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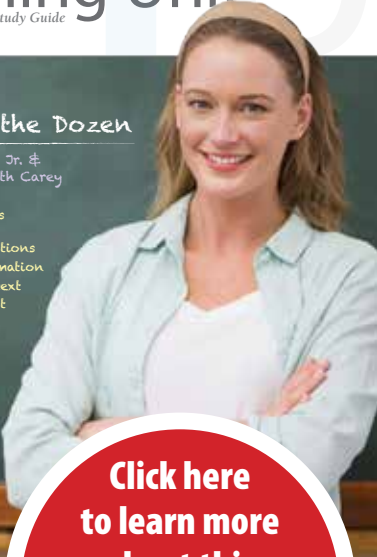
Prestwick House  
**Literature**  
Teaching Unit  
*Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide*



## Cheaper By the Dozen

by Frank B. Gilbreth, Jr. &  
Ernestine Gilbreth Carey

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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# Literature Teaching Unit

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# Cheaper By the Dozen

## Objectives

*By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:*

1. define a memoir and discuss the use of the first-person narrative.
2. discuss the significance of setting on the characters.
3. explain allusion and identify several uses of allusion in the book.
4. understand and appreciate the comic elements of the story.
5. define personification and give an example of its use.
6. write a brief character sketch of the main character of the story.
7. discuss the elements of an episodic book and the merits or shortcomings of a story that is not chronologically developed.
8. recognize and discuss the elements in this novel that have given it long life.
9. infer a major theme in the story and support it by citing specific evidence from the novel.

# Cheaper By the Dozen

## Questions for Essay or Discussion

1. Often, the preface or dedication of a book can give the reader some indication of the theme of the book or provide important background information. In a two-paragraph essay, explain what the dedication, “to Dad, who only reared twelve children, and to Mother, who reared twelve only children” means to you.
2. Memoirs (a French word meaning “memories”) are traditionally written in the first person, because they are usually autobiographical. What advantages or disadvantages does a memoir give the author?
3. When Mother says to Father, “You sound like Shylock,” the authors assume that the reader understands that Shylock, a character from Shakespeare’s play *The Merchant of Venice*, represents a ruthless moneylender. Identify two other instances of allusion in the book, and briefly explain what the authors are alluding to.
4. Although the character of Mother is not as clearly defined as Father is, she still emerges as a unique individual, someone who is very different in personality from her husband. Supply as many examples as you can that illustrate the differences between the two personalities.
5. In the family council meeting, Dad says, “This is a democracy – everybody has an equal voice.” Do you think this was really so? Defend your answer.
6. What is personification? Give at least one example of its comic use in the book.
7. If you were writing a letter to a friend, how would you describe Father to your friend? The following are some things you may want to include: what does he look like, what are his creative ways of teaching, what is his sense of humor, what is his concern with using time wisely, etc. Do you think you would enjoy being with such a person? Do you think he likes children and enjoys being with them?
8. The children seem to think that Dad is an effective teacher. Give specific examples from the book that support this belief. If you disagree, supply evidence of Dad’s failure as a teacher.
9. Even though *Cheaper by the Dozen* was written about events that happened over 75 years ago, some of the conflicts that occurred between Mother and Dad and the two oldest girls, Anne and Ernestine, could happen today. Discuss some of the ways that Anne and Ernestine deal with their parents over issues such as hairstyles, clothing, dating, or make-up.
10. The first printing of *Cheaper By the Dozen* was in 1949, and since then, it has had more than eighty re-printings. In effect, it is rarely out of print. What elements in the book make it a constant seller?

# Cheaper By the Dozen

## Chapter 1

### Vocabulary

**gall** – boldness, insolence  
**gimlet eyes** – piercing, staring eyes  
**jowl** – the flesh under the lower cheek

1. How is the father physically described?

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2. Why are there so many children in the family?

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3. Why do the children suspect that the family was so large?

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4. What type of business do Mother and Dad run?

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5. How is the family run?

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## Chapter 3

### Vocabulary

**bolster** – to support or prop up  
**calliope** – a musical instrument  
**duster** – a woman's loose floor-length housecoat  
**garish** – loud and flashy  
**lurid** – causing shock or horror  
**penultimate...ante-penultimate...ultimate** – next to last...before the next to last...  
     last  
**porte-cochere** – a carriage entrance  
**reprobate** – a shameless person  
**rhetorical question** – a question for which an answer is not required or expected

1. What two experiences lead Dad to insist that roll always be called?  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. The Gilbreth clan apparently cause quite a stir whenever they go motoring in their Pierce Arrow. What case of mistaken identity causes the ultimate embarrassment?  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Why is Dad's retort to strangers, "They come cheaper by the dozen," called an "apparent ad lib"?  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. How does Dad use his "cheaper by the dozen" line to his advantage?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 9**

Vocabulary

**extricated** – released from a difficult situation  
**Hara-kiri** – Japanese word for ritual suicide  
**unamenable** – not receptive to advice

1. How did Mother change after she arrived in California?

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2. How did the children protest against having to wear clothes their grandmother had selected?

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3. How did this protest change the children's behavior?

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4. How did Billy tease the Chinese cook?

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5. What was the surprise on the family's trip home?

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