

PREVIEW  
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Short Story  
Terms

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Setting

- **Setting** is when and where a story takes place.
- The setting shapes the events and conflicts in a story. For example, weather can indicate danger or good fortune.
- Consider how in horror movies, there are often thunderstorms or it is night. It is harder for characters to function when they can't see well, which builds more suspense for readers/viewers.
- The culture of the time period (past, present, future) dictate how characters behave.

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## Plot

- **Plot:** the sequence of most significant events in a story; plot lines develop how the characters behave, interact, and details the main events that make a story whole
- **Exposition:** an introduction to the characters, conflicts, setting, and basic information about the story
- **Rising Action:** the conflicts start to heat up; tensions build and readers discover more interesting, in-depth details about characters and the story
- **Climax:** the turning point of the story; the point of highest tension; the conflict reaches its peak (some cliff hangers will end on the climax)
- **Falling Action:** conflicts calm down and readers are exposed to the aftermath of the climax where loose ends begin to get tied up
- **Resolution:** the ending of the story; tells where characters leave off; the final details of the story

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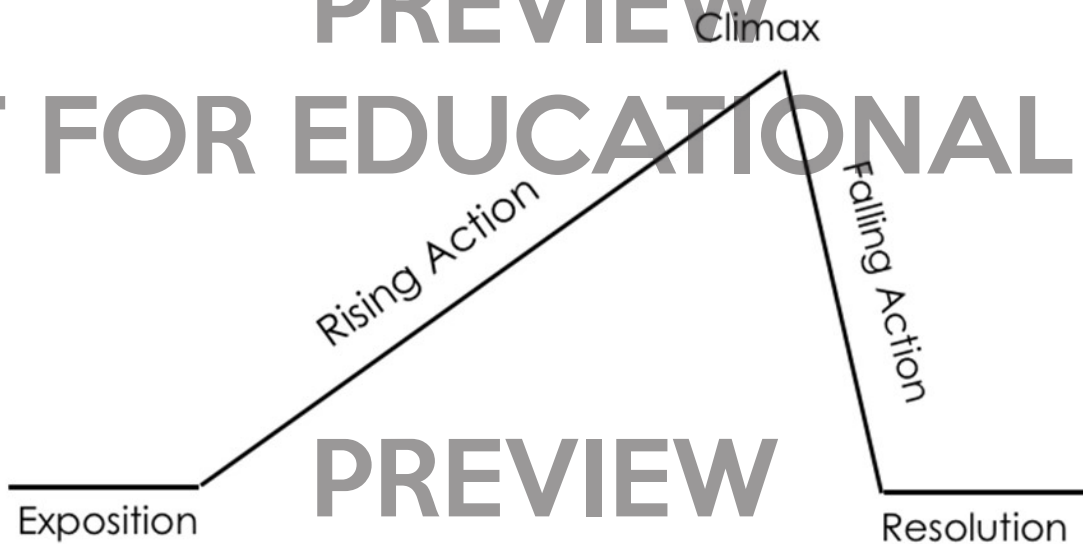
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# Plot Diagram

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## NOT FOR Conflict

- Internal conflict: a struggle that takes place in someone's mind. Example: make a tough decision.

- External conflict: a struggle that takes place between a person and some outer force.

- Man vs. Man –two characters that verbally or physically have a conflict
- Man vs. Nature – a character is conflicted by a natural force, such as weather or an animal
- Man vs. Society – a character has a conflict with the way a society functions; they can be against its laws or social norms that most others live by; for example, if a character is anti-slavery during a period of slavery

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## Theme

- **Theme** is the central idea of a work of literature that depicts a message from the author.
- It can be the moral of the story, and stories can contain more than one theme.
- Theme is not just one word, such as "love" or "war." It must be a concept expressed using a complete sentence, in message form, such as: "love requires sacrifice," or "war can turn ordinary people into heroes."
- A theme is not specific to one person or setting. It must be **universal**. You can express the same message to someone living in France in 1805 that can also be said to someone living in America in 1970.
- Theme doesn't have to be a true statement; it is just the opinion of the author based on evidence from the story.

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## The Three Little Pigs

### Examples of Theme

Incomplete theme: “Danger”

- Danger is not a message and is only one word.

Incomplete theme: “Do not build your house of straw because a wolf will come blow it down.”

- This is too specific to the story and is not universal. It can't be applied to everyone.

**Complete theme: Do not be naïve or criminals will take advantage of you.**

- This theme is arguably the most important message that the author is trying to portray.

A secondary theme could be: “You can always depend on family in times of need.”

- There is evidence of both these themes in the story. Whether you believe these statements to be true is a matter of opinion. Theme is the opinion of the author that readers gather from evidence.

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## Activity 1: Word Sort

**Teacher Directions:** There's two ways you can do this. Option A: You can write each of the following words on their own individual index cards and then put them in a ziplock bag. Repeat this process so you have at least 5 ziplock bags of words (one for every group). Option B: You can print out 5 copies of the list of words and give one to each group of students. Then, ask every group to cut out each individual word and put them in a ziplock bag when they are done with the activity. You can reuse the bags for the rest of your classes.

This activity is a fun, simple way for students to work collaboratively. It allows students to associate the following words with one another and make connections to their deeper meanings. Talking about superstitions, magic, and curses will get them thinking about ideas that will be present in the short story, "The Monkey's Paw." There is no right answer. After students sort their words, have a class discussion and allow groups to share. Ask students if they believe in superstitions and share some examples aloud. Examples of good luck superstitions: throwing salt over your shoulder, finding a penny heads up, rabbit's foot. Examples of bad luck superstitions: walking under a ladder, seeing a black cat, breaking a mirror, Friday the 13th, etc.

**Directions for students:** In your groups, spread out all fifteen words on a desk/table. Look at all of the words and try to put them in different categories. How you sort the words are up to you.

Luck	Money	Graveyard
Curse	Genie	Magic
Greed	Four Leaf Clover	Jinx
Black cat	Fate	Salt
Coincidence	Rabbit's foot	Horseshoe

## Activity 2: Journal Prompt

**Teacher directions:** Have students write a journal entry, using the Collins type 1 writing method, based on the following question.

If you were given three wishes tomorrow, what would you wish for? Exclude money.

## Activity 3: Review Short Story Terms: Plot, Conflict, Mood, Setting, Theme

**Teacher directions:** Using the PowerPoint, review these five terms with your class if necessary.



#### Activity 4: Read “The Monkey’s Paw” and Recall Questions

**Teacher directions:** Print the Reading Questions worksheet for students to complete while reading “The Monkeys Paw.”

#### Activity 5: Close Reading Text Analysis Questions

**Teacher directions:** Print the Text Analysis Questions worksheet for students to complete after reading “The Monkeys Paw.”

#### Activity 6: Plot Diagram and Theme

**Teacher directions:** Print the Plot and Theme worksheet for students to complete after reading “The Monkeys Paw.”

#### Activity 7: Learning Menu Projects

**Teacher directions:** Provide students with the project options on the Learning Menu worksheet and conclude the unit on “The Monkey’s Paw.”

Name:

Class:

## Monkey's Paw Reading Questions

1. How does Mr. White get the monkey's paw?

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2. What power does the monkey's paw have?

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3. Why did the fakir curse the monkey's paw?

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4. How do the White's respond to Sergeant-Major Morris' story about the monkey's paw?

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5. What is Mr. White's first wish

6. What is the consequence of Mr. White's first wish

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7. What is the family's second wish?

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8. What is the conflict between M. and Mrs. White at the end of the story?

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## Monkey's Paw Reading Questions Answer Key

1. How does Mr. White get the monkey's paw?

Sergeant-Major Morris brings the monkey's paw to Mr. White's house, which he received in India. Although Morris throws the paw into the fire, Mr. White then pulls it out.

2. What power does the monkey's paw have?

The monkey's paw grants three wishes to three different men.

3. Why did the fakir curse the monkey's paw?

The fakir cursed the paw to teach the lesson that fate is what rules people's lives; he wanted to punish anyone who tried to interfere with fate.

4. How do the Whites respond to Sergeant-Major Morris' story about the monkey's paw?

They don't believe the paw will work or that it is cursed; they treat the situation with laughter, jokes, and doubt.

5. What is Mr. White's first wish?

Mr. White wishes for 200 pounds, which he believes is not a greedy amount of money.

6. What is the consequence of Mr. White's first wish?

Mr. White receives his wish of 200 pounds, but it costs him his son's life. It was the compensation from the company he worked for and the reason for his death.

7. What is the family's second wish?

Mr. White wishes his son Herbert to be alive again.

8. What is the conflict between Mr. and Mrs. White at the end of the story?

Mrs. White wanted to let the presumed back-from-the-dead Herbert in, while Mr. White wanted him to stay locked out. Mr. White ultimately wishes the person or creature to be gone, which greatly disappoints Mrs. White, as she believed it was her late son.

Name:

Class:

## Monkey's Paw Text Analysis Questions

**Directions: Answer the following questions. Use evidence from the passages provided.**

1. What details of the story establish the mood?

Without, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlour of Laburnam Villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned brightly. Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly by the fire.

2. How does the setting impact the story?

"That's the worst of living so far out," bawled Mr. White, with sudden and unlooked-for violence; "of all the beastly, slushy, out-of-the-way places to live in, this is the worst. Pathway's a bog, and the road's a torrent. I don't know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only two houses in the road are let, they think it doesn't matter."

3. What type of person is Sergeant-Major Morris?

At the third glass his eyes got brighter, and he began to talk, the little family circle regarding with eager interest this visitor from distant parts, as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of wild scenes and doughty deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

4. How does Sergeant-Major Morris build suspense in the story?

"The first man had his three wishes. Yes," was the reply; "I don't know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That's how I got the paw." His tones were so grave that a hush fell upon the group.

5. How does the mood change immediately after Mr. White makes his first wish? What event is foreshadowed in the following passage?

He sat alone in the darkness, gazing at the dying fire, and seeing faces in it. The last face was so horrible and so simian that he gazed at it in amazement. It got so vivid that, with a little uneasy laugh, he felt on the table for a glass containing a little water to throw over it. His hand grasped the monkey's paw, and with a little shiver he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed.

6. What does the description of the man outside the White's home tell you about what will happen next in the story?

She was watching the mysterious movements of a man outside, who, peering in an undecided fashion at the house, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter. In mental connexion with the two hundred pounds, she noticed that the stranger was well dressed, and wore a silk hat of glossy newness. Three times he paused at the gate, and then walked on again. The fourth time he stood with his hand upon it, and then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path.

7. What imagery does the author use to set the mood of horror in the following passage?

He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlour, and then to the mantelpiece. The talisman was in its place, and a horrible fear that the unspoken wish might bring his mutilated son before him ere he could escape from the room seized up on him, and he caught his breath as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way round the table, and groped along the wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand.

8. What do readers assume Mr. White's third and final wish is? How do you know?

But her husband was on his hands and knees groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If only he could find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey's paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

9. What is the mood of the end of the story?

The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house. He heard the chair drawn back, and the door opened. A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him the courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond. The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.



## **Monkey's Paw Text Analysis Teacher Answer Key**

**Directions: Answer the following questions. Use evidence from the passages provided.**

1. What details of the story does the author W.W. Jacobs use to establish the mood?

Without, the night was **cold and wet**, but in the small parlour of Laburnam Villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned **brightly**. Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting **placidly by the fire**.

**Jacobs describes the night as “cold and wet” outside, but describes the atmosphere as “placid” and “bright” inside. These details establish a mood that the outside of the White’s home is dark and scary, but inside the home is safe and calm.**

2. How does the setting impact the story?

"That's the worst of living so far out," bawled Mr. White, with sudden and unlooked-for violence; "of all the **beastly, slushy, out-of-the-way places to live in, this is the worst**. Pathway's a **bog**, and the road's a **torrent**. I don't know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only **two houses** in the road are let, they think it doesn't matter."

**The location of the White’s residence is described as “beastly” and in the middle of nowhere. The driveway and road to their home is basically a wetland, described as a “bog,” “torrent,” and “slushy.” This adds to the spooky and mysterious atmosphere because the White’s home is difficult to find. It would be hard to get help if they were in trouble. They also don’t have many neighbors they could just run to. The Whites feel like people forget they even live there.**

3. What type of person is Sergeant-Major Morris?

At the third glass his eyes got brighter, and he began to talk, the little family circle regarding with **eager interest** this visitor from distant parts, as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of **wild scenes** and doughty deeds; of wars and plagues and **strange peoples**.

**Sergeant-Major Morris is a very interesting person with elaborate stories to tell; the Whites seem to appreciate his grandeur as they sit back with “eager interest.” He enjoys telling the family about his adventures as he is forthcoming about “wild scenes” he’s encountered and eventually shows off the monkey’s paw. He is also mysterious because he has many experiences that others do not.**

4. How does Sergeant-Major Morris build suspense in the story?

"The first man had his three wishes. Yes," was the reply; "I don't know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That's how I got the paw." His tones were so **grave** that a hush fell upon the group.

Sergeant-Major Morris moves the plot along because he introduces the main conflict in the story: the curse of the monkey's paw. He tells a spooky story to the family that involves magic. He then warns the family that whatever the man who previously had the paw wished for was so terrible that he ultimately wished for death as a result. This serious warning is foreshadowing for the family that nothing good can come of the monkey's paw.

5. How does the mood change immediately after Mr. White makes his first wish? What event is foreshadowed in the following passage?

He sat alone in the **darkness**, gazing at the **dying** fire, and seeing **faces** in it. The last face was so **horrible** and so **simian** that he gazed at it in amazement. It got so vivid that, with a little **uneasy** laugh, he felt on the table for a glass containing a little water to throw over it. His hand grasped the monkey's paw, and with a little **shiver** he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed.

The mood shifts from a comfortable, harmless evening with the family to an unpleasant and fearful night. Mr. White saw "horrible, simian" faces in the "dying" fire, which indicate he saw terrifying, monkey-like faces. The atmosphere is now uneasy and anxious as he goes to bed. This foreshadows that maybe the monkey's paw is real and the curse will happen.

6. What does the description of the man outside the White's home tell you about what will happen next in the story?

She was watching the **mysterious movements** of a man outside, who, peering in an **undecided** fashion at the house, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter. In mental connexion with the two hundred pounds, she noticed that the stranger was **well dressed**, and wore a silk hat of glossy newness. **Three times he paused at the gate**, and then walked on again. The fourth time he stood with his hand upon it, and then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path.

The man walks by the White's home three times before entering in a very mysterious way. He is well dressed which might indicate that he will be the person to deliver the 200 pounds. The fact that he is seemingly nervous and undecided tells readers that perhaps he comes bearing bad news.

7. What imagery does the author use to set the mood of horror in the following passage?

He went down in the **darkness**, and **felt his way** to the parlour, and then to the mantelpiece. The talisman was in its place, and a **horrible** fear that the unspoken wish might bring his **mutilated son** before him ere he could escape from the room seized up on him, and he **caught his breath** as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. His brow **cold with sweat**, he felt his way round the table, and **groped along the wall** until he found himself in the small passage with the **unwholesome** thing in his hand.

Jacobs describes this scene as very dark, which sets a terrifying mood. Mr. White can't see a thing, which is why he is groping the wall and feeling his way around in order to find the monkey's paw. We also know that Mr. White is sweating, yet is cold, which helps readers visualize how afraid he is. The description of Herbert as "mutilated" allows readers to imagine his body, caught in the machinery, now back from the dead.

8. What do readers assume Mr. White's third and final wish was? How do you know?

But her husband was on his hands and knees groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. **If only he could find it before the thing outside got in.** A perfect fusillade of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey's paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

Mr. White wished for the person at the other side of the door to be gone. Readers know this because he was frantically trying to find the monkey's paw while the "thing" was knocking incessantly. He needed to find the paw before the thing "got in." After he made the wish, the knocking stopped.

9. What is the mood of the end of the story?

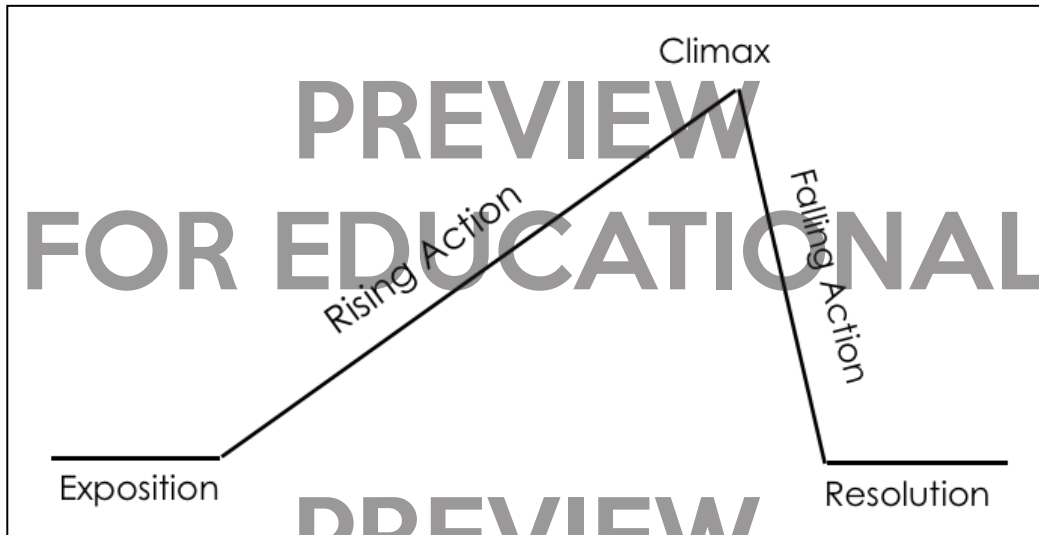
The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house. He heard the chair drawn back, and the door opened. **A cold wind** rushed up the staircase, and a long **loud wail of disappointment and misery** from his wife gave him the courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond. The **street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.**

The mood of the end of the story is desolate, hopeless, and empty. Mrs. White is devastated and grief-stricken again for her son Herbert as she wails and runs outside looking for him. She finds nothing but a deserted road and a flickering light which paints a picture of isolation and loneliness.

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## Monkey's Paw Plot and Theme



Exposition:

Rising Action(s):

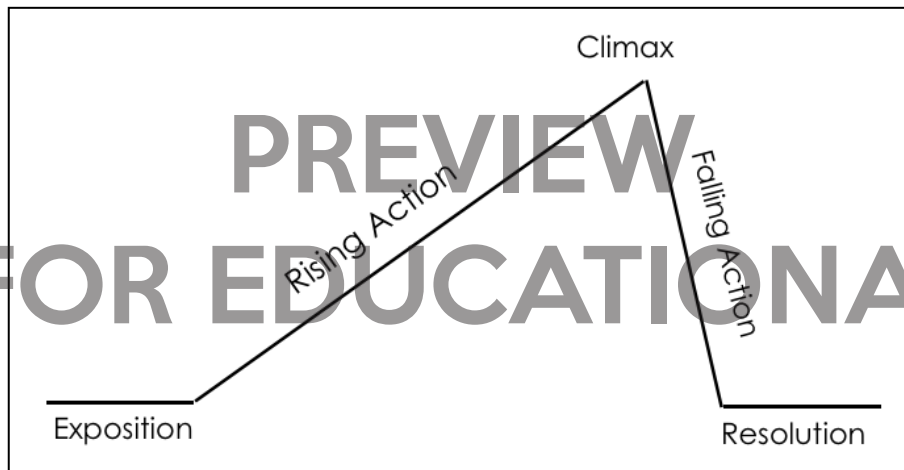
Climax:

Falling Action(s):

Resolution:

What is one theme from the story? Give evidence to support your answer:

## Monkey's Paw Plot and Theme Answer Key



**Exposition:** The main characters are Mr. and Mrs. White, their son Herbert, and their friend Sergeant-Major Morris. The family lives on a desolate road sometime during the 20th century. It's raining outside, but the family is inside by the fire, and the men are playing chess as they await their friend's arrival.

**Rising Action(s):** Morris tells the family the curse of the monkey's paw. He throws the paw into the fire to get rid of it, but Mr. White pulls it out. Mr. White then wishes for 200 pounds. A strange man shows up the next day with 200 pounds, but also with the news that Herbert was killed in a work accident. The couple mourns their son and then decide to wish for Herbert back to life. Someone shows up at their door knocking loudly and aggressively.

**Climax:** The point of highest suspense is when Mrs. White is finally able to unlatch the lock on the door and Herbert, or the mutilated monster, is about to enter the room. Simultaneously, Mr. White is wishing on the monkey's paw.

**Falling Action(s):** Mr. White finishes his third wish for the thing to disappear. As Mrs. White opens the door, nothing is there.

**Resolution:** The family looks outside and they find nothing but a flickering street light. The wish worked. The monkey's paw curse is true and no longer has its power after the third wish. Mr. and Mrs. White must deal with the reality that their son Herbert is dead.

**What is one theme from the story? Give evidence to support your answer:** Answers may vary. *Be careful what you wish for.* — The family wished for 200 pounds; they received it, but only as compensation for their son's death. *Be happy with what you have.* — Mr. White claims he has "everything he needs" in the beginning of the story, but makes a wish anyway. This causes him to lose his son. *Don't mess with fate.* — The fakir's curse was to bring sorrow to anyone who messed with destiny. Morris warned the family not to use the monkey's paw, but they tampered with fate anyway.

## Monkey's Paw Learning Menu

**Directions: Pick one of the following projects to complete.**

### **Evaluate Decisions**

Do you think the Whites deserved what happened to them? Do you agree or disagree with Mr. White's final wish? What would you have wished for in that moment? Who is to blame for the death of Herbert? Evaluate the decisions of the characters throughout the story and include what you would do in a one paragraph explanation (8 sentences).

### **Picture Book Summary**

Write a condensed version of the story in picture book form. Illustrate important scenes, including dialogue when needed. It can be designed to look like a comic book and should be at least 6 pages. Don't forget to decorate the cover.

### **Connect to the Text**

The curse of the monkey's paw is based on the fakir's message that people should not mess with fate. Do you believe people have control over their own destiny? Or is fate already determined for us? Write a paragraph (8 sentences) explaining your thoughts on destiny and give examples from your real life.

### **Descriptive Setting**

Draw and color an accurate portrayal of the setting. Somewhere in your detailed picture, include quotation marks with a direct quote from the story that describes the setting. On the back of your design, explain why the setting is so important to the story.

### **Monkey's Paw Slideshow**

Although the Whites are hesitant at first to believe in the power of the talisman, eventually they know that the curse of the monkey's paw is real. Research talismans in our and other cultures. Create a slideshow that encompasses the information you find. You can pick one talisman to focus on, or several. Your research should include at least 6 slides with pictures.

### **Alternate Ending**

What do you think would've happened if Mrs. White had opened the door before her husband made the final wish? What would happen next? What would the third wish be? Would they get to make a third wish? Write an alternate ending to the story in at least one paragraph (8 sentences).

### **Make Your Own Restaurant**

Create and color a pamphlet advertising a new restaurant that is all about "The Monkey's Paw." Include a name, location, description of atmosphere, food/drink menu, prices, and gift shop.

### **Flat and Dynamic Characters**

In one paragraph (8 sentences), describe who is the most dynamic character in the story. How does the character change and give multiple examples from the text.

### **Internal and External Conflicts**

Create a slideshow that highlights at least 6 different conflicts in the story. Be sure to describe the conflict as internal or external and give details of who/what the conflict is between. Also include how the conflict is resolved.