

Contents



TEACHER GUIDE

• Assessment Rubric	4
• How Is Our Literature Kit™ Organized?	5
• Graphic Organizers	6
• Bloom's Taxonomy for Reading Comprehension	7
• Teaching Strategies	7
• Summary of the Story	8
• Vocabulary	9



STUDENT HANDOUTS

• Spotlight on Virginia Hamilton	10
• Chapter Questions	
<i>Chapter 1</i>	11
<i>Chapter 2</i>	14
<i>Chapters 3 – 4</i>	17
<i>Chapters 5 – 6</i>	20
<i>Chapters 7 – 8</i>	23
<i>Chapter 9</i>	26
<i>Chapters 10 – 11</i>	29
<i>Chapter 12</i>	32
<i>Chapter 13</i>	35
<i>Chapter 14</i>	38
• Writing Tasks	41
• Word Search	44
• Comprehension Quiz	45



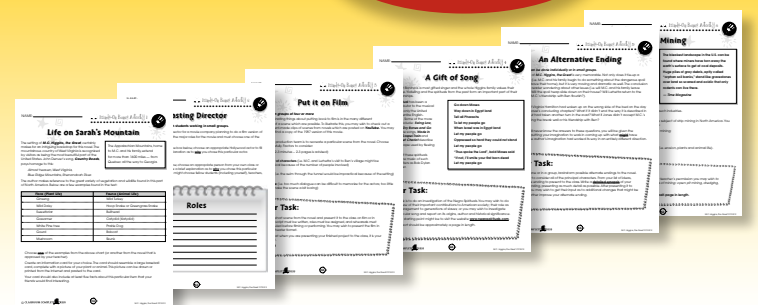
EASY MARKING™ ANSWER KEY

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

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Virginia Hamilton

"I hope teachers realize their power and the importance of kindness and fairness as well as firmness. How one mixes the magic potion of the creative process, heritage, ethnicity, place and time, and language, makes the magic of words and writing."

— Virginia Hamilton



Virginia Hamilton was born in 1934, the youngest of five children. She grew up in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where her family had lived for almost 100 years. Her grandfather had been brought into the area as an infant — a runaway slave carried to freedom via the underground railway. Virginia attended Ohio State University, and then the New School for Social Research in New York City, where she worked at various jobs while pursuing her dream of becoming a published writer. In 1960 she married the poet/teacher, Arnold Adoff. In 1969, with their two children, Virginia and Arnold, they moved back to Yellow Springs — to the family property where they built their dream home. During her lifetime, Virginia published 41 books covering several genres: novels, picture books,

non-fiction, folktales, science fiction... She especially loved to write books that helped define the lives of African Americans (as is evidenced in **M.C. Higgins, the Great**). She won every major award in children's literature, including the Newbery Medal, the National Book Award, the Boston Globe - Horn Book Award, and the Coretta Scott King Award. In 1992, the International Board on Books for Young People gave Hamilton the Hans Christian Andersen Award for her lifetime contribution to children's literature. Sadly, Virginia passed away on February 19, 2002. She died of breast cancer at the age of 65.

Did You Know?

- **M.C. Higgins, the Great is the first work in history to win both the National Book Award and the John Newbery Medal.**
- **Virginia was named for her grandfather's home state.**
- **While pursuing her dream to become a published writer, Virginia had many different jobs, such as museum receptionist and nightclub singer.**



Chapters Three to Four

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

1. In Chapter three, we are introduced to Jones Higgins, M.C.'s dad. Predict what kind of person you think Jones will be. Why do you feel this way?

2. What characteristics do you think it's important to have if a person is going to be a good father to his children? Try to think of three or four items.

Vocabulary

Complete each sentence with a word from the list.

- | | | | | |
|---------|------------|----------|----------|---------|
| wistful | silhouette | confound | desolate | cherish |
| reverie | impel | spigot | cadence | hurtle |

1. The _____ of the Beatles' tune was not typical of the band's songs.
2. No one is going to _____ you to perform a deed which is against your will.
3. I think my little sister will really _____ that old teddy bear.
4. Being born into a family with alcoholic parents was probably the severest _____ that he had to overcome.
5. The _____ was rusted and filthy.
6. I'm sure he thinks that the big words he uses will _____ most listeners.
7. Hearing my grandmother read a chapter from "Anne of Green Gables" gave me a dreamy, _____ feeling deep in my soul.
8. The artist merely needs a _____ of your portrait in order to complete the project.
9. It was obvious from his expression that he was in the midst of a _____.
10. Our family got a flat tire along a _____ stretch of highway in the middle of the night.



Chapters Three to Four

1. Fill in each blank with the correct word from the chapters.

- a) It was important to pitch a _____ high and loud enough to outdistance the sounds drifting in from the river and from Harenton.
- b) Macie Pearl was in the lead not because she was the fastest, but because she liked to pretend she was the _____.
- c) M.C. wondered if the harsh _____ from the mining cut on the mountain was poisoning the grapes.
- d) Jones played rough with his oldest son so that M.C. would grow up to be _____.
- e) Jones bet M.C. a _____ that he could climb the boy's steel pole.

2. Complete each sentence with a word from the list.

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------------|--------|-------|-------|
| slave | premonition | grotto | sight | crate |
|-------|-------------|--------|-------|-------|

- a) M.C.'s bedroom was really a _____.
- b) M.C.'s seat at the kitchen table was a _____.
- c) Jones half-believed that his son had second _____.
- d) When Sarah first arrived at the mountain, she had still been a _____.
- e) M.C. had a strange _____ that the spoil heap was going to slide.



Chapters Three to Four

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

1. The author uses a number of **similes** (a comparison of two things using the words **like** or **as**) in these two chapters. One example is **tough palms like scoop shovels**. What two things are being compared? Invent your own simile using an old man's face as an object of comparison.

2. Of what use were the pedals and wheels on M.C.'s pole?

3. What did Jones Higgins feel was preventing him from being a success at the steel mill? Why did he believe this?

4. Although the Higgins family was poor, they were quite enterprising. Give an example to prove this.

5. From where do you think Sarah's song originated? Defend your response.

6. Describe your first impression of M.C.'s mother. What is there about her that gave you this impression?

Journaling Prompt

Jones describes his son as a **worrier**, and the novel seems to bear this out. Interview another student asking them to describe a time in his or her life when they had cause to worry. (This could be the result of responsibilities at home or at school; issues with family and friends, etc.) How was the situation resolved?



Chapters 10 to 12

Coal Mining Company - We Care for You!

Every disagreement has two points of view. The reader might be horrified at the heartless manner in which the coal mining company treats the Higgins family and other residents of Sarah's Mountain; yet the coal they are excavating makes possible the electricity in the homes of area residents.

Your task is to create an advertisement— one created by the coal mining company — making public the many good things about having such an industry in the area.

Your ad should be designed for a newspaper or magazine and be one-half page in size. It should contain a graphic as well as two or three statements claiming the benefits of coal mining for the people of that area.

Your creation should be imaginative, positive, and seek to reach the hearts and minds of many people who might be concerned about the results of having such an industry on Sarah's Mountain.



Chapters 13 to 14

Worth Posting!

Your assignment is to write a brief review of *M.C. Higgins, the Great* for posting on a website such as www.amazon.com. This is an opportunity to share your opinion of the novel with other young people who are considering whether to read the book or not.

Your review should be at least two paragraphs in length. One paragraph should briefly describe the plot (without giving away the ending). The second paragraph should give your impression of the novel. You may wish to interview a couple of your classmates so that you can include their opinions of the novel in your review as well.

When writing your impression, try to include one favorable comment and one suggestion as to how the novel might be improved.



Word Search

Find all of the words in the word search. Words may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. A few may even be backwards. Look carefully!

amiable	briers	enormous
indignant	intruder	premonition
pungent	reverie	sinister
suffocate	tension	topsoil
undergrowth	witch	yodel



Comprehension Quiz



Answer each question with a complete sentence.

- Describe the development occurring high on Sarah's Mountain, which M.C. finds particularly disturbing. 2
- Why was M.C. excited by the appearance of the dude (Mr. Lewis) on the mountain? 2
- What were the names of M.C.'s three siblings? 3
- M.C.'s seat at the kitchen table was actually a _____ and his bedroom was in fact a _____. 2
- Describe M.C.'s attitude regarding the Killburn family. 2
- Why was M.C. so concerned about the danger posed by the spoil heap, considering that it was only moving one-half inch at a time? 2
- As it turned out, swimming through the tunnel with Lurhetta was an especially dangerous thing for M.C. to do. Why was this so? 2

SUBTOTAL: /15

Fact and Opinion

M.C. Higgins, the Great raises a number of thoughtful issues in a most interesting manner:

- coming to terms personally with people who are different than ourselves;
 - the heartless indifference of large corporations/industries;
 - the importance of personal history and heritage in knowing better who we are;
 - personal responsibility;
 - societal and personal prejudices.
- Choose a thought-provoking topic discussed in this novel. Place this topic in the box below.
- Underneath the topic, add important details relating to the topic.
- facts and opinions that might arise in a public discussion of this topic.
- some research may be necessary.

Topic:	Opinions
	Facts

NAME: _____

After You Read 



Chapter Thirteen

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

- As M.C. watches his family members interacting together, he thinks they are **different from the Killburns. Closer somehow.** Support M.C.'s argument with proof from the novel, then refute his argument with proof from the novel.

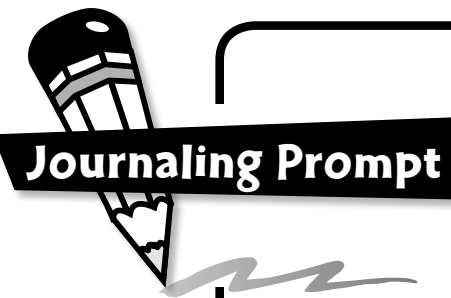
- As the dude is leaving, his eyes meet M.C.'s. **Just a fleeting look through which terrible doubt met a knowing sadness.** What do you think the author meant by this statement?

- What did the dude mean by saying that M.C.'s mother wouldn't fit on a stage?

- Why do you think M.C. lied to the children about the dude returning to the mountain to get Banina?

- Berthold Auerbach once wrote, **Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.** How did M.C. find truth in Berthold's words?

- As darkness settles on the mountain, how does the rain lend to the suspenseful atmosphere of the story?



The next Chapter is the last. Predict what you think will happen in this chapter. When you have finished reading Chapter 14, come back and reread your prediction; then write a final comment indicating how close you were to the ending imagined by the author. In what way(s) was your conclusion better than the author's?

1.
Answers will vary. (i.e. There are fewer Higgins and so seem closer to each other; the Killburns are much more accepting of others).

2.
M.C. now doubts that his mother will be discovered, and the dude knows he can do nothing for the family to help M.C.

3.
I'd change her. smile and project herself and look chic.

4.
Answers will vary. (i.e. he didn't want to disappoint the children).

5.
Singing with his family made him feel somewhat better.

6.
We wonder if it will loosen the spoil heap and bring it down on the house.



1.
Answers will vary.

2.
Answers will vary.

Vocabulary

- privie
- corridor
- accustomed
- keen
- gully
- inking
- gouged
- skirted
- rancid
- revulsion



- 1.**
- T
 - T
 - F
 - F
 - F
 - F

- 2.**
- 4
 - 5
 - 6
 - 1
 - 3
 - 2



1.
Answers will vary. (i.e. Perhaps as a way of saying goodbye and thanks to M.C.).

2.
A break wall to keep back any mudslides.

3.
Answers will vary. (i.e. Lurhetta accepted Ben, and M.C. admired Lurhetta).

4.
Answers will vary. (i.e. When M.C. resolves to accept Ben as an equal and ignore his father's prejudices).

5.
Answers will vary.

6.
Answers will vary.



EASY MARKING ANSWER KEY

- **RSL.3.1** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- **RSL.3.2** Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
- **RSL.3.3** Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- **RSL.3.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from non-literal language.
- **RSL.3.5** Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
- **RSL.3.6** Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
- **RSL.3.7** Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story.
- **RSL.3.10** By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 2-3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- **RSL.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RSL.4.2** Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- **RSL.4.3** Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.
- **RSL.4.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology.
- **RSL.4.6** Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.
- **RSL.4.10** By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- **RSFS.3.3** Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. **A)** Identify and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and derivational suffixes. **B)** Decode words with common Latin suffixes. **C)** Decode multi-syllable words. **d.** Read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.
- **RSFS.3.4** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. **A)** Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. **B)** Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings **C)** Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- **RSFS.4.3** Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. **A)** Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.
- **RSFS.4.4** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. **A)** Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. **B)** Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. **C)** Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- **WS.3.1** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons. **A)** Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons. **B)** Provide reasons that support the opinion. **C)** Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons. **D)** Provide a concluding statement or section.
- **WS.3.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. **A)** Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. **B)** Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. **C)** Use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information. **D)** Provide a concluding statement or section.
- **WS.3.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. **A)** Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally. **B)** Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations. **C)** Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order. **D)** Provide a sense of closure.
- **WS.3.4** With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- **WS.3.7** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
- **WS.3.8** Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
- **WS.4.1** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. **A)** Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose. **B)** Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details. **C)** Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases. **D)** Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.
- **WS.4.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. **A)** Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally. **B)** Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations. **C)** Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events. **D)** Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely. **E)** Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- **WS.4.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **WS.4.7** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- **WS.4.8** Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.
- **WS.4.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. **A)** Apply *grade 4 Reading standards* to literature. **B)** Apply *grade 4 Reading standards* to informational texts.