



Teaching Resource for 'The Garden Party' by Katherine Mansfield

PURPOSE

This resource has a variety of activities designed to support the teaching of Katherine Mansfield's short story 'The Garden Party'. The activities have been designed with students from Year 10 and above in mind, but teachers can choose the activities that they believe will work best for the year level of their students and their own approach to teaching.

WHERE TO FIND THE STORY

You can find the full text of 'The Garden Party' online here:

- Project Gutenberg <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1429/1429-h/1429-h.htm#chap02>
- NZ Electronic Text Centre <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-ManGard-t1-g1-t2.html>
- A Celebration of Women Writers (University of Pennsylvania Libraries) <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/mansfield/garden/party.html>

Or by searching 'Katherine Mansfield The Garden Party full text' online.

BEFORE READING

Before reading 'The Garden Party' you might like to explore one or more of these introductory topics with your students.

Who was Katherine Mansfield?

These two activities are designed to give students a quick introduction to the life of Katherine Mansfield. Students can then see whether they think Mansfield may have used people, experiences and places from her own life as inspiration for the story.

Photographs

Look at the images in this DigitalNZ image story 'Introducing Katherine Mansfield': <https://digitalnz.org/stories/6243bca9c8015e002a68f45a>

Discuss what clues the images give about Katherine Mansfield's life. For example:

- What was her family like - for example, was her family wealthy?
- Where did she grow up?
- Where did she go to school?
- What were her interests?
- Where did she live as an adult?
- How did fashion change during her lifetime?

Timeline

Use one of the sources listed below to create a timeline of key events in Katherine Mansfield's life. For example:

- What year and where she was born

- Where she went to school (both primary and secondary)
- When she moved to England permanently
- What year her first book was published
- What year her brother Leslie died in the First World War
- What year she was diagnosed with tuberculosis/a 'spot on her lung'
- What year her second book was published
- What year her third book was published
- What year she died and where she is buried

Use one or more of these sources to find the information:

- Katherine Mansfield House & Garden's website
<https://www.katherinemansfield.com/about/katherine-mansfield>
- Wikipedia entry https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katherine_Mansfield
- Dictionary of New Zealand Biography entry
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3m42/mansfield-katherine>
- Walking with an ANZAC entry on Leslie Beauchamp
<https://www.walkingwithananzac.co.nz/leslie-heron-beauchamp>

The short story

Explore the form of the short story. This webpage gives a great overview of the short story form and highlights some famous short stories – including 'The Garden Party':

<https://www.blurb.com/blog/what-is-a-short-story/>

The British Library says, "Widely regarded as a pioneer of the [short story] form, Mansfield focussed on capturing the psychology and inner lives of characters through free indirect discourse and 'epiphanies' (sudden moments of realisation and insight). Unlike traditional narratives, the stories typically begin in the heart of a moment and end abruptly. Mansfield strove for absolute precision and distillation, writing in a letter that, ideally, 'there mustn't be one single word out of place, or one word that can be taken out'. From contemporaries including Virginia Woolf to later writers such as Alice Munro and Philip Larkin, Mansfield's influence and contribution to literary modernism extends throughout the 20th century." From: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-garden-party-and-other-stories-by-katherine-mansfield>

Symbolism

Explore the literary device of symbolism. The literary definition of symbolism is "the use of symbols that represent other concepts or ideas in order to convey a deeper meaning." Writers can use all sorts of things (including an object, character, setting, event, word or action) to represent a deeper meaning that contributes to the understanding of the overall piece of writing. Symbols always have a literal (concrete) meaning and a figurative (abstract) meaning.

As a quick introduction to (or reminder about) symbolism, you can work with students to identify and discuss some common symbols. For example:

- A red rose = love, romance
- A dove = peace
- The sun = happiness, warmth, life
- A seed = growth, potential, new life
- A diamond = wealth, engagement
- A book = knowledge
- Different colours e.g. blue = sad, the ocean; yellow = happy, the sun; green = nature, growth

Even through this basic exercise students may find that an object can symbolise different things to different people and the context can change what an object symbolises. Some symbols have a universal meaning, like the ones listed above. However, writers can also create their own specific symbols in their writing by referring to something repeatedly, emphasising it through the language used to describe it or by the attention given to it.

Modernism and Literary Modernism

‘Modernism’ was a global movement in society and culture that began from the end of the 19th century (the late 1800s) and developed through the early 20th century (the early 1900s) until around the Second World War (1939-1945).

Writers, painters, musicians and other artists used new techniques to try to express the experience of their ‘modern’ lives. This experience included new technology, industrialisation and the First World War.

Some of the characteristics of modernism in literature were:

- **Experimentation:** Modernist literature employed different experimental writing techniques that broke the conventional rules of storytelling. Some of those techniques include blended imagery and themes, absurdism, nonlinear narratives, and stream of consciousness—which is a free-flowing inner monologue.
- **Individualism:** Modernist literature typically focuses on the individual, rather than society as a whole. Stories follow characters as they adapt to a changing world, often dealing with difficult circumstances and challenges.
- **Multiple perspectives:** Many modernist writers wrote in the first-person perspective with multiple characters to emphasize the subjectivity of each character and to add depth to the story by presenting a variety of viewpoints.
- **Free verse:** Many modernist poets rejected the traditional structure of poetry and opted for free verse, which lacks a consistent rhyme scheme, metrical pattern, or musical form.
- **Literary devices:** Many modernist writers rely on literary devices like symbolism and imagery to help the reader understand the writing, and to create a stronger connection between the text and the reader.

(From this website: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/modernist-literature-guide#what-is-modernist-literature>)

AFTER READING

After reading the story, you can use some or all of these activities to help students interrogate the text.

What was it about? How did it make you feel?

This is particularly useful if the story is read as a class rather than individually for homework.

As soon as the story has been read, ask the students to pair up and summarise what the story was about and how it made them feel. This could also be done as a whole class discussion.

Write the blurb

'The Garden Party' is being published and a one paragraph blurb needs to be written for the back cover to promote it. To encourage potential readers and help them to decide if they want to read it or not, what would you say?

E.g. This is the actual blurb from Penguin Books: "A windless, warm day greets the Sheridan family on the day of their garden party. As daughter Laura takes the reins on party preparations the news of a neighbour's demise casts a cloud over the host and threatens the entire celebration."

Or "As a wealthy family prepares for a garden party, a death nearby threatens to upset their perfect day. A story that captures all the fun of a party as well as the sad realities of life that are hard to avoid."

Setting



A garden party in 1903, photographed by William Fitzgerald Crawford. One of the guests looks like she could be Laura! From the collection of Tairāwhiti Museum: <https://digitalnz.org/records/45474997/garden-party>

The story is set over 100 years ago, in the early 1900s. It was written in 1920 at a time when Katherine Mansfield was thinking back to people, places and events in her own childhood.

What stands out to you when reading the story as a marker of the era that the story is set in? For example:

- particular words or phrases
- the way people speak to or interact with each other
- objects mentioned
- clothing described

Hamilton Gardens have created a Mansfield Garden. It is inspired by 'The Garden Party'. Looking at the photos on their website, what do you recognise from the story?

<https://hamiltongardens.co.nz/collections/fantasy-collection/mansfield-garden/>

Katherine Mansfield lived in four different houses while growing up in Wellington. This is a photograph of one of the houses on a small hill with workers' cottages down below during a flood: <https://digitalnz.org/records/22651098/saunders-lane-thorndon-wellington-in-flood>

Find the quote in 'The Garden Party' that seems to describe these cottages.

Dividing it up

Before it was published as one complete story in Katherine Mansfield's third collection of short stories, 'The Garden Party' was first published in three parts - in the *Saturday Westminster Gazette* on 4 and 11 February 1922, and the *Weekly Westminster Gazette* on 18 February 1922.

If you had to divide the story into three parts, how would you do it? Where would each part start and end? Why?

Character studies

Who are the main characters in 'The Garden Party'? What do we learn about each of them through the story – about their characteristics, their personality, their values (what they believe is important)? What do they do or say in the story that demonstrates this?

Create a table like this for each of the main characters:

[Character Name]		
Action	Meaning	Supporting quote
[Something they do in the story]	[What it tells us about the character]	[A quote from the story that supports the meaning you've interpreted]

Here's an example:

Laura		
Action	Meaning	Supporting quote
Goes to tell the workmen where to set up the marquee	She likes to be in charge	"she loved having to arrange things; she always felt she could do it so much better than anybody else."
Tries to stop the garden party out of respect for the man who has died and his family	She is compassionate, she cares about others, she can imagine how others might feel, she doesn't think she is better than others	"Of course, we can't have our party, can we?" she pleaded. "The band and everybody arriving. They'd hear us, mother; they're nearly neighbours!"

Tables could be completed for:

- Mrs Sheridan
- Jose
- Sadie
- The cook
- Laurie

Different perspectives

In groups of four, assign each student the role of one of the following: Laura, Jose, Mrs Sheridan, or the cook. Have students write their thoughts about the idea of stopping the garden party after hearing about the death of the man who lives nearby.

For example: "I just heard about the accident. I feel ... Our garden party is this afternoon, so I think we should ..."

Get students to share their ideas together and discuss why each person might have a different feeling?

In their shoes

Ask students to imagine that they have been invited to the garden party and to visit the grieving family at the house of the man who has died. In each of the places:

- What can you see?
- What can you hear?
- How do you feel?

The garden party	The house of the man who has died
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I see people in fancy clothes walking around, chatting to each other• I see a table with a white tablecloth piled with cakes and sandwiches• I see a servant carrying a tray of drinks• I see lots of flowers• I hear a band playing• I hear people talking and laughing• I feel happy to see my friends• I feel like dancing to the music of the band	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I see people sitting around the kitchen table drinking a cup of tea• I hear people talking about how the accident happened, about arranging a funeral• I hear crying from the wife of the man who has died• I hear the children outside, trying to be quiet, not sure what to do• I feel like I don't know what to say• I feel sad

The ending

The story ends like this:

At the corner of the lane she met Laurie.

He stepped out of the shadow. "Is that you, Laura?"

"Yes."

"Mother was getting anxious. Was it all right?"

"Yes, quite. Oh, Laurie!" She took his arm, she pressed up against him.

"I say, you're not crying, are you?" asked her brother.

Laura shook her head. She was.

Laurie put his arm round her shoulder. "Don't cry," he said in his warm, loving voice. "Was it awful?"

“No,” sobbed Laura. “It was simply marvellous. But Laurie—” She stopped, she looked at her brother. “Isn’t life,” she stammered, “isn’t life—” But what life was she couldn’t explain. No matter. He quite understood.

“Isn’t it, darling?” said Laurie.

What do you think Laura is trying to say and that Laurie understands?

Replying to a letter from the writer William Gerhardi, Mansfield explained “...yes, that is what I tried to convey in *The Garden Party*. The diversity of life and how we try to fit in everything, Death included. That is bewildering for a person of Laura's age. She feels things ought to happen differently. First one and then another. But life isn't like that. We haven't the ordering of it. Laura says, “But all these things must not happen at once.” And Life answers, “Why not? How are they divided from each other.” And they do all happen, it is inevitable. And it seems to me there is beauty in that inevitability.”

(Katherine Mansfield to William Gerhardi, 13 March 1922. You can find the letter online here: <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Mur02Lett-t1-body-d167.html>)

Themes

A theme is an idea that the writer explores, develops and repeats in a particular piece of writing. Ask students to identify the themes explored in ‘*The Garden Party*’ and discuss the ways they are explored in the story, using examples of actions and quotes.

Here are some suggested themes for discussion with examples of how these themes are explored in the text.

Theme: Social classes/class differences

‘Social class’ refers to a group of people with similar levels of wealth, influence, and status in a society.

Examples:

The Sheridan family are obviously wealthy:

- They have a two-storey house and a property that has a tennis court
- Their property is big enough to hold a garden party
- They have staff including a gardener, a servant and a cook
- They have hired a marquee and a band, they have ordered lots of flowers from a florist and, as well as the food being prepared by their cook, they have ordered cream puffs from a well-known bakery

It is a novelty for Laura to talk to the workmen setting up the marquee. She tries to copy her mother’s voice when she first talks to them, thinking she needs to sound a certain way. But she finds they are very friendly and cheerful: “Oh, how extraordinarily nice workmen were, she thought. Why couldn’t she have workmen for her friends rather than the silly boys she danced with and who came to Sunday night supper? She would get on much better with men like these.”

The distinction between the family and the servants is evident throughout the story:

“Jose loved giving orders to the servants, and they loved obeying her. She always made them feel they were taking part in some drama.” Even though Jose is a young woman, likely still a teenager,

she is able to boss the servants around because they are employed by her family - she is understood to have a higher status than them in the house.

The description of the workers' cottages, told from the point of view of someone from a higher class, is like a visual illustration of class differences: "the little cottages were in a lane to themselves at the very bottom of a steep rise that led up to the house. A broad road ran between. True, they were far too near. They were the greatest possible eyesore, and they had no right to be in that neighbourhood at all. They were little mean dwellings painted a chocolate brown. In the garden patches there was nothing but cabbage stalks, sick hens and tomato cans. The very smoke coming out of their chimneys was poverty-stricken. Little rags and shreds of smoke, so unlike the great silvery plumes that uncurled from the Sheridans' chimneys."

"'You won't bring a drunken workman back to life by being sentimental,' she said softly." This comment from Jose shows that people from different classes can easily make assumptions about each other. After hearing that a man who lives in the nearby cottages has died in an accident, Jose assumes the man was drunk, probably because of what she has been told about the families who live in the cottages by people in her own social class rather than any direct personal experience she has had. Laura's reply highlights this: "'Drunk! Who said he was drunk?' Laura turned furiously on Jose."

After Laura tells her mother about the man's death and suggests they should cancel the garden party so that the man's family doesn't hear the music and see people having a party during their time of grief, Laura's mother says: "You are being very absurd, Laura...People like that don't expect sacrifices from us. And it's not very sympathetic to spoil everybody's enjoyment as you're doing now." Her words "people like that" emphasise her view that the man who has died and his family are different to the Sheridan family.

After the party, Laura's mother suggests Laura take a basket of left-over food down to the man's grieving family. Because the man's family are of a lower social class, her mother seems to think that it's appropriate to give them the leftovers from the party. As Laura approaches the family's cottage, she feels very out of place: "She wished now she had put on a coat. How her frock shone! And the big hat with the velvet streamer—if only it was another hat! Were the people looking at her? They must be."

Laura is invited into the man's house, to see his wife and even his body. If the roles were reversed, would the man and his family have been invited into Laura's house? What about into a bedroom to see a deceased person? In Laura's large house there would be defined areas that people would be able to access depending on their status - the bakery delivery man delivers the cream puffs to the kitchen through the back door; guests to the house would be welcomed through the front door and hosted in the 'best' rooms of the house, like the room with the piano that Jose sets up in case she is asked to sing.

Theme: Empathy

'Empathy' is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Examples:

Laura imagines how the family of the man who has died feels and how hearing music from the garden party and seeing people dressed up and coming and going from the Sheridan's house might upset the family. She feels empathy for them and wants to do something to try to ease their suffering: "Of course, we can't have our party, can we?...The band and everybody arriving. They'd hear us, mother; they're nearly neighbours!"

In contrast, her sister Jose and her mother can't see why the death of someone who lives nearby should affect the party, as we see in these quotes:

“‘Oh, Laura!’ Jose began to be seriously annoyed. ‘If you’re going to stop a band playing every time someone has an accident, you’ll lead a very strenuous life.’”

“But, my dear child, use your common sense. It’s only by accident we’ve heard of it. If someone had died there normally—and I can’t understand how they keep alive in those poky little holes—we should still be having our party, shouldn’t we?”

Jose talks about sympathy, which is feeling sorry for others. Discuss the difference between sympathy and empathy.

When Mr Sheridan comes home, he mentions the accident and says, “It was a horrible affair all the same...The chap was married too. Lived just below in the lane, and leaves a wife and half a dozen kiddies, so they say.” Do you think he feels more like Laura, or his wife and Jose?

Mrs Sheridan seems to have more empathy for the family of the man who has died when she suggests filling a basket of leftovers and giving them to the family. The food is obviously leftover party food, including cakes and cream puffs. Laura thinks of it as “scraps from their party.” Mrs Sheridan says, “At any rate, it will be the greatest treat for the children.” This doesn’t seem very empathetic of the children’s situation - they have just lost their father. Laura senses this, again because she is thinking about how the grieving family will feel or perceive the basket of leftovers. Laura doesn’t think it’s a good idea, but she agrees after her mother questions why Laura thought they should cancel the party but doesn’t want to take a basket of food to the family.

A smaller example of Laura’s empathy is when she asks if the band can have something to drink - she realises that playing must be hot, thirsty work for them and wants them to be comfortable.

Theme: Family

The story explores family relationships - including the dynamics between different family members and their personalities.

Examples:

It seems Laura is the youngest child and because her mother and sisters are too busy (or don’t want) to talk to the workmen about where to put the marquee, Laura is told to do it.

The family seems to be affectionate and close, as we see from this action from Laura to her mother: “She put her arm round her mother’s neck and gently, very gently, she bit her mother’s ear.”

Laura calls her mother ‘pet’, a term of endearment.

Like all siblings, the Sheridan siblings have times of getting on well and times of disagreement or treating each other less nicely as we see in this quote:

“Her eyes hardened. She looked at her sister just as she used to when they were little and fighting together. [...] Laura turned furiously on Jose. She said, just as they had used to say on those occasions, “I’m going straight up to tell mother.”

“Do, dear,” cooed Jose.”

Laura and Laurie seem to have a good sibling relationship, although there is evidence of traditional gender roles being performed: "I say, Laura," said Laurie very fast, "you might just give a squiz at my coat before this afternoon. See if it wants pressing." Laurie is off to the office with his father, Laura is at home helping prepare for the party and being asked to look after Laurie's coat for him.

The dynamics between Mr Sheridan, Mrs Sheridan and the children when Mr Sheridan brings up the death of the man nearby show how Mr Sheridan's opinion matters in the family. Prompted by his comments, Mrs Sheridan behaves differently to how she responded to Laura earlier in the day.

Theme: Growing up

Often in literature or films, this is described as 'coming of age'. It's the process of a young person transitioning from a child to adult, often through experiences they have and how those experiences change their perception of the world and the people around them.

Examples:

Laura's response to the news of the local man's death could be seen as quite naive and childish - she feels for the grieving family and wants to act on those feelings even though she doesn't know the family. Through the dismissive responses of her older sister and her mother, she begins to understand the reality of class differences. When she tries on a hat and her mother compliments her on it, she becomes swept away by a vision of who she could be. She makes a choice to stop thinking about the grieving family: "I'll remember it again after the party's over, she decided. And somehow that seemed quite the best plan..."

She is reminded of the dead man and his family again when she sees her brother, to whom she feels particularly close, but once he compliments her on her hat, she chooses not to tell him about the death. She continues to be swept along by the new version of herself she has created by wearing the hat:

"“Darling Laura, how well you look!”

“What a becoming hat, child!”

“Laura, you look quite Spanish. I’ve never seen you look so striking.”

And Laura, glowing, answered softly, “Have you had tea? Won’t you have an ice? The passion-fruit ices really are rather special.”

[...]

Laura helped her mother with the goodbyes. They stood side by side in the porch till it was all over.”

Laura's experience at the grieving family's cottage is another experience that we understand will play a part in her growing up. Seeing the deceased man, she thinks:

“Oh, so remote, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again. His head was sunk in the pillow, his eyes were closed; they were blind under the closed eyelids. He was given up to his dream. What did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things. He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was

playing, this marvel had come to the lane. Happy...happy...All is well, said that sleeping face. This is just as it should be. I am content.”

She seems to understand that death is part of life and makes daily worries seem insignificant, that life is complex and full of contradictions and competing feelings. However, she struggles to express this when she sees her brother: “‘Isn’t life,’ she stammered, ‘isn’t life—’ But what life was she couldn’t explain.”

Theme: Death

Death is a recurrent theme in Katherine Mansfield’s writing, perhaps because she was unwell for so much of her relatively short adult life.

The death of the man who lives nearby is a tragic event that throws the extravagance of the fancy garden party into sharp relief [makes the contrast very obvious]. It is the pivotal event of the story.

As noted above under the ‘Growing up’ section, through Laura’s experience at the end of the story she seems to understand that death is part of life and makes daily worries seem insignificant, that life is complex and full of contradictions and competing feelings. However, she struggles to express this when she sees her brother: “‘Isn’t life,” she stammered, “isn’t life—” But what life was she couldn’t explain.

Symbolism

What are some of the symbols in the story? What do they stand for? Are they universal symbols or specific to this story?

Some examples could be:

Laura’s hat. Laura’s hat symbolises her growing up. In the garden with the workmen who are setting up the marquee, she feels like she could be friends with them and doesn’t believe in class differences. But once she puts the hat on and begins to be complimented by people, she begins to behave more like her mother and older sister - she chooses to forget about the grieving family down the road and enjoys the garden party, helping to host and then to say goodbye to guests with her mother. When she goes to visit the grieving family, she feels self-conscious of the hat - the hat is fancy and out of place, just like her.

The cream puffs. The cream puffs are a symbol of extravagance. They are bought from a well-known bakery rather than made at home. Laura and her sister eat one each when they are delivered, even though they’ve only just had breakfast, and get cream on their fingers. After the garden party, Mrs Sheridan suggests that Laura take some of the leftovers to the grieving family. Laura feels uncomfortable about the idea - like her hat, the cream puffs are fancy and from a party, they will seem out of place in the cottage of a grieving family who may be worrying about how the family will be fed now that the father has died and they won’t have his income. There is also a stark contrast in the imagery of the beautiful and delicious cream puffs and the description of the grieving woman with her “puffed up face.”

Day and night. The story’s transition from day to night symbolises Laura’s growing up and the class differences explored in the story. The story begins in daylight - and not just any daylight, the weather is “ideal”, “Windless, warm, the sky without a cloud. Only the blue was veiled with a haze of light gold, as it is sometimes in early summer.” Laura is happy and naive. As the day progresses and she learns of the death of the man who lives nearby, the reality of class differences becomes more

apparent and the question of what kind of person she will grow up to be becomes more obvious (e.g. will she be someone who doesn't believe in class differences, who feels empathy towards people who are considered lower class than her and is friends with them; or someone who follows the social conventions of the different social classes and behaves as it suits her, without much thought to others?). Laura goes down into the darkness when she takes the basket of leftover food to the grieving family and feels out of place. We understand that her encounter with death is a big moment for her as part of her growing up.

Flowers. Flowers symbolise wealth and beauty. Flowers are mentioned often in the story - the roses that will impress the guests and the lilies ordered by Mrs Sheridan illustrate how wealthy the family is. In comparison, down the hill at the workers' cottages "In the garden patches there was nothing but cabbage stalks, sick hens and tomato cans." Laura's hat has daisies on it, a symbol of youth and happiness. The lavender that the workman rubs between his fingers perhaps symbolises that he is a more physical being, more in touch with the earth than Laura and her family. Furthermore, the image of a flower blooming and then closing at night follows the format of the story itself. The story includes the line "And the perfect afternoon slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly its petals closed." This is like the story itself, the garden party in the story blooms and so does Laura in her hat as she is complimented by the guests; but it becomes dark, Laura goes down to the grieving family's cottage and the story comes to an end.

Laura and Laurie. Laura and Laurie are very similar names. Some people think Mansfield did this to symbolise the close bond between Laura and her brother Laurie. Mansfield had a close bond with her brother, Leslie, who died in the First World War.

Contemporary story inspired by 'The Garden Party'

Paula Morris (Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Whātua) is an award-winning novelist, short story writer and essayist. She has been awarded numerous residencies and fellowships, including the 2018 Katherine Mansfield Menton Fellowship which allowed her to spend three months living in Menton, France, and writing at the Villa Isola Bella where Mansfield lived in 1920 and 1921. Paula is convenor of the Master in Creative Writing programme at the University of Auckland.

In 2023 Paula published the story 'Isn't It', a contemporary take on 'The Garden Party'. Paula's story focuses on the mourning family rather than the family hosting a party. You can find the story here: <https://newsroom.co.nz/2023/08/25/short-story-isnt-it-by-paula-morris/>

Read Paula's story and discuss how she has brought 'The Garden Party' into the 21st century. Are the themes the same as the original story? Are there any shared symbols?

Students could write their own short story inspired by 'The Garden Party', choosing a different character to focus on or putting it into a new setting.

TV Adaptation

In 1983 the story was adapted for TV in New Zealand. The episode is about 25 minutes long and is available on NZ On Screen: <https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/the-garden-party-1983>

Unfortunately the visual quality isn't great, but if you can get past that it's worth watching.

After watching, ask students to discuss these questions:

- How true to the story was the TV adaptation in terms of the plot (what happens)?
- When you read the story, did you picture the setting and the clothes like they are portrayed in the TV adaptation? Were the characters how you imagined them?

- Is there anything you would do differently if you had to adapt the story for TV?

Other resources for ‘The Garden Party’:

The Literary Life podcast episode on ‘The Garden Party’: <https://www.theliterary.life/013/>

British Library blog post introducing Katherine Mansfield and three of her stories, including a close reading of ‘The Garden Party’: <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/an-introduction-to-katherine-mansfields-short-stories>

FEEDBACK

If you have any feedback on this resource, including suggestions for improvement, we’d love to hear them! Email us at info@katherinemansfield.com or fill out the contact form on our website: www.katherinemansfield.com

We’d also love to hear about any activities you have developed for teaching ‘The Garden Party’, especially if you’d be happy to share them with other teachers.

Who are we?

Katherine Mansfield House & Garden is a writer’s museum and Category 1 Historic Place in the inner-city heritage suburb of Thorndon, Wellington. Opened to the public in 1988, Katherine Mansfield House & Garden offers a unique insight into 19th-century Wellington and the life and literature of its most famous former occupant, the internationally acclaimed Aotearoa New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield.

The house is owned and operated by the Katherine Mansfield Birthplace Society Incorporated, a registered charity. Staffed by a small, dedicated team with assistance from volunteers, Katherine Mansfield House & Garden runs regular events and activities. We also offer guided tours for small and large groups and welcome school groups for education visits that take an active learning approach. Find out more at www.katherinemansfield.com