The story

Matthew Cuthbert lives with his sister Marilla on their farm Green Gables near the village of Avonlea in Canada. They are getting old and decide to send for an orphan to come and live with them and work on the farm. However, the children’s home makes a mistake and sends a little girl instead of a boy. Her name is Anne and she has red hair, freckles and is very talkative. After some thought, Matthew and Marilla decide that she can stay and work in the house instead.

Anne is a happy girl with a vivid imagination but she is always getting into trouble and the story is about her many adventures. For example, when the new vicar Mr Allan and his wife come to Green Gables for tea, Anne is very excited and wants to make a cake. It looks delicious but tastes awful. Poor Anne has put some medicine in the cake thinking it was milk. Another time Marilla comes home to find Anne upstairs with green hair. She had bought some hair dye from a salesman who said that it would change her hair from red to black. It is so bad Marilla has to cut it all off. And that summer Anne is playing in a boat on the river when suddenly it begins to sink and she has to jump in a tree. Luckily, her classmate Gilbert Blythe comes by in his boat and rescues her. But Gilbert is her sworn enemy as he once pulled her hair and called her ‘carrots’.

In spite of all this, Anne is a clever girl and wants to go to Queen’s College in Charlottetown to train to become a teacher. She studies very hard and she and Gilbert share first place in the exams. They both go to Queen’s but they still won’t talk to each other. At the end of the year Gilbert comes first in the exams and Anne wins the Avery prize which means a free place at Redmond College for the next four years.

However, something happens to change Anne’s plans. Matthew dies suddenly after hearing that the bank has closed down and that he and Marilla have lost all their money. Anne then decides to stay at home to be with Marilla and teach in one of the village schools. When Gilbert hears this, he offers her his job at Avonlea school. And from that day on they agree to be very good friends.

Background to the story

Lucy Maud Montgomery, the author of Anne of Green Gables was born and lived on Prince Edward Island, where the story itself is set. Prince Edward Island is a large island near the mouth of the Saint Lawrence River in eastern Canada. It is the smallest Canadian Province.

Before reading

Here are some ways to help your students approach the story:

1. Give students the title of the book and show them the picture on the cover. Ask them to try and guess what kind of story it is.
2. Ask the students to read the text on the back cover of the book, and the story introduction on the first page. Then ask them a few questions about the story, or use the Before Reading Activities in the back of each Bookworm.
3. Use the pre-reading activity in this worksheet.
4. If there is a recording of this title, play the first few pages and stop at an interesting point.
Anne of Green Gables

Pre-reading activity

Match the words with the pictures

Aim: To introduce the students to the story

Time: 10–15 minutes

Organization: Give one copy of the worksheet to each student, or to each group of students. Ask the students to match the picture with the correct caption. When they have done this check the answers. Then ask the students to order the pictures as they think they might occur and to predict in general terms, the story. Tell them that picture number 1 is first in the sequence but after that there is no right or wrong answer to the activity.

Key: 1e, 4i, 6h, 8f, 2c, 9g, 3b, 7d, 5a
Anne of Green Gables

While reading activity

Predict events

What happens to these characters?

Anne
- She has to leave Avonlea school.
- She makes friends with Gilbert Blythe.
- She dyes her hair a different colour.
- She goes to live with Mrs Lynde.
- She goes to college.
- She runs away.

Gilbert
- He comes first in the school examinations.
- He marries Diana.
- He leaves Avonlea and doesn’t come back.
- He leaves school and helps Matthew on the farm.
- He rescues Anne one day when she is in trouble.
- He studies to be a teacher.

Marilla
- She sends Anne back to the children’s home.
- She cuts all Anne’s hair off.
- She starts to love Anne like a daughter.
- She gets married and leaves Green Gables.
- She loses all her money.
- She gets ill and dies.

To the teacher

Where: At the end of Chapter 3
Aim: To predict future events in the story
Time: 10–15 minutes
Organization: Give one copy of the worksheet to each student, or to each group of students. Ask students some simple questions about the three characters to check their understanding of them and the story so far. Then ask students to consider what might happen next to the three characters. Ask them to read the statements and decide which ones are correct, giving reason for their choice. Don’t tell them whether they are right or wrong. Simply encourage discussion and ideas.