT THE BOOKS

Where the lively Penderwick sisters and their dog go, fun, adventure, chaos, laughter, and tears are sure to follow.

Since the death of their mother, Rosalind takes her responsibility as the oldest Penderwick seriously. Sometimes seen as a troublemaker, Skye, the second oldest, loves math, astrophysics, and soccer. Next in line, Jane, an avid reader and author of several Sabrina Starr books, shares Skye's love of soccer. Batty, the youngest Penderwick, who adores all animals, especially their dog, Hound, keeps the rest of the family hopping. Although Mr. Penderwick does an admirable job of keeping the family on track most of the time, situations frequently get out of hand, providing readers with hilarious romps as well as poignant moments.

In *The Penderwicks*, the family rents a summer cottage on the Arundel estate. There they meet affable Jeffrey and his snooty mother, Mrs. Tifton. To the dismay of Jeffrey and the Penderwick sisters, Mrs. Tifton plans to remarry and send Jeffrey to a residential military academy. Can the girls save Jeffrey from this dreadful fate?

In *The Penderwicks on Gardam Street*, the Penderwicks are back home for the school year. It has been four years since Mrs. Penderwick died, and Aunt Claire is pressuring Mr. Penderwick to start dating. Clearly, this situation calls for a Save-Daddy Plan to avoid disaster for the Penderwick family.

The Penderwicks at Point Mouette takes three of the Penderwick sisters, Aunt Claire, and Jeffrey on a summer vacation in Maine. Rosalind is off to

the beach, and that leaves Skye as OAP (Oldest Available Penderwick)—a terrifying notion for all, but for Skye especially. It's a rollicking ride filled with laughs and joyful tears!

In *The Penderwicks in Spring*, there are surprises in store for each member of the family. Some surprises are just wonderful, like neighbor Nick Geiger coming home from war. And some are ridiculous, like Batty's new dog-walking business. Batty is saving up her dog-walking money for an extra-special surprise for her family, which she plans to present on her upcoming birthday. But when some unwelcome surprises make themselves known, the best-laid plans fall apart.

Each story line brings its own adventures, but furious soccer playing, sisterly squabbles, serious MOPS (Meetings of Penderwick Sisters) and MOYPS (Meetings of the Younger Penderwick Siblings), new installments of Sabrina Starr novels, dramatic and musical performances, heartwarming talks, parental wisdom, secrets kept, boyfriend troubles, and bouts of laughter are constants in every book. Reading each story is like coming home to a loving, caring—albeit boisterous and sometimes misguided—family.

GRADES 4–7

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask students to write a journal entry on the topic of families with many children. They may write from their own experience, their observations of others, books they have read, or television shows or movies they have seen.

When they finish writing, group the class in literature circles of four to six students and have them discuss their journal responses. This discussion will provide a natural segue into the introduction of the Penderwick books—stories about the adventures of a large family in which there is never a dull moment.

Although the richest reading experiences will probably come if all four books are read in chronological order, this is not the only way to enjoy the books. After a brief booktalk on each book, allow students to choose which book they want to read first. Group students who choose the same book in pairs or literature circles. The following activities are designed to be adapted for situations in which students have read one, two, three, or all four Penderwick books.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.3, W.5.3, W.6.3, and W.7.3; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.4.1, SL.5.1, SL.6.1, and SL.7.1.

CONNECTING TO THE CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

Journaling Allow students to enjoy their chosen novel by reading it straight through without instructional interruptions. When they finish, have them write a journal entry describing their response to the novel as a whole. What did they find particularly appealing about the story? What did they learn about relationships in large families? Which characters can they relate to the most? What in the story reminds them of their own experiences?

Correlates to Common Core Standards: Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.1, W.5.1, W.6.1, and W.7.1; Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1, and RL.7.1; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1; Knowledge of Language: L.4.3, L.5.3, L.6.3, and L.7.3.

Writing Jane writes stories about Sabrina Starr. Based on the information Jane provides, students may want to re-create or devise new Sabrina Starr stories, or write a letter to Jane suggesting situations she might use in her books. After students complete the rough draft of their story or letter, students should select a partner and read their writing to them. Partners should write questions about what they hear in order to help the writers add more to their writing to fully develop their pieces.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.3, W.5.3, W.6.3, and W.7.3; Production and Distribution of Writing: W.4.5, W.5.5, W.6.5, and W.7.5; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1; Knowledge of Language: L.4.3, L.5.3, L.6.3, and L.7.3.

Storytelling When Batty was the same age as Lydia, they both liked to hear a bedtime story every night. Ask students to write a bedtime story to be read aloud based on a family experience or about an adventure they invent. Have students work with a partner to finesse their storytelling skills. Students should practice varying their pacing, volume, inflection, and emphases to create drama and suspense for their story. Then have students present their stories in small groups or for other classrooms.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.3, W.5.3, W.6.3, and W.7.3; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1; Knowledge of Language: L.4.3, L.5.3, L.6.3, and L.7.3.

Literature Throughout all four books, Jane and other characters make numerous references to authors, characters, titles, and phrases familiar to book lovers. Divide the class into four groups and assign each group one of the books in the series. Ask each group to peruse their selected book and to make a list of all the references to other pieces of literature. As a class, compile a master list of literary texts and have each student select at least one book to read. Have each student write an essay explaining the connection that book holds for a Penderwick family member. Students should include evidence from their selected books to support the connection. Have students share their essays in small groups and post them on a Penderwicks bulletin board.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.1, W.5.1, W.6.1, and W.7.1; Production and Distribution of Writing: W.4.5, W.5.5, W.6.5, and W.7.5; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1; Knowledge of Language: L.4.3, L.5.3, L.6.3, and L.7.3.

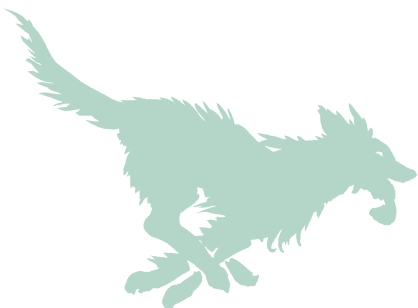
The Penderwick books are frequently compared to Louisa May Alcott's books about the March sisters. Suggest that interested students read *Little Women* and discuss the similarities and differences between the Marches and the Penderwicks.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.4.1, SL.5.1, SL.6.1, and SL.7.1; Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.4.1, R.5.1, RL.6.1, and RL.7.1 and RL.4.3, RL.5.3, RL.6.3, and RL.7.3 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: RL.4.9, RL.5.9, RL.6.9, and RL.7.9.

Listening Aunt Claire, Mrs. Grunfeld, Nick, Iantha, and Mr. Penderwick are good listeners, but Mrs. Tifton and Oliver are not. Ask students to find passages where a character is described or shown as a good listener and devise tips Mrs. Tipton and Oliver could follow should they ever be inclined to improve their poor listening behavior. Have students make an illustrated flyer to place in the counselor's office, classroom, and/or the library.

Correlates to Common Core Standards: Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.2, W.5.2, W.6.2, and W.7.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1.

Vocabulary/Use of Language Each Penderwick book abounds with wonderful, fascinating, even unusual words. Have



students go through the books and collect interesting words to create a Penderwick dictionary in which they include the word, its definition, the sentence from the book in which the word was used, an original sentence using the word, and a visual depiction of the word. Have students use their dictionary as a resource for their individual writing activities.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Standards:** Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.2, W.5.2, W.6.2, and W.7.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1; Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.4.4, L.5.4, L.6.4, and L.7.4.

THE ARTS

Art The Penderwick family and their friends expand over the course of the four books. Keeping each character's interests, personality traits, and dress preferences in mind, have students sketch and then paint, color, or chalk a group portrait for each book and/or dress up as the characters in each book for group photographs.

Music Tchaikovsky, Bach, Liszt, Stravinsky's Piano Sonata, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, Berliner Philharmoniker and Herbert von Karajan symphonies, "Taps," "Edelweiss," "Do-Re-Mi," Springsteen's "I'm on Fire," Sondheim's "City on Fire," "The 1812 Overture," Aaron Copeland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*—parodied as *Fanfare for the Uncommon Seal*—and George Gershwin's "Summertime" are musical composers or pieces mentioned in one Penderwick book or another. Suggest that students supplement their reading by finding recordings of these pieces or works by these composers and sharing them with class members.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Standards:** Language: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.4.2, R.5.2, RL.6.2, and RL.7.2; Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1; Knowledge of Language: L.4.3, L.5.3, L.6.3, and L.7.3.

Cooking From Churchie's Gingerbread to Rosalind's Pineapple Upside-Down Cake, to Jeffrey's Stuffed Green Peppers, to Batty's chocolate birthday cake, culinary delights are important in each of the four books. But since recipes are not provided in the books, have students find recipes for foods mentioned in the books and, as a class, create a cookbook entitled *Food for Penderwick Family*,

Friends, and Fans. Students should include recipes, illustrations, and an introductory paragraph for each recipe explaining its importance in the book. Make copies of the cookbook for each student to take home.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Standards:** Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.2, W.5.2, W.6.2, and W.7.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1.

GEOGRAPHY

When they are traveling to Arundel in *The Penderwicks*, the family follows a map until Hound eats it. Also, when Batty leaves Arundel to go to Boston, she mentions several modes of transportation she will have to take to get there. Using geographical references from each of the four books, have students find the locations mentioned on a map of the United States from New Jersey to Maine. Ask students to research interesting information about the various locations and post the information along with a United States map in the class.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Standards:** Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.2, W.5.2, W.6.2, and W.7.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1; Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.4.4, L.5.4, L.6.4, and L.7.4.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Penderwick sisters adore Nick, and each of them has a different but special attachment to him. As Nick prepares to leave for war, emotions run high; no one wants him to go, and the Penderwicks as well as the Geigers are afraid for him. The United States is sending many soldiers to war, and citizens in every community are dealing with their loved ones fighting in countries far from home. As a class, brainstorm appropriate interview questions for veterans and families of veterans. Connect with veterans in your area and have students conduct interviews so they can grasp the reality of Nick's situation. Finally, have students write a letter of gratitude to the people they interviewed, thanking them for their sacrifice in service of our country's freedom.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Standards:** Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: W.4.4, W.5.4, W.6.4, and W.7.4; Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: W.4.7, W.5.7, W.6.7, and W.7.7; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1.

SCIENCE

Have students explore the flora, fauna, and terrain in each Penderwick book. Which books have formal gardens and cultivated plants and trees? Which have trees and plants in a natural setting? Which have domesticated animals? Which have animals in the wild? Which have rugged terrains? Which have gentle terrains? Which have man-made landscapes? Working in small groups, ask students to write an explanation of how the flora, fauna, and terrain coincide with or enhance the story line in a particular book. Each group can present its findings as part of a class symposium entitled "Plants, Animals, Landscapes, and Penderwick Plots."

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Standards:** Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.2, W.5.2, W.6.2, and W.7.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1; Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.4.4, L.5.4, L.6.4, and L.7.4; Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1, and RL.7.1.

MATH

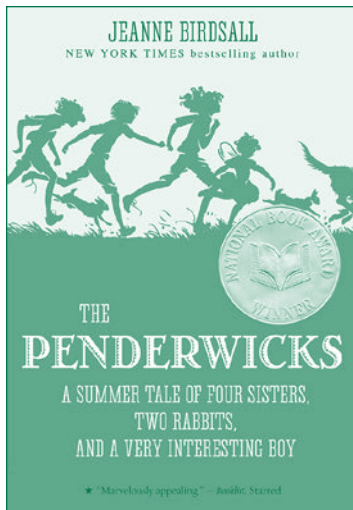
Skye loves math. In *The Penderwicks on Gardam Street*, she recites prime numbers to improve her concentration before soccer matches; in *The Penderwicks at Point Mouette*, she recites them to calm herself while she watches over an anxious Jeffrey. After several student volunteers explain what prime numbers are, encourage the class to make its own list of prime numbers.

In *The Penderwicks*, Jeffrey tries to interest Skye in music by playing a Bach piece and talking about mathematical progressions. In *The Penderwicks at Point Mouette*, Turron devises games with his drum to teach Batty about whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes as well as three-four time, four-four time, and syncopation. Ask students who are interested in both math and music to write and present an explanation for the class on the connections that Jeffrey tries to explain to Skye, and to demonstrate some of the games Turron might have made up for Batty.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Standards:** Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.2, W.5.2, W.6.2, and W.7.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1; Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.4.4, L.5.4, L.6.4, and L.7.4; Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1, and RL.7.1.

READERS' THEATER

STARRING THE PENDERWICKS



With lively dialogue, characters with distinct personalities, and lots of action, the four Penderwick novels can provide excellent opportunities for student-created readers' theater experiences.

Introduce the concept of readers' theater by asking six students to practice and read (using their best expressive reading skills) the following script, which was created from pages 2–3 of the first novel, *The Penderwicks*.

Skye: "It's Batty's fault."

Batty: "It is not."

Skye: "Of course it is. We wouldn't be lost if Hound hadn't eaten the map, and Hound wouldn't have eaten the map if you hadn't hidden your sandwich in it."

Jane: "Maybe it's fate that Hound ate the map. Maybe we'll discover something wonderful while we're lost."

Skye: "We'll discover that, when I'm in the backseat for too long with my younger sisters, I go insane and murder them."

Mr. P.: "Steady, troops. Rosalind, how about a game?"

Rosalind: "Let's do I Went to the Zoo and I Saw. I went to the zoo and I saw an anteater. Jane?"

Jane: "I went to the zoo and I saw an anteater and a buffalo."

Narrator: Batty was between Jane and Skye, so her turn was next.

Batty: "I went to the zoo and I saw an anteater, a buffalo, and a kangaroo."

Skye: "Kangaroo starts with a *k*, not a *c*."

Batty: "It does not. It starts with a *c*, like *cat*."

Rosalind: "Just take your turn, Skye."

Skye: "There's no point in playing if we don't do it right."

Narrator: Rosalind, who was sitting in the front seat with Mr. Penderwick, turned around and gave Skye her oldest-sister stare. It wouldn't do much, Rosalind knew. After all, Skye was only one year younger than she was. But it might quiet her long enough for Rosalind to concentrate on where they were going. They really were badly lost. This trip should have taken an hour and a half, and already they'd been on the road for three.



Prepared by Elizabeth A. Poe, PhD, Children's and Young Adult Literature Specialist, Morgantown, WV,
and Susan Geye, Director of Library Services, Everman ISD, Texas.

After students perform the script on the previous page, distribute copies of the script to the class so they can compare it with the original text. This will serve as a model for them as they create their own readers' theater performances based on other sections of the novel.

Here are some guidelines for helping students create readers' theater performances for their classmates.

1. Form readers' theater groups of four to six students who have all finished reading the novel.
2. Have group members collaborate to decide on a part of the novel they consider particularly exciting, moving, or entertaining that they would like to perform for their classmates. Passages with lots of dialogue work best.
3. Divide the passage into parts according to who is speaking. Add a part for a narrator if necessary. When there is a lot of narration, divide it up between readers for the sake of variety. A reader can be both a character and a narrator if the divisions are carefully assigned.
4. Retype the passage, taking out all the *he said*s and *she said*s and any other distracting or unnecessary words.
5. Assign one member the role of director. It will be his or her responsibility to make suggestions to the other students who will be reading the parts.
6. Assign the various parts to the other members of the group.
7. Practice reading the script as dramatically as possible without the use of staging, props, or costumes. The only action necessary is eye contact between characters speaking to each other and an occasional hand gesture. Readers rely on the author's words to convey the meaning, emotion, and importance of the passage. It is helpful to put the scripts in notebooks with pages that turn easily. Readers may stand or sit on stools behind music stands that hold their script notebooks.

8. Sequence the class performances so the various readings tell the Penderwicks' story in the order it occurs in the novel. Introductions are not necessary; let the words speak for themselves.
9. Grade students on their cooperation, effort, improvement, and enthusiasm.
10. Stress that the most important aspect of this assignment is enjoying the literature from which the readers' theater comes and encouraging others to enjoy it through the performance.

Students may wonder why the teacher doesn't just hand out prefabricated scripts for the various parts of the novel. If they ask for this, remind them that, by creating their own scripts, they deepen their involvement with the novel and will therefore come to understand it and the author's craft more fully. If they are truly at a loss for what passages to use, you might suggest the first MOOPS meeting (pages 33–37), the incident with the bull (pages 57–62—multiple narrators would be needed for this passage), Jeffrey's birthday dinner (pages 106–111), Batty and the rabbits (pages 128–131), the rabbit chase (pages 137–143), the soccer practice/Garden Club competition (pages 159–166), the piano lesson (pages 178–183), Rosalind's midnight stroll in the garden (pages 199–203), or Jeffrey runs away (pages 223–231).

Please keep in mind that the more students are empowered to interact meaningfully with the text, the more they increase their prospects of becoming lifelong readers and lovers of literature.

● Correlates to Common Core Standards: Writing: Text Type and Purposes: W.4.3, W.5.3, W.6.3, and W.7.3; Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.4.1, L.5.1, L.6.1, and L.7.1.



Illustration © 2015 by David Frankland



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When **Jeanne Birdsall** was young, she promised herself she'd be a writer someday—so that she could write books for children to discover and enjoy, just as she did at her local library. She is the author of *The Penderwicks*, which won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature, *The Penderwicks on Gardam Street*, *The Penderwicks at Point Mouette*, and *The Penderwicks in Spring*.

Jeanne lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, with her husband and an assortment of animals, including a dog named Cagney. You can find out more about Jeanne, her books, and her animal friends at JeanneBirdsall.com.