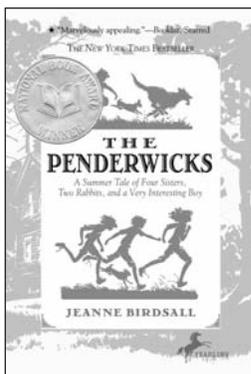
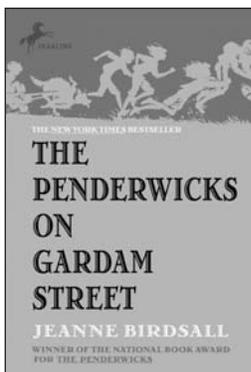


# BOOKNOTES

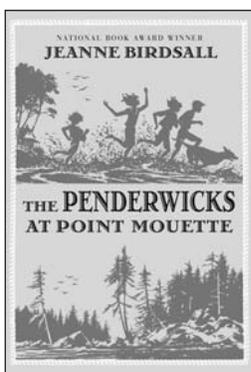
educators guide



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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 much of the time, things frequently get out of hand, providing readers with hilarious romps as well as poignant moments with the Penderwicks.

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!

Each story line brings its own adventures, but furious soccer playing, sisterly squabbles, serious MOPS (Meetings Of Penderwick Sisters), new installments of Sabrina Starr novels, dramatic and musical performances, heartwarming talks, parental wisdom, and bouts of laughter are constants in every book. Entering each story is like coming home to a loving, caring—albeit boisterous and sometimes misguided—family. Reading each story is as richly satisfying as spending time with a comforting friend.

GRADES 4-7

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## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask students to write a journal entry on the topic of families with lots of children. They may write from their own experience, from their observations of others, from books they have read, or from 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 three 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, or all three Penderwick books.

Illustration © 2011 by David Frankland

# 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? Which characters can they relate to the most? What in the story reminds them of their own experiences?

**Writing** Jane writes stories about Sabrina Starr. Based on the information she provides, students may want to recreate Jane's Sabrina Starr stories, devise new Sabrina Starr stories, or write a letter to Jane suggesting situations she might use in her books.

**Literature** Throughout all three books, Jane and other characters make numerous references to authors, characters, titles, and phrases familiar to book lovers. Instruct students to go through each book and make a list of all the literary references. Compile a master list from which each student may choose at least one book to read and report back to his or her literature circle about the connection that book holds for a Penderwick family member.

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.

**Storytelling** Batty likes to hear a bedtime story every night. Pair students and encourage them to tell each other stories based on family experiences or about adventures they invent.

**Listening** Aunt Claire, Iantha, and Mr. Penderwick are very good listeners, but Mrs. Tipton is not. Ask students to find passages where someone is described or shown as a good listener and devise tips Mrs. Tipton could follow should she ever be inclined to improve her poor listening behavior.

**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 list the word, its definition, and the sentence from the book in which the word was used.

**Readers' Theater** Because it contains lively dialogue and characters with distinct personalities as well as lots of action, *The Penderwicks* can provide excellent opportunities for student-created readers' theater experiences. An example of how to help students create a readers' theater performance for *The Penderwicks* can be found at [www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers\\_guides/9780440420477.pdf](http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers_guides/9780440420477.pdf).





## THE ARTS

**Art** The Penderwick family and their friends expand over the course of the three books. Keeping each character's interests, personality traits, and dress preferences in mind, have students sketch and then paint a group portrait for each book and/or dress up as the characters in each book for group photographs. Place these images in the Penderwick Family and Friends Portrait/Photo Album.

**Music** Tchaikovsky, Bach, List, Stravinsky's Piano Sonata, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, "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.

**Cooking** From Churchie's Gingerbread to Rosalind's Pineapple Upside-Down Cake to Jeffrey's Stuffed Green Peppers, culinary delights are important in each of the three books. But since recipes are not provided, students may want to find recipes for foods mentioned in the books and prepare a cookbook entitled "Food for Penderwick Family, Friends, and Fans."

## GEOGRAPHY

When they are traveling to Arundel in *The Penderwicks*, the family follows a map until Hound eats it. Using geographical references from each of the three books, have students locate the various locations mentioned on a map of states from New Jersey to Maine.

## 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 consider 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."

## 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 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 a student who is interested in both math and music to explain to the class the connections that Jeffrey tries to explain to Skye and to demonstrate some of the games Turron might have made up for Batty.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Rosalind is learning Latin, which Mr. Penderwick speaks frequently, and Tommy Geiger is learning Russian. Find examples of these languages in the various books and prepare a glossary based on the contextual cues given within the story.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Soccer moves and matches, football drills—sports provide exciting action in each of the Penderwick books. Ask volunteers to demonstrate some of the athletic maneuvers described in the books.



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## AWARDS & PRAISE

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Photograph © 2011 by Tsar Fedorsky

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Jeanne Birdsall lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, with her husband. Their house is old and comfortable, full of unruly animals, and surrounded by gardens.

#### The Penderwicks

Winner of a National Book Award for Young People's Literature  
An ALA-ALSC Notable Children's Book  
A *School Library Journal* Best Book  
A *Booklist* Editors' Choice  
A *Kirkus Reviews* Editor's Choice  
A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book

- ★ "Birdsall follows in the footsteps of Elizabeth Enright, Edward Eager, and Noel Streatfeild, updating the family story yet keeping all the old-fashioned charm."  
—*Booklist*, Starred
- ★ "Problems are solved and lessons learned in this wonderful, humorous book that features characters whom readers will immediately love, as well as a superb writing style. Bring on more of the Penderwicks!"—*School Library Journal*, Starred
- "Not since the Marches have readers met more engaging girls."—*Kirkus Reviews*

#### The Penderwicks on Gardam Street

A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book  
A New York Public Library Top Title for Reading and Sharing

- ★ "This is a book to cherish and to hold close like a warm, cuddly blanket that you draw around yourself to keep out the cold."—*School Library Journal*, Starred
- ★ "Just the sort of cozy fare that's missing in today's mean-girl world."  
—*Booklist*, Starred
- ★ "It's sheer pleasure to spend time with these exquisitely drawn characters, girls so real that readers will feel the wind through their hair as they power down the soccer field."—*Publishers Weekly*, Starred
- "Birdsall's second novel . . . offers comforting comedy."  
—*The New York Times Book Review*

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