

Ava Gardner, *From Grabtown to Tinseltown*

By Alyssa Bailey

STUDY GUIDE

1. Who first advised Ava Gardner to go to Hollywood?
 - A. Ava's sister, Beatrice
 - B. Henry Fonda
 - C. Henry Fonda's date
 - D. Larry Tarr

2. Where was Ava Gardner born?
 - A. Grabtown, NC
 - B. Newport News, Va.
 - C. Smithfield, NC
 - D. Wilson, NC

3. Where did Gardner attend college?
 - A. Grabtown, NC
 - B. Newport News, Va.
 - C. Smithfield, NC
 - D. Wilson, NC

4. Where is the Ava Gardner Museum?
 - A. Grabtown, NC
 - B. Newport News, Va.
 - C. Smithfield, NC
 - D. Wilson, NC

5. How did MGM become aware of Ava Gardner?
 - A. Larry Tarr sent photos of Ava to MGM.
 - B. Sister Beatrice paid for Ava's screen test.
 - C. Henry Fonda recommended Ava to MGM.
 - D. A legal clerk from Loews Theaters sent photos of Gardner to MGM.

6. How much pay did Gardner's first contract call for?
 - A. \$50 a week
 - B. \$100 a week
 - C. \$200 a week
 - D. \$1000 a week

7. What motivated Ava Gardner to become a movie star, according to the text?
 - A. She wanted to live away from her family.
 - B. She did not have opportunity to attend college.
 - C. She wanted her children to escape small-town life.
 - D. She preferred the life of a star to that of a secretary.

8. Which characterizes Ava Gardner?
 - A. Her marriages limited her fame.
 - B. Her appearance made her stand out.
 - C. She had no regrets about how her life turned out.
 - D. She was confident of her ability to succeed in Hollywood.

9. What is meant by "continued to blossom?"
 - A. changed jobs

- B. started a garden
- C. kept getting better
- D. sprouted more flowers

10. Which is the best meaning of the phrase, “made her star turn?”

- A. moved to Spain
- B. suffered an illness
- C. took a leading role
- D. graduated from college

11. Which is the best meaning of “breathing the same air?”

- A. sharing a room
- B. living in the same area
- C. drawing the same conclusions
- D. suffering from a lung disorder

12. Which is the best meaning of the word “hold,” found in the 5th paragraph from the end of the profile?

- A. container
- B. fame
- C. influence
- D. store

Verbs to define: Match the verbs with their meanings. Check the context.

___1. boasted

A. tried out

___2. auditioned

B. grabbed

___3. garnered

C. experienced pain

__4. weakened

__5. suffered

__6. snatched

D. bragged

E. gained

F. made less forceful

G. grew

H. fought

EVALUATIONS:

Respond to the prompts in one page (or more). If needed, conduct research to obtain additional facts to support your analyses.

1. Describe Ava Gardner, how she looked, how she felt, what she thought and other, based on what you learn from the profile and what more you learn from research.
2. What do you think Gardner meant in her letter when she wrote, "I think it would be better to be born sick and miserable than to know a healthy, good life and have it snatched away in two weeks?" Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
3. What do you think biographer Doris Cannon meant when she said at Ava's funeral, "The curtains have closed, but the applause will continue through the years." How does this quote apply to her school performance at age 6 and her career?
4. Watch or find out more about one or more of her films and write a review that might appear in a newspaper:
 - A. "Whistle Stop"
 - B. "Maisie Goes to Reno"
 - C. "The Killers"
 - D. "Hucksters"
 - E. "Mogambo"

NEWS CONNECTIONS:

1. Search for stories about movie stars in your newspaper. How are today's stars similar to and/or different from Ava Gardner? For example: How are they discovered? What do they earn? Do their personal lives receive attention? What advice might Ava Gardner give today's young stars, such as Justin Bieber and Miley Cyrus?
2. Search the movie listings in your newspaper. What parts might Ava Gardner be considered for, if she were cast in current films?
3. If Ava Gardner were writing a letter similar to ones written to advice columnists in your newspaper, what would she say? What help would she ask for?
4. What is YouTube? How does YouTube affect filmmaking? Have any stars debuted on YouTube? How does someone's debut on YouTube compare with Ava's rise to stardom? Who do current stars work with? Agents? Studios? Independently? Choose a favorite current star and compare him or her to Ava Gardner.
5. Collect evidence from newspapers to argue whether America supports a celebrity culture.

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