



Each pack contains:

- Objectives
- Full Text of Story
- Student Questions
- Activities and Graphic Organizers
- Teacher Answer Guide

Instant Short Story Pack

The Purple Jar

BY MARIA EDGEWORTH

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, 2, 3, 5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1, 2, 5



Objectives:

After completing the activities in this packet, the student will be able to:

- cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text (RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1),
- determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details (RL.9-10.2; 11-12.2),
- analyze how complex characters interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme (RL.9-10.3), and
- analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text...create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise (RL.9-10.5; 11-12.5).

Time:

1-2 class periods

Materials:

✓ 1 copy of each handout per student:

- **Handout #1** (3 pages) – Purpose-setting and Motivational Activities
- **Handout #2** (6 pages) – Text of Story
- **Handout #3** (1 page) – Student Questions
- **Handout #4** (7 pages) – Activities and Graphic Organizers

✓ Teacher Answer Guide

Procedure:

1. Reproduce all handouts.
2. Distribute **Handouts #1** and **#2**.
 - Allow students to read the short biography of Edgeworth (approximately 10 minutes).
 - Read and discuss the information about Edgeworth's work and ideas (approximately 20 minutes).
 - Assign the story to be read for homework OR
 - Allow students to read the story in class and perform the two **As you read...**activities.
3. Distribute **Handout #3**.
4. Give students time to read the questions (approximately 5 minutes).
5. Review with students what each question is asking for and what type of information is required for a thorough answer (e.g., references to prior knowledge, quotations from the story, additional reading or research, etc.).
6. Distribute **Handout #4**.
7. Walk the class through Question 1, demonstrating that in order to address a complex issue, it is often helpful to divide it into smaller subtopics. Students can then use the ideas generated by each subtopic to build a complete and thoughtful answer to the full question.
8. Have students answer the questions.

Maria Edgeworth

The Purple Jar

“The Purple Jar,” Maria Edgeworth’s most famous short story, was originally published in 1796 in a collection of morally instructive stories for children called *The Parent’s Assistant*. She later included it in a similar collection called *Early Lessons* (1801). In addition to her stories that were intended to teach moral lessons, Edgeworth was known for humorous—but biting—satires of contemporary society, especially her culture’s attitudes toward women, their education, and their positions as adult human beings.

Because “The Purple Jar” was written for children, it is not an overly complicated tale, but because it was published over two centuries ago, it does not *sound* like a modern children’s story. If you research the story, you are likely to find a wide range of interpretations, some of which you might find ridiculous. You should know that you are not obligated to accept anyone else’s take on a story you’ve read—especially if the other reader’s evidence is questionable. By now, though, you should also know that in order for *your* interpretation to be meaningful, you must support it accurately and thoroughly with evidence from the text.

This instructive little tale provides an excellent opportunity to learn or to practice effective interpretation and discussion. It offers much more than a surface meaning.

Before you read:

Know something about the life of the author:

Maria Edgeworth was born on January 1, 1768, in a village in Oxfordshire, England. She spent the first five years of her life in England, but after her mother died and her father remarried, she moved to her father’s estate, Edgeworthstown, in Ireland. While attending school in London when she was fourteen, Edgeworth nearly lost her eyesight to an infection, and she was brought home. Her father took charge of her education from then on. She also began to help her father manage the estate. She would spend the rest of her life at Edgeworthstown.

Edgeworth’s father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, was a politician, writer, and inventor. He was also an early member of the cryptic Lunar Society. As Edgeworth grew, she and her father developed a close intellectual friendship. Through him, she established correspondences with some of the most famous writers and thinkers of her age, including Sir Walter Scott.

Maria Edgeworth

The Purple Jar

Lexile Measure: 790L

ROSAMOND, A LITTLE girl of about seven years old, was walking with her mother in the streets of London. As she passed along, she looked in at the windows of several shops, and she saw a great variety of different sorts of things, of which she did not know the use, or even the names. She wished to stop to look at them; but there was a great number of people in the streets, and a great many carts and carriages and wheelbarrows, and she was afraid to let go her mother's hand.

"Oh! mother, how happy I should be," said she, as she passed a toy-shop, "if I had all these pretty things!"

"What, all! Do you wish for them all, Rosamond?"

"Yes, mamma, all."

As she spoke, they came to a milliner's shop; the windows were hung with ribbons, and lace, and festoons of artificial flowers.

"Oh! mamma, what beautiful roses! Won't you buy some of them?"

"No, my dear."

"Why?"

"Because I don't want them, my dear."

They went a little farther, and they came to another shop, which caught Rosamond's eye. It was a jeweler's shop; and there were a great many pretty baubles, ranged in drawers behind glass.

"Mamma, you'll buy some of these?"

"Which of them, Rosamond?"

"Which? I don't know which; but any of them, for they are all pretty."

Maria Edgeworth

The Purple Jar

STUDENT QUESTIONS:

1. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3) Analyze the characters of Rosamond and her mother. Is their relationship best described as oppositional or complementary? Why?
2. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3) In what ways does Rosamond and her mother's relationship create the conflict and advance the plot?
3. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1) What is the narrator suggesting when she observes "Presently... they came to a shop, which appeared to [Rosamond] far more beautiful than the rest. It was a chemist's shop; but she did not know that"? What evidence does the narrator provide to lead to and support this inference?
4. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2; 11-12.2) Trace the progression of the mother's responses to Rosamond. With what principles is the mother most concerned?
5. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5; 11-12.5) Describe the relationship between the narrator's descriptions of the four shops they visit and Rosamond's reactions to their wares. What emerges as the young girl's guiding principle? How does this principle intensify the impact of the story's ending?

ACTIVITIES AND GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS:

Maria Edgeworth, *The Purple Jar*

Question 1: Analyze the characters of Rosamond and her mother. Is their relationship best described as oppositional or complementary? Why?

- STEP 1: Look up the words “complement” and “opposite” in the dictionary. Note the difference between the two terms.
- STEP 2: In the chart that follows, use the textual evidence provided in the first row to conclude the trait being displayed by each character. Think of Rosamond’s and the mother’s other major traits on your own, and quote from or paraphrase the story to support the existence of each trait. Add more rows to the chart as you see fit.

Rosamond’s Traits	Textual Evidence	Mother’s Traits	Textual Evidence
	Rosamond wishes she could own many things “of which she did not know the use, or even the names.”		When Rosamond asks if her mother will buy some jewelry or one of the jars, she responds that she will not, having no use for them.