Summary
When their typical Cape Cod rental house isn’t available one summer, the Penderwick family opts instead to vacation at a cottage in the Berkshire Mountains for three weeks. The Penderwicks are a motley crew comprised of Mr. Penderwick, his four daughters and a dog named Hound. Mr. Penderwick is studious yet often lost in his own world, researching plants and reciting latin. Rosalind is twelve years old, the eldest daughter and is deemed “in charge”, filling in her late mother’s shoes as protector and caregiver. Skye is next in line at age eleven, with a spunky spirit and unwavering focus for competition. Next is Jane, an inspiring author and dreamer who is often found wandering in search of her next idea. The youngest daughter is named Elizabeth, but goes by "Batty", a four year old who is shy and adores animals of all shapes and sizes.

When the Penderwicks arrive at the cottage, they find that it is accompanied by a grandiose mansion dubbed "Arundel" and extensive grounds and gardens. The Penderwick sisters are given the freedom to explore as long as they keep an eye out for one another. For the next three weeks, the girls are immersed in a series of adventuresome days as they become friends with Jeffery Tifton who is son to mean, pretentious Mrs. Tifton, the owner of Arundel. Various eventful (but innocent) circumstances occur such as a run-in with a bull, late night escapes via rope ladders, falling into the lily pond and escaping rabbits only make Mrs. Tifton more angry and hostile towards the Penderwicks, who she deems are a bad influence on her son. The sisters strive to prove they are good-hearted while encouraging Jeffrey to stand up for what he believes in. When their time at Arundel is over, the girls have not only learned about taking care of each other but have made a true friend in the process.
Mini Lesson #1: Inferring

- Explain that now we have a glimpse into what the setting of *The Penderwicks* is going to be, we will be predicting what the characters will be like. By making predictions we are using our previous background knowledge (schema!) paired with solid evidence. This technique for discovering more about the text is called inferring.

- Present an anchor chart that depicts some ways we might start to infer:
  - My guess is...
  - Perhaps...
  - Maybe...
  - It could be that...
  - This could mean...
  - I predict...

Leave this chart up to remind students of how they could to make predictions and spark their further investigation of the text.

- Read pages 1-5 aloud from the beginning of the novel and ask students to think about predictions they are forming about the Penderwick family just from the first few pages.

- Model the strategy of making a inference as you read.
  Example passage from page 3:
  "Kangaroo starts with a *k*, not a *c*," said Skye. "It does not. It starts with a *c*, like in *cat*," said Batty. "Just take your turn Skye," said Rosalind.

Based on just this passage alone, maybe Skye is a little bossy and she likes to correct others mistakes. Rosalind could be the mediator, or peace keeper of the family. What is your prediction?

- Invite students to share inferences they have made on their own while listening and record them on the board for everyone to see.

- Tell students they are now going to practice inferring on their own by using something other than the text. Explain that we can learn a lot about someone by just looking at some of their belongings or things. Show them a basket of items that were "left behind" by the Penderwick family as they left on their summer family vacation. (Examples of objects could be receipts, books, pictures, soccer cleats, food wrappers, toys, magazines etc. that tie directly into the personality of a character) Hold up an object and explain who you think it belongs to, why you think this and what it might tell about the character.

- Working in pairs, have students examine each object and then make inferences to who the object belongs to and what its importance might be in who the character is as a person.
Take a look at the objects that were left behind by the Penderwick family as they left on their summer vacation to Arundel. Fill out the chart below to begin to make inferences about the characters.

Remember: schema (what you already know) + evidence = inference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Who do you think it belongs to?</th>
<th>What predictions can you make about this character?</th>
<th>Additional evidence from the text that supports your prediction</th>
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Mini Lesson #2: Personification

- Begin by saying “I have noticed a lot of the objects and animals we have been reading about in the first few chapters of *The Penderwicks* have been personified.” Ask students to speculate what the word personified or personification means. Point out that each starts with the root word “person”...this is a clue! Brainstorm together as a group possible meanings and/or examples.

(Personification is the attribution of human nature or character to animals, inanimate objects, or nonliving things)

- Model the strategy of recognizing personification while reading a passage aloud to the class. Example passage from page 9:
  “And so it was, a huge mansion crouching in the middle of formal gardens. Built from gray stone, it was covered in towers, balconies, terraces and turrets that jutted every which way.”

- Ask students what words or phrases were used to instill “human nature” upon the mansion.
  • What mental images come to mind when hearing this description?
  • How else could you personify Arundel Hall based on other collective descriptions earlier in the text?

- Invite a student to come up and record their mental image of Arundel as a quick sketch or drawing on chart paper. If the house is being compared to a person, what might this person look like?

- Finally, ask students what they think the importance of personification is. How does it help (if at all) as they read? (example: add interest, help create a better mental image, invoke curiosity)

- Tell students they are now going to practice identifying personification in the text on their own during independent reading time.
As you read, record three examples of personification that really conjure up a strong mental image for you. Create a drawing that somehow resembles your mental image.
*Remember to also include the page number you found your example on!

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<th>Example of Personification from Text</th>
<th>Mental Image</th>
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Critical Thinking/Focusing Questions

Before reading, consider....
• One the first page, Jane Birdswell writes "But then what is a summer without a road trip to someplace special?" Have you ever been on a fantastic summer vacation? What did you do?
• Based on the cover illustrations and the title, predict what this novel will be about?

Chapter 1: A Boy at the Window
• Why do you think that Mr. Penderwick sometimes talks in latin? Can the girls understand him?
• What do you predict will be the role of Harry the Tomato man throughout the rest of the novel?
• Would you like to live in a mansion like Arundel? What sorts of things would you do that you can't do in a regular house?

Chapter 2: A Tunnel Through the Hedge
• Each sister is given the opportunity to choose her own bedroom...how does each seem to suit their personalities?
• What is the unique way the sisters use to pick order? Do you have a particular way to choose who goes first, second, third, etc.?

Chapter 3: The MOOPS
• What does the acronym "MOOPS" mean? Do you think Batty feels left out when she is not included in these meetings?
• What are some ways that Batty communicates with Hound?
• How do you know that Rosalind and Skye are concerned with how Jane might apologize to Jeffrey?

Chapter 4: The Apology
• How do you think Jane felt when Churchie answered the door of the mansion instead of Mrs. Tifton?
• In your opinion, did Jane need to give a formal speech as an apology to Jeffrey? How would you have apologized?

Chapter 5: The New Hero
• "Mr. Penderwick believed in long walks. One of his favorite sayings was, Take a walk, clear your head." (pg. 51) How do you clear your head? How does it help you calm down and look at a problem in a new way?
• What clues does the author give that Batty is going to have a run in with the "man-goring" bull?
• Who ends up being the new hero?

Chapter 6: Rabbits and a Long Ladder
• Based on the inside of Cagney's apartment, what conclusions can you draw about him? How is his room different than yours?
• How can you tell that although he denies it, Jeffrey is really interested in music and playing the piano?
• Why does Jeffrey hate hanging out with Teddy Robinette so much? How is Teddy different than the Penderwick sisters?

Chapter 7: Borrowed Finery
• At this point in the story, which character do you feel like you relate the most to? Why?
• Would you comfortable wearing clothes that had once belonged to Mrs. Tifton? Do you think she will notice that the dresses the girls are going to wear to Jeffrey's birthday party were once hers?

Chapter 8: The Birthday Dinner
• Jeffrey receives a set of golf clubs for his birthday, yet he despises golf. Have you ever received a gift you weren't particularly fond of? How did you react?
• How would you feel if your parents had planned every detail of your life for you like Mrs. Tifton has for Jeffrey?

Chapter 9: Shocking News
• Why do you think Batty gave Jeffrey her framed photo of Hound? Have you ever given something away that has a lot of value to you?
• How do you think Jeffrey feels when he overhears his mother and Dexter talking about getting married?
• What are some of the plans that the Penderwick sisters come up with so Jeffrey doesn't have to go to military school? Do you think any of these plans will work?

Chapter 10: A Bold Escape
• Who's face did Jane and Skye choose to paint as a target for their bow and arrow practice?
• What causes Mrs. Tifton's dislike of the Penderwick family? Do you think its justified?
• Describe a friendship you have had that is similar to Batty and Hound's.

Chapter 11: Another Rescue
• Why do you think Batty wants to leave Arundel so badly that she sets off for home on her own?
• "Her spirits were flagging." (pg. 149) How might Batty be feeling this far back into her trek back home?
• Mr. Penderwick tells the girls, "People sometimes make unexpected choices when they are lonely." (pg. 152) What does this quote mean to you?

Chapter 12: Sir Barnaby Patterne
• Why do you think Mrs. Tifton cares so much about her gardens and the Garden Club Competition?
• What do you predict will happen when Jane, Jeffrey and Skye set out to play soccer close to the garden hedge on the morning of the Garden Club Competition?
• When Jeffrey and Skye name their soccer balls "Dexter" and "Pencey" what do you think they are trying to symbolize?
• Why is Rosalind so shy and intimidated around Cagney?
The daylight was gone, and thick clouds were hiding the moon and stars. All she could see were black branches against an almost black sky. (pg. 172) When you read this passage, what mental images come to mind?

Chapter 13: The Piano Lesson
• All along, Jane has been writing a series of books featuring "Sabrina Starr". Who do you think Sabrina represents?
• Why do you think Skye is so nervous to learn how to play the piano from Jeffrey?
• While the piano lesson is happening, Batty occupies herself by constructing a fort. Have you ever made a fort before? What materials did you use? What did it look like?
• Would you have the courage to eavesdrop on someone and then stand up and defend your family if they were being unkind?
• What is the connection that Jeffrey tries to explain to Skye between playing music and math?

Chapter 14: A Midnight Adventure
• Batty enjoys listening to the same bedtime stories about her mother each night. When you were younger did you enjoy the same stories over and over again? What were they about?
• Why do you think Rosalind is so restless after she falls into the lily pond? What thoughts might be going through her mind as she tries to sleep?

Chapter 15: The Shredded Book
• Rosalind admits she has trouble expressing some of her feelings to her father. Think of someone in your life that you can tell anything to. Describe that person and why they are such a good listener.
• Mr. Penderwick tells his daughters, "For parents almost always want what is best for their children. They just don't always know what that is." (pg. 208) How does this relate to Jeffrey and his mother's wishes for him to go to Pencey Military School?

Chapter 16: The Runaway
• Jeffrey tells Skye there is a difference between being courageous and having a temper. What do you think the differences are?
• What are some ways that the Penderwick sisters have "adopted" Jeffrey into their family?
• Why won't Mrs. Tifton and Dexter listen to Jeffrey's concerns about being sent to Pencey?

Chapter 17: The Next-to-Last Day
• Jane tells Rosalind, "This isn't about law, Rosy. This is about heart and truth and adventure." What does this mean to you?
• What are some ways that Batty tries to keep Dexter and Mrs. Tifton from entering the cottage when they come looking for Jeffrey?
• How does Jeffrey finally connect with his mother and make her understand how he is feeling?

Chapter 18: Good-bye for Now
• As the Penderwicks pack up to leave, Jeffrey is no where to be found. Where do you predict he is?
• Rosalind asks Batty, "Endings are sad, aren't they?" Do you agree? Why or why not?
Why does Jeffrey refer to Dexter as a serial killer or werewolf? What would you compare him to based on his personality and behavior?

After you read, consider...
• How are friends and family important in this book? What is one relationship between two of the characters that really stands out to you?
Resources
The Penderwicks by Jeanne Birdsall
Comprehension Connections by Tanny Mcgregor
Yardsticks by Chip Wood