

WORKSHEET - AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL

Read the passage below carefully. Then answer the questions.

AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL.

by Louisa May Alcott

Polly hoped the “dreadful boy” (Tom) would not be present; but he was, and stared at her all dinner time in a most trying manner. Mr. Shaw, a busy-looking gentleman, said, “How do you do, my dear? Hope you’ll enjoy yourself;” and then appeared to forget her entirely. Mrs. Shaw, a pale, nervous woman, greeted her little guest kindly, and took care that she wanted for nothing.

Madam Shaw, a quiet old lady, with an imposing cap, exclaimed, on seeing Polly, “Bless my heart! the image of her mother—a sweet woman—how is she, dear?” and kept peering at the newcomer over her glasses till, between Madam and Tom, poor Polly lost her appetite.

Her cousin Fanny chatted like a magpie, and little Maud fidgeted, till Tom proposed to put her under the big dish cover, which produced such an explosion that the young lady was borne screaming away by the much-enduring nurse. It was, altogether, an uncomfortable dinner, and Polly was very glad when it was over.

They all went about their own affairs; and, after doing the honors of the house, Fan was called to the dressmaker, leaving Polly to amuse herself in the great drawing-room. Polly was glad to be alone for a few minutes; and, having examined all the pretty things about her, began to walk up and down over the soft, flowery carpet, humming to herself, as the daylight faded, and only the ruddy glow of the fire filled the room.

Presently Madam came slowly in, and sat down in her armchair, saying, “That’s a fine old tune; sing it to me, my dear. I haven’t heard it this many a day.” Polly didn’t like to sing before strangers, for she had no teaching, but such as her busy mother could give her; but she had been taught the utmost respect for old people, and, having no reason for refusing, she directly went to the piano and did as she was bid.

“That’s the sort of music, it’s a pleasure to hear. Sing some more, dear,” said Madam, in her gentle way, when she had done. Pleased with this praise, Polly sang away in a fresh little voice that went straight to the listener’s heart and nestled there. The sweet old tunes that one is never tired of were all Polly’s store. The more she sung, the better she did it; and when she

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wound up with “A Health to King Charlie,” the room quite rung with the stirring music made by the big piano and the little maid.

“That’s a jolly tune! Sing it again, please,” cried Tom’s voice; and there was Tom’s red head bobbing up over the high back of the chair where he had hidden himself. It gave Polly quite a turn, for she thought no one was hearing her, but the old lady dozing by the fire. “I can’t sing any more; I’m tired,” she said, and walked away to Madam in the other room. The red head vanished like a meteor, for Polly’s tone had been decidedly cool.

The old lady put out her hand, and, drawing Polly to her knee, looked into her face with such kind eyes that Polly forgot the impressive cap, and smiled at her confidently; for she saw that her simple music had pleased her listener, and she felt glad to know it. “You mus’n’t mind my staring, dear,” said Madam, softly pinching her rosy cheek, “I haven’t seen a little girl for so long, it does my old eyes good to look at you.”

Polly thought that a very odd speech, and couldn’t help saying, “Aren’t Fan and Maud little girls, too?”

“Oh, dear, no! Not what I call little girls. Fan has been a young lady this two years, and Maud is a spoiled baby. Your mother’s a very sensible woman, my child.”

“What a queer old lady!” thought Polly; but she said “Yes’m,” respectfully, and looked at the fire.

“You don’t understand what I mean, do you?” asked Madam, still holding her by the chin. “No’m; not quite.”

“Well, dear, I’ll tell you. In my day, children of fourteen and fifteen didn’t dress in the height of the fashion; go to parties as nearly like those of grown people as it’s possible to make them; lead idle, giddy, unhealthy lives, and get blasé at twenty. We were little folks till eighteen or so; worked and studied, dressed and played, like children; honored our parents; and our days were much longer in the land than now, it seems to me.” The old lady appeared to forget Polly, at the end of her speech; for she sat patting the plump little hand that lay in her own, and looking up at a faded picture of an old gentleman with a ruffled shirt and a queue.

“Was he your father, Madam?”

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“Yes, my dear; my honored father. I did up his frills to the day of his death; and the first money I ever earned, was five dollars which he offered as a prize to whichever of his six girls would lay the handsomest darn in his silk stockings.”

“How proud you must have been!” cried Polly, leaning on the old lady’s knee with an interested face.

“Yes; and we all learned to make bread, and cook, and wore little chintz gowns, and were as gay and hearty as kittens. All lived to be grandmothers; and I’m the last—seventy next birthday, my dear, and not worn out yet; though daughter Shaw is an invalid at forty.”

“That’s the way I was brought up, and that’s why Fan calls me old-fashioned, I suppose. Tell more about your papa, please; I like it,” said Polly.

“Say, ‘father.’ We never called him papa; and if one of my brothers had addressed him as ‘governor,’ as boys now do, I really think he’d have him cut off with a shilling.” Madam raised her voice in saying this, and nodded significantly; but a mild snore from the other room seemed to assure her that it was a waste of shot to fire in that direction.

Before she could continue, in came Fanny with the joyful news that Clara Bird had invited them both to go to the theatre with her that very evening, and would call for them at seven o’clock.

Note: See Recommended Reading Section if you wish to read the entire book.

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QUESTIONS

1. What is the main idea of this passage?

- ☐ Children are brought up differently in each generations.
- ☐ Older people dislike young people.
- ☐ The young and old can get along.

2. Use the word box below to complete the definition of the following words.

WORD BOX:

a French word meaning surfeited, rendered incapable further enjoyment.

a shooting star.

a noisy, mischievous bird, common in Europe and America.

with trust

disappeared.

having the power of exciting attention and feeling, impressive.

a person who is sickly.

Meteor	
Vanished	
Blasé	
Imposing	
Invalid	
Magpie	
Confidently	

Name: _____

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3. Select the main characters in the story from the list below.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| ☐ Mrs. Shaw | ☐ Mr. Shaw | |
| ☐ Polly | ☐ Polly's mother | ☐ Fanny |
| ☐ The Nanny | ☐ Tom | ☐ Maud |
| ☐ Madam Shaw | ☐ Louisa | ☐ Mrs. Shaw's Father |

4. Who is Polly?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ a family member | ☐ a visitor |
| ☐ the nanny | ☐ an entertainer |

5. What did Polly thought of the dinner?

- ☐ The experience was awful.
- ☐ The food was delicious.
- ☐ The experience was uncomfortable

6. What time did you think this story took place?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ☐ 1870s | ☐ 2000s | ☐ 1970s |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|

7. To whom do you think is referred to as “Old-fashioned Girl“?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Mrs. Shaw | ☐ Polly |
| ☐ Madam Shaw | ☐ Fanny |

Name: _____

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8. Who asked Polly to sing?

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ☐ Miss Shaw | ☐ Madam Shaw | |
| ☐ Mr. Shaw | ☐ Fanny | ☐ Tom |

9. How old was Madam Shaw?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ☐ 40 | ☐ 56 | ☐ 69 | ☐ 70 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|

10. Why did Polly stop singing?

- ☐ She was tired
- ☐ Tom asked her to sing the song again.
- ☐ She did not know the song.
- ☐ She wanted to talk to Madam Shaw.

11. Is the following statement factual or an opinion?

“That’s the sort of music, it’s a pleasure to hear.”

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ Fact | ☐ Opinion |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|

12. Which is NOT likely?

- ☐ Polly is visiting the Shaw family in the city.
- ☐ Polly grew up in the country.
- ☐ Polly lives with the Shaw family.
- ☐ The Shaw family was wealthy.

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13. Type **T** for **True** or **F** for **False** for the following statements. Type your answer in the space provided.

- Young Polly can play the piano. ☐
- Polly and Tom were good friends. ☐
- Fanny thought Polly was old-fashioned. ☐
- Polly and Madam Shaw has a lot in common. ☐
- Mrs. Shaw is Fanny's Grandmother. ☐
- Mr. Shaw is Madam Shaw's husband. ☐
- Mr. and Mrs. Shaw has four children. ☐
- Fanny, Tom, and Maud are Madam Shaw's grandchildren. ☐

14. Complete the statement below.

Madam Shaw found the young people of the day_____.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ fun-loving and idle. | ☐ musical and smart. |
| ☐ studious and childish. | ☐ playful and studious. |

15. When Madam Shaw raised her voice saying this: "Say, 'father.' We never called him papa; and if one of my brothers had addressed him as 'governor,' as boys now do, I really think he'd have him cut off with a shilling." For whom was this statement intended?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Mr. Shaw | ☐ Fanny |
| ☐ Tom | ☐ Mrs. Shaw |

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer

1. What is the main idea of this passage? *Children are bought up differently in each generations.*

2. Use the word box below to complete the definition of the following words.

Meteor	a shooting star.
Vanished	disappeared.
Blasé	a French word meaning surfeited, rendered incapable further enjoyment.
Imposing	having the power of exciting attention and feeling, impressive.
Invalid	a person who is sickly.
Magpie	a noisy, mischievous bird, common in Europe and America.
Confidently	with trust

3. Select the main characters in the story from the list below. *Mrs. Shaw, Mr. Shaw, Polly, Fanny, Tom, Maud, Madam Shaw*

4. Who is Polly? *A visitor*

5. What did Polly thought of the dinner? *The experience was uncomfortable.*

6. What time did you think this story took place? *1870s*

7. To whom do you think is referred to as “Old-fashioned Girl”? *Polly*

8. Who asked Polly to sing? *Madam Shaw*

9. How old was Madam Shaw? *69*

10. Why did Polly stop singing? *Tom asked her to sing the song again.*

11. Is the following statement factual or an opinion? *“That’s the sort of music, it’s a pleasure to hear.” Opinion*

12. Which is NOT likely? *Polly lives with the Shaw family*

13. Type **T** for **True** or **F** for **False** for the following statements. Type your answer in the space provided.

Name: _____

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Young Polly can play the piano.

Polly and Tom were good friends.

Fanny thought Polly was old-fashioned.

Polly and Madam Shaw has a lot in common.

Mrs. Shaw is Fanny's Grandmother.

Mr. Shaw is Madam Shaw's husband.

Mr. and Mrs. Shaw has four children.

Fanny, Tom, and Maud are Madam Shaw's grandchildren.

14. Complete the statement below.

Madam Shaw found the young people of the day fun-loving and idle.

15. When Madam Shaw raised her voice saying this: "Say, 'father.' We never called him papa; and if one of my brothers had addressed him as 'governor,' as boys now do, I really think he'd have him cut off with a shilling." For whom was this statement intended? *Tom*