

Ages  
6-12



From 5 May to 27 September 2026  
at the Grand Trianon and the English garden of the Petit Trianon



# Gardens

of the Enlightenment  
**EXHIBITION**

1750-1800



CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

in cooperation with

**@strapi\***

# Welcome to the English gardens!

## They appeared all over EUROPE

English gardens emerged around 1730 and remained fashionable during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. **This type of garden was developed in England and was called "anglo-chinese" in France because it was also inspired by Chinese gardens.** Back then, the Europeans were fascinated by everything coming from China!



## Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU

This writer was convinced that nature helped a person feel free and be happy. His thinking had a lot of influence over the way people designed gardens at the time. Paths became winding so that visitors could be surprised and amazed at every turn.

## MINIATURE worlds

Visitors felt like they had travelled **without leaving the garden** thanks to little decorative structures that evoked other countries: Chinese pagodas, Egyptian pyramids, Greek and Roman temples...



## PLAY!

By the way, do you know what this kind of decorative feature is called?

To find out, replace each number with its corresponding letter.



|    |    |    |   |
|----|----|----|---|
| 25 | 12 | 15 | 6 |
| y  | l  | o  | f |

|   |    |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|----|
| 6 | 15 | 12 | 12 | 25 |
|---|----|----|----|----|

Match each photo below to its country of origin.



Egypt China Italy

1

2

3

## Larger than LIFE!

Water was everywhere in these new gardens, with little rivers, lakes, and waterfalls. Dotted with hills, rocks, caves, and winding paths, you'd think you were in the wilderness! **But don't be fooled, this scenery is completely artificial and created by landscape architects.**



## RIDDLE

Once upon a time, I was forced to take the shape of a cube or pyramid.

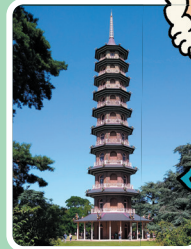
But thanks to Rousseau, I refuse to stay tidily inside the lines.

I start to reach for the sky and I am finally free.

What am I?

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## The creation of an English garden GARDEN



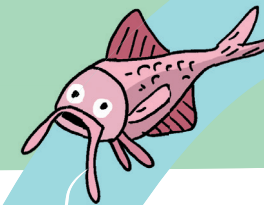
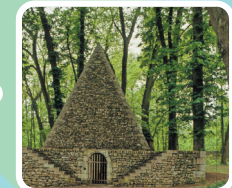
A



B



C



# Life in the garden

## FASHION in the gardens

To be able to walk around and play outside, clothing became lighter and less cumbersome.

Women wore simpler dresses that were more flowy and protected themselves from the sun with straw hats or parasols. Men also chose more comfortable outfits, decorated with flowers or patterns inspired by far-off places.



### The scandalous SHIRT!

In 1783, Marie-Antoinette appeared in public wearing a very simple white dress, called a "chemise à la reine," or a "queen's shirt." Many people were shocked to see a queen dressed in something like a nightgown! However, this light attire quickly became fashionable in order to walk in the garden.



## Everybody OUTSIDE!

When it was nice out, they brought out armchairs, little tea tables, cushions, and sometimes even rugs outside.

The garden became an open-air living room! That's why people of the time invented furniture especially for outdoors: folding chairs, tables that were easy to move, and even tables with umbrellas to protect them from the sun.



### Living BENCHES!

Sometimes, benches weren't made of wood or stone. They were low earthen walls covered in grass. They were mostly used in good weather, because dampness could make them less comfortable...

## How to read a PAINTING?

1

Take your time and **observe** closely: Look at the painting to the right as if you were going to step inside it.



2

**Describe what you see:** What can you say about the colours, the light, the movement? What do you see in the foreground, middle ground, and background?

3

**Search for meaning:** What story is this work of art telling?

4

**Express your emotions:** What do you feel? Do you find the painting scary, funny...?

**It's your turn now to play this game** with other works of art!



# Gardens full of surprises!



## Places to RELAX

Nobles gathered there to escape the strict rules of the court and have a bit of fun. They attended concerts, theatre productions, and even shows featuring automatons, astonishing machines that seem to come to life on their own.



## A brief HISTORY of fireworks

Fireworks were invented in China more than 1,000 years ago thanks to the gunpowder used in cannons. This secret gradually made its way to Europe with the help of great explorers. Specialised craftsmen then learnt to create sparks and light effects in different colours. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, these shows were so spectacular that they were officially known as "the king's pyrotechnicians."

## PLAY!

These gardens are real playgrounds for big kids!

Write each coloured letter in the list of games from the era in the correct space to discover another very popular game from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A very popular game in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was:

JEU DE PAUME BOWLING  
CROQUET HIDE-AND-SEEK  
HOT COCKLES SPINNING TOP  
RING CAROUSEL LEAP-FROG  
CUP-AND-BALL



## Magical NIGHTS!

Lavish evening parties were held at Versailles. Thousands of lanterns and candles illuminated the walkways and ornamental pools. They even hung chandeliers off the trees! Candlelights illuminated large painted fabrics from behind, enhancing the magic. The garden was transformed into a veritable fairytale setting.



During parties at the Petit Trianon, at the sound of a rifle shot, over 200 "illuminators" had to run to light all the candles in a matter of a few minutes.



## PLAY!

Seek and find!

Look for these details in the painting to the left.



## A VOLCANO in the garden!

A German prince, fascinated by Mt. Vesuvius, had a replica of the volcano built in his garden. Fire, smoke, and lighting effects to mimic lava made it seem like it was erupting. The guests were very impressed!



# A sumptuous garden!

## Marie-Antoinette's GARDEN

At Marie-Antoinette's request, architect Richard Mique and gardener Antoine Richard carried out extensive renovations to create her new garden.

The garden, a living theatre set, soon became the Queen's favourite place.



## PLAY!

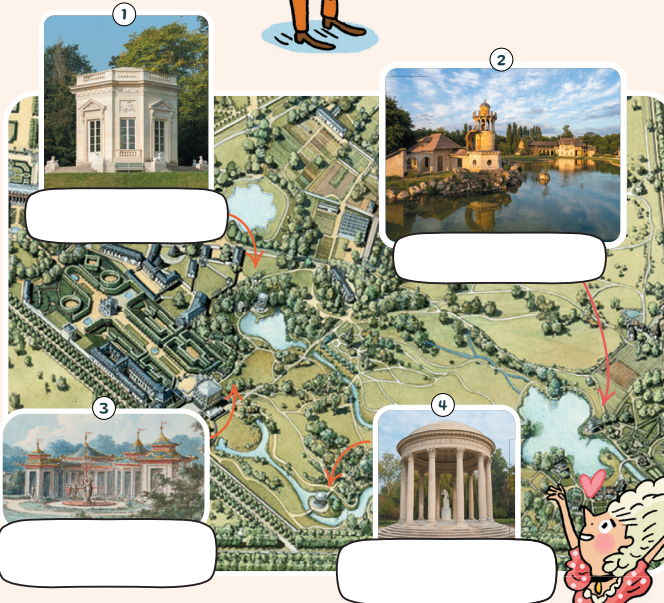
Write the missing name underneath the correct photo below using these clues:

**The Queen's hamlet:**  
Marie-Antoinette's dreamy rustic village.

**Chinese Ring Carousel:**  
A merry-go-round with sculpted dragons and Chinese figures. Unfortunately, it no longer exists today.

**The Belvedere**  
A small octagonal pavilion with sculptures of fruits and flowers and a pair of sphinxes (who have the body of a lion and the head of a woman) at each door.

**The Temple of Love**  
A dome supported by white columns, with a statue of Cupid.



## Family ACTIVITIES at Versailles

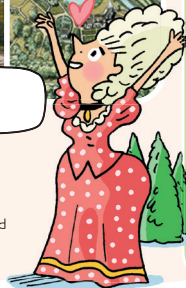
THANKS TO THE CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY "VERSAILLES WITH THE FAMILY: IT'S A PIECE OF CAKE" OR THE GUIDED TOUR "THE KING'S PRIVATE APARTMENTS", SET OFF TO EXPLORE LESSER-KNOWN AREAS OF THE ESTATE – USUALLY CLOSED TO VISITORS – WITH A MUSEUM GUIDE.

Discover the full programme at [en.chateauversailles.fr/family](http://en.chateauversailles.fr/family)



## ANSWERS

Page 2: A tree. Page 3: Game 1: A folly. Game 2: 1 - I/C; 2/A; 3/B. Page 4: Blind Man's Bluff. Page 8: 1 - The Belvedere; 2 - The Queen's Hamlet; 3 - The Chinese Ring Carousel; 4 - The Temple de l'Amour.



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