

MIDDLE SCHOOL

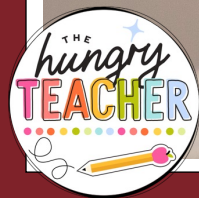
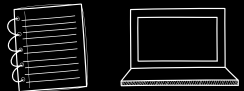
THE MONKEY'S PAW BY W. W. JACOBS

A SIXTH – EIGHTH GRADE SHORT STORY UNIT

UNIT FOCUS:
symbolism

SHORT STORY SOCRATIC SEMINAR MINI UNIT

PRINT AND
DIGITAL



A MIDDLE SCHOOL ELA

short story literature unit

Teach symbolism, foreshadowing, and theme through W.W. Jacobs' chilling short story *The Monkey's Paw* with this 6-lesson unit designed to spark high-level discussion and **deep reading**. Your students will explore the text through structured Socratic Seminar discussions, guided responses, and multimedia comparisons—while building critical thinking, writing, and literary analysis skills. This unit is also a perfect intro to the Socratic Seminar and reading response structure used in all my literature resources.

- ✓ 6 step-by-step teacher lesson plans
- ✓ 6 step-by-step teacher PDF and Google Slides teaching presentations for literature concepts
- ✓ All student reference materials and resources
- ✓ Teacher answer keys and examples
- ✓ 100% digital student notebook
- ✓ Formative assessment, exit tickets, and final summative assessment

The Monkey's Paw Short Story Unit

Tired of surface-level reading and disconnected discussions?

Transform your short story instruction with this discussion-based, step-by-step literary analysis unit built around W.W. Jacobs' "The Monkey's Paw."

✨ Here's what they'll learn:

- **Symbolism & Foreshadowing:** Analyze recurring images, objects, and clues that build suspense and deepen theme.
- **Thematic Analysis:** Explore how fate, desire, and the consequences of choice develop across the story.
- **Discussion & Response Skills:** Build confidence in Socratic Seminars and structured responses that push students to cite and explain textual evidence.

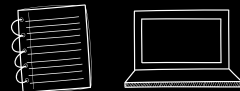
📖 Why this works:

This unit introduces students to advanced literary analysis through six scaffolded lessons that balance structured guidance with open-ended thinking. With a complete teacher's guide, flexible pacing, and editable resources, this unit makes deep analysis and meaningful discussions both achievable and engaging—especially for 7th and 8th graders.

💡 Perfect for:

- Teachers introducing Socratic Seminars or close reading routines
- Classrooms focused on symbolism, foreshadowing, or thematic analysis
- Educators looking for high-impact, ready-to-go ELA lessons that engage students in deep reading and discussion

PRINT AND
DIGITAL



Teachers like you have said...



Loved this resource! Added this short story to my curriculum this year and needed a place to start. This unit is completely done for you and ready to go. I love everything The Hungry Teacher produces! – Janis S.



Perfect for me to use when we returned to school following the Christmas break. We are a Catholic school and focus on Epiphany, The Three Kings and the gifts the Magi bring. What a great literary piece to tie in, with lots of learning. Great resources included and all ready to print. – Michelle L.



Perfect Christmas unit for my middle schoolers. Some of them had seen the Mickey Christmas Special... but this was so fun and engaging for all of my students. Thorough as well. –Kidd to Kid Teaching



I could not believe how much my students loved working with these materials! Even in their heightened state of "Christmas Crazy", they followed along and paid attention thanks to the easy-to-understand resources from the queen of lit herself. Thanks so much for another fantastic product. – Gwen T.



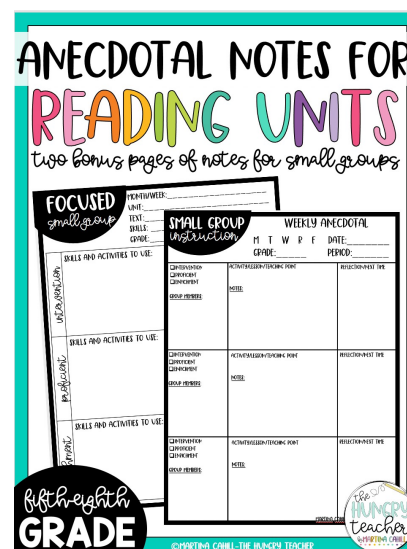
I have enjoyed using all of your products. They are always engaging and require students to use critical thinking when working. I have not been disappointed yet. –Jennifer L.



READING UNIT
Includes lesson plans, reference materials, and graphic organizers.



SOCRATIC SEMINAR GUIDE
Breaks down the Socratic Seminar and how it's different than typical novel studies



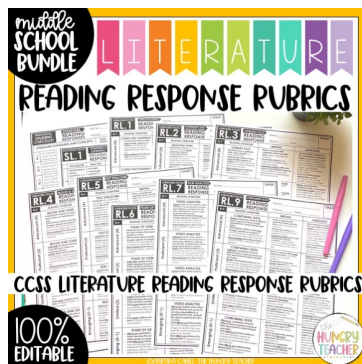
ANECDOTAL NOTES
Anecdotal notes for individual student conferences and small groups.

Alongside the unit itself, you will find many other helpful resources and tools in the zip file.

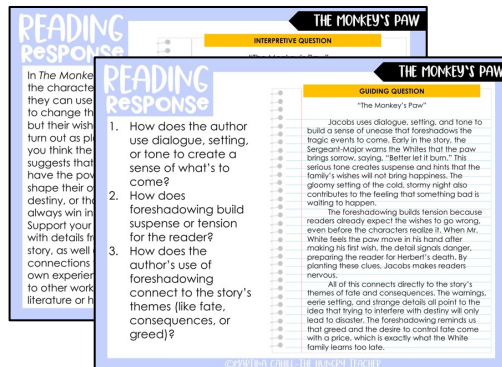


DIGITAL FILES

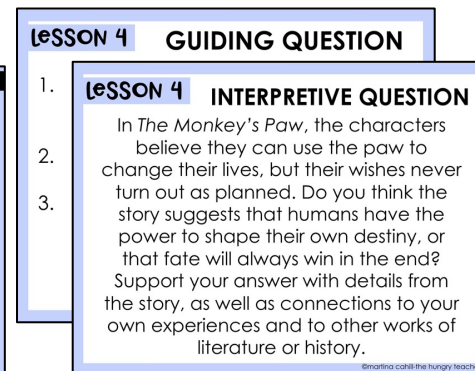
Digital student response notebooks with guiding and interpretive questions and vocabulary for each novel. Also, includes digital reading response rubrics.



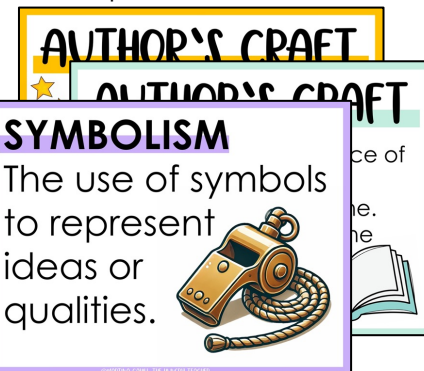
EDITABLE RESPONSE RUBRICS
Editable, digital, and differentiated literature reading response rubrics.



READING RESPONSE EXAMPLES
Examples of written reading responses to show students as exemplars and inspiration.



QUESTION DISPLAY SLIDES
Slides with interpretive and guiding questions to eliminate, "What was the question again?"



CONCEPT TEACHING SLIDES
Slides to teach any literary or literature concepts needed to implement the unit's content.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO TEACH AND MODEL

EXAMPLE OF A LESSON PLAN

INTERACTIVE NOTEBOOK LESSON EXAMPLE

AUTHOR'S CRAFT LESSON

PAGE 1/2

AUTHOR'S CRAFT LESSON

PAGE 1/2

Similar

Metaphor

Hyperbole

Personification

Allusion

Alliteration

Assonance

Tone

Symbolism

Imagery

OR SENSORY

Vocabulary Preparation

1. Have copies of this lesson's interactive notebook pages.
2. Copies of the Author's Craft interactive notebook pages or quick notes.
3. Copies of the Author's Craft Reference pages for students.
4. Students will also need scissors, glue, and colored pencils.

Learning Period

THE MONKEY'S PAW LESSON I: AUTHOR'S CRAFT DAY 1

1 DAY(S)

Common Core Standards

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

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Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

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Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

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Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Literature: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Writing: 1

Closing

AUTHOR'S CRAFT

AUTHOR'S CRAFT

DEFINITION

PURPOSE

SIMILE

METAPHOR

HYPERBOLE

PERSONIFICATION

ALLUSION

ALLITERATION

ASSONANCE

SYMBOLISM

IMAGERY

OR SENSORY

AUTHOR'S CRAFT

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SYMBOLISM

IMAGERY

OR SENSORY

VOCABULARY

HOUSE ARMOIR

DEFINITION

SENTENCE

ILLUSTRATION

CLERIC

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VOCABULARY

HOUSE ARMOIR

DEFINITION

SENTENCE

ILLUSTRATION

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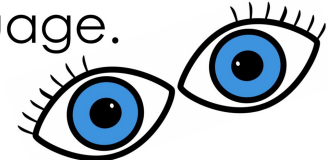
ALLITERATION

ASSONANCE

SYMBOLISM

IMAGERY

OR SENSORY



example of lesson three's slides

What might the following symbol

What might the following symbol

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

What might the following symbol represent?

What might the following

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

What might the following sym

What might the skill

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

What might the following symb

What might the following symbol

LESSON 3

GUIDE

LESSON 3

GUIDING QUESTION

In the important

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

What might the following symbol represent?

What might the following symbol represent?



LESSON 3

INTERPRETIVE QUESTION

1. How does the author use the symbol and why? What is the purpose of the symbol?
2. What is the author trying to show the reader with those symbols?

READING RESPONSE

1. How does the author use the symbol and why? What is the purpose of the symbol?
2. What is the author trying to show the reader with those symbols?

THE MONKEY'S PAW

Symbolism-Response
"The Monkey's Paw"

One of the most important symbols in The Monkey's Paw is, of course, the paw itself. W. W. Jacobs uses the paw as more than just a plot device; it represents the danger of tampering with fate and the destructive power of human greed. From the very beginning, the Sergeant-Major warns the Whites that the paw "had a spell put on it by an old fakir" to prove "that fate ruled people's lives, and those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow." This establishes the paw as a recurring reminder that each wish carries consequences, even when the family ignores these warnings.

The paw reappears at every critical moment of the story, each time connected with escalating emotions of hope, fear, and grief. When Mr. White first makes a wish for money, the paw supposedly moves in his hand, filling the room with unease. Later, when Herbert dies as a result of the wish, the paw becomes tied to grief and regret, showing that the symbol shifts in meaning as the story unfolds. The repeated physical presence of the paw mirrors the emotional shift in the family, from excitement to devastation.

Jacobs also uses the paw to show how human desires can blind people to danger. Mrs. White, overwhelmed by grief, demands her husband use the paw to bring Herbert back to life, even though the Sergeant-Major's warning has already driven him. Here, the paw symbolizes desperation and the inability to accept loss. Mr. White's final wish, which makes the knocking at the door stop, shows that he has finally learned the lesson of the paw: some things are not meant to be controlled by human will.

The purpose of the symbol, then, is to highlight the consequences of interfering with destiny. The paw appears over and over again to remind readers that every choice has a cost. It connects to the theme of fate versus free will, showing that while people can make decisions, those decisions often bring unintended results. By the end of the story, the paw leaves readers with the chilling message that trying to manipulate life for personal gain can only lead to sorrow.

In conclusion, the monkey's paw is a powerful symbol that evolves with the story. It begins as a curiosity, becomes an object of greed, and finally turns into a symbol of regret and restraint. Jacobs uses its repeated presence to show the destructive effects of wishing for more than what life naturally gives, urging readers to reflect on the dangers of unchecked desire and the limits of human control.

slides included for all lessons

OBJECTIVE

Summary

FIVE STEPS TO CREATE AN OBJECTIVE SUMMARY:

SUMMARY STEP

EXPLANATION

1. Who are the characters?

2. What do the characters want?

3. What is getting in the way?

AUTHOR'S CRAFT

Craft is a part of vocabulary formation, and it is established.

symbolism

FORESHADOWING

Foreshadowing is a device used to give an indication or hint of what is to come later in the story. Foreshadowing is used to create suspense, a sense of unease, a sense of curiosity, or a mark that may not be as the

LESSON 5

Note: I have included YouTube links to short video versions, but you can easily search "The Monkey's Paw," on Google and you'll find a few different versions.

1. THE MONKEY'S PAW (2011) | Ricky Lewis Jr | Short Film by Ricky Lewis Jr:
<https://youtu.be/ugjegcILNhM?si=I5byid-bbdUcS5LT>
2. The Monkey's Paw | Short Film | 2024 by Ture Fiction | Film:
https://youtu.be/io2C4Tj-H-M?si=1_sqsi39bFTHRvle

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AUTHOR'S CRAFT

AUTHOR'S CRAFT

6th-8th GRADE

middle school

6th-8th GRADE

middle school

6th-8th GRADE

middle school

THE MONKEY'S PAW

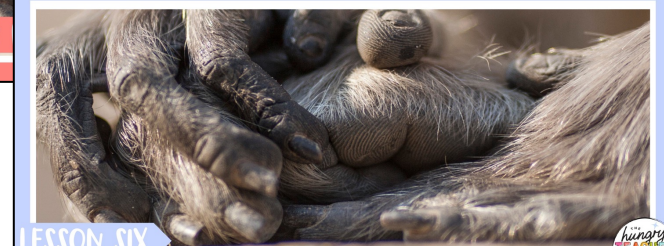
LESSON

6th-8th GRADE

middle school

THE MONKEY'S PAW

LESSON



LESSON SIX

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READING RESPONSE EXAMPLES AND WORKSHEETS

PART II: DEEPER SYMBOLISM IN THE MOVIE

5. Color Symbolism: Use of color in the movie to represent themes or characters. Explain the symbolism.

SYMBOLISM assignment

PART I: SYMBOLISM BASICS

1. Which of the following is a symbol? (a) A comparison, (b) When something happens, (c) A type of irony, (d) The repetition of words.

2. Write possible meanings for the color green. (a) Black, (b) White, (c) Green.

3. Why do authors use symbols?

4. In *The Monkey's Paw*, the color green represents:

"THE MONKEY'S PAW"

NAME: _____

GUIDING QUESTION: _____

1. To what extent does the paw represent fate?

2. How does the author use dialogue to convey the theme?

3. How does foreshadowing build suspense?

4. How does the author's use of foreshadowing build suspense?

INTERPRETIVE QUESTION: _____

1. Why do you think the paw represents fate?

2. How does the author use dialogue to convey the theme?

3. How does foreshadowing build suspense?

4. How does the author's use of foreshadowing build suspense?

"THE MONKEY'S PAW"

NAME: _____

GUIDING QUESTION: _____

1. In the important scenes, is there an object, a color, an emotion, or something that seems to appear over and over again?

2. How does the author use that symbol and why? What is the purpose of the symbol?

3. What is the author trying to show the reader with those symbols?

INTERPRETIVE QUESTION: _____

1. What lessons do you think the author is trying to teach us with this short story? You learn any other lessons than the most obvious?

LESSON 2 GUIDING QUESTION

"THE MONKEY'S PAW" BY W.W. JACOBS

OPTIONAL READING RESPONSE

For authors, the author writes in the story. Use the evidence you have to support your answer.

LESSON 3 GUIDING QUESTION

In the important scenes, is there an object, a color, an emotion, or something that seems to appear over and over again?

LESSON 3 READING RESPONSE

1. How does the author use dialogue to convey the theme?

THE MONKEY'S PAW

Symbolism-Response: "The Monkey's Paw"

The paw is, of course, the plot device; it represents the power of human greed. It is the paw that the paw "had" people's lives, and those who are the paw as a recurring theme in the family ignores the story, each time it is told. When Mr. White first

LESSON 4 GUIDING QUESTION

1. How does the author use dialogue to convey the theme?

THE MONKEY'S PAW

GUIDING QUESTION: "The Monkey's Paw"

LESSON 4 INTERPRETIVE QUESTION

In *The Monkey's Paw*, the characters believe they can use the paw to change their lives, but their wishes never turn out as planned. Do you think the story suggests that humans have the power to shape their own destiny, or that fate will always win in the end? Support your answer with details from the story, as well as connections to your own experiences and to other works of literature or history.

THE MONKEY'S PAW

INTERPRETIVE QUESTION: "The Monkey's Paw"

In *The Monkey's Paw*, the Whites try to use the paw to control their lives, but each wish ends in disaster. Mr. White's wish for money comes true, but only because Herbert dies in a terrible accident. Later, Mrs. White's wish to bring Herbert back leaves the family horrified when something begins knocking at their door. These events show that no matter what choices the family makes, fate has the final word.

LESSON 4 READING RESPONSE

1. How does the author use dialogue to convey the theme?

THE MONKEY'S PAW

INTERPRETIVE QUESTION: "The Monkey's Paw"

In *The Monkey's Paw*, the Whites try to use the paw to control their lives, but each wish ends in disaster. Mr. White's wish for money comes true, but only because Herbert dies in a terrible accident. Later, Mrs. White's wish to bring Herbert back leaves the family horrified when something begins knocking at their door. These events show that no matter what choices the family makes, fate has the final word.

This idea connects to stories many students know, like *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*. In that series, Percy and his friends often try to change or avoid the prophecies about their futures, but no matter what they do, the prophecy still comes true in some way. Just like in *The Monkey's Paw*, the characters' choices matter, but fate twists those choices into something they can't control. Both stories show that trying to fight against destiny can make things worse.

In the end, Jacobs' story suggests that humans don't really have the power to shape their own destiny. The paw symbolizes the danger of trying to control fate, reminding readers that every choice has consequences — and sometimes, no matter what we do, fate always wins.

LESSON 5 INTERPRETIVE QUESTION

Why do you think the paw represents fate?

THE MONKEY'S PAW

Film Comparison: "The Monkey's Paw"

I think the director and actors in the 2024 *Monkey's Paw* short film made their choices to keep the story suspenseful and to make the themes clear for a modern audience. For example, the director uses close-up shots of the

LESSON 6 GUIDING QUESTION

Write an objective summary of the text you read.

THE MONKEY'S PAW

Objective Summary-Response Four: "The Monkey's Paw"

In *The Monkey's Paw* by W.W. Jacobs, the White family receives a magical paw from a visiting soldier. The paw is said to grant three wishes, but it brings misfortune to anyone who uses it. Despite warnings, Mr. White wishes for two hundred pounds. The wish is granted through the tragic death of his son, Herbert, whose company pays the family compensation. Grieving, Mrs. White convinces her husband to wish Herbert back to life, but the results are horrifying. In fear, Mr. White makes a final wish, and the knocking at the door suddenly stops. The story shows how greed and the desire to control fate can lead to devastating consequences.

The image displays a collection of educational worksheets and reference pages for literature, organized into several categories:

- OBJECTIVE summaries**: Includes a 'SUMMARY STEP' section.
- author's PURPOSE**: A section focusing on the author's intent.
- POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CHARACTER TRAITS**: A table listing various character traits.
- READING genres one**: A section for the first set of reading genres.
- POINT OF VIEW**: A section explaining different perspectives in a story.
- CHARACTER TERMS**: A section defining key terms related to characters.
- AUTHOR'S CRAFT one**: A section focusing on the first set of author's craft elements.
- AUTHOR'S CRAFT two**: A section focusing on the second set of author's craft elements.
- ELEMENTS OF PLOT**: A section detailing the components of a story's plot.
- FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**: A section explaining various literary devices.
- LITERARY devices**: A section detailing specific literary techniques.
- TIME PERIODS and eras**: A section covering historical time periods.
- HISTORICAL FICTION text sections**: A section detailing various parts of a historical fiction text.
- READING genres two**: A section for the second set of reading genres.
- LITERATURE reference notebook**: A central notebook-style page with a cover and multiple tabs for different topics.
- FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**: A section explaining various literary devices.
- LITERARY devices**: A section detailing specific literary techniques.
- TIME PERIODS and eras**: A section covering historical time periods.
- HISTORICAL FICTION text sections**: A section detailing various parts of a historical fiction text.
- READING genres two**: A section for the second set of reading genres.

The pages are colorful and feature definitions, examples, and diagrams, providing a comprehensive resource for literature study.

COMES IN SIX DIFFERENT VERSIONS:

1. Tabbed mini-page in full-color
2. Tabbed mini-page in black and white
3. Non-tabbed mini-page in full-color
4. Non-tabbed mini-page in black and white
5. Full-page in full-color
6. Full-page black and white

digital versions of notebooks, slides, and assessments

THE MONKEY'S PAW STUDENT NOTEBOOK

File Edit View Insert Format Slide Arrange Tools Extensions Help

Author's Craft Lesson

FLASHBACK

FLASHFORWARD

CLIFFHANGER

FORESHADOWING

SUSPENSE

Lesson TWO

Author's Craft

FLASHBACK

FLASHFORWARD

CLIFFHANGER

FORESHADOWING

SUSPENSE

DIGITAL
STUDENT
NOTEBOOK

Preview mode

PART I: SYMBOLISM BASICS

* Indicates required question

Email *

☐ Record martinacahill@gmail.com as the email to be included with my response

Which of the following is the best definition of symbolism? *

1 point

☐ A comparison using like or as

☐ When something stands for or represents a bigger idea

☐ A type of irony where the reader knows more than the character

☐ The repetition of consonant sounds

Write possible meanings for the color black. *

1 point

Your answer

Write possible meanings for the color white. *

1 point

Your answer

Write possible meanings for the color green. *

1 point

Your answer

SELF-GRADING
GOOGLE
FORM
ASSESSMENT

GOOGLE SLIDES
TEACHING
PRESENTATIONS

LESSON 1

File Edit View Insert Format Slide Arrange Tools Extensions Help

Author's Craft

FLASHBACK

FLASHFORWARD

CLIFFHANGER

FORESHADOWING

SUSPENSE

Lesson TWO

Author's Craft

FLASHBACK

FLASHFORWARD

CLIFFHANGER

FORESHADOWING

SUSPENSE

LESSON 4

File Edit View Insert Format Slide Arrange Tools Extensions Help

READING RESPONSE

THE MONKEY'S PAW

INTERPRETIVE QUESTION

"The Monkey's Paw"

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PART II: DEEPER SYMBOLISM IN THE MONKEY'S PAW

5. **Color Symbolism:** The story is filled with dark, foreboding imagery. How does the use of **black** (darkness, night, shadows) contribute to the mood and themes of fate and death? Choose one key scene where darkness plays an important role, and explain the symbolic meaning behind it.

SYMBOLISM
assessment

ANSWER KEY

PART I: SYMBOLISM BASICS

PART II: DEEPER SYMBOLISM IN THE MONKEY'S PAW

5. **Color Symbolism:** The story is filled with dark, foreboding imagery. How does the use of **black** (darkness, night, shadows) contribute to the mood and themes of fate and death? Choose one key scene where darkness plays an important role, and explain the symbolic meaning behind it.

SYMBOLISM
assessment

NAME: _____
DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____

PART I: SYMBOLISM BASICS

1. Which of the following is the best definition of symbolism?

- A comparison using like or as
- When something stands for or represents a bigger idea
- A type of irony where the reader knows more than the character
- The repetition of consonant sounds

2. Write possible meanings for each color.

- Black → _____
- White → _____
- Green → _____

3. Why do authors use symbols instead of just stating their ideas directly?

4. In *The Monkey's Paw*, the chess game at the beginning is symbolic because it represents:

- How well Herbert knows the rules of the game
- Mr. White's tendency to take risky chances
- The importance of leisure activities in Victorian England
- A foreshadowing that the monkey's paw is magical

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middle SCHOOL BUNDLE

LITERATURE

6TH-8TH READING RESPONSE RUBRICS

EDITABLE AND DIGITAL

EXIT TICKETS

RL.4 POSSIBLE ANSWERS

- Connotative meaning: the indirect meaning or interpretation of a word. Denotative meaning: the dictionary definition of a word
- Positive: Jordan. Negative: aunt. Positive: kind. Negative: anxiety.

RL.7 POSSIBLE ANSWERS

RL.3 POSSIBLE ANSWERS

6th-8th GRADE middle school ELA

EXIT TICKETS

CCSS READING LITERATURE STANDARDS EXIT TICKETS FOR 6TH-8TH

LITERATURE STANDARDS

EXIT TICKET RL.3 NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____ **number 1**

Define the following literary devices:

Flashback: _____ Cliffhanger: _____

EXIT TICKET RL.4 NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____ **number 1**

What is the difference between a word's connotative meaning and its denotative meaning (connotation and denotation)?

Denotative meaning: _____

Connotative meaning: _____

EXIT TICKET RL.3 NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____ **number 2**

Give an example of positive connotation and negative connotation for the following examples:

A word or phrase to describe someone who is very thin: _____

A word or phrase to describe someone that you don't like very much: _____

EXIT TICKET RL.4 NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____ **number 3**

"Look, is there not plenty of water in the sea where we live? We should scoop up and spray it towards the sky. The water will be like rain drops and come down to save the people," said the Long Dragon.

"I will do anything to save the people," the Yellow Dragon said **resolutely**.

"Then let's begin. We will never regret it," said the Long Dragon.

EXIT TICKET RL.4 NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____ **number 17**

1. Which of the following is the best definition of symbolism?

EXIT TICKET RL.7 NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____ **number 1**

Compare and contrast a movie portrayal of a book you have read. Explain if the movie stays faithful to the text and evaluate the choices made by the director or actors:

EXIT TICKET RL.7 NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____ **number 3**

Analyze the effects that the lighting has on a movie portrayal of a text you have read:

EXIT TICKET RL.7 NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____ **number 3**

Analyze the effects that the lighting has on a movie portrayal of a text you have read:

FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS INCLUDED

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