

Unit THREE

READING Fiction

Fiction is prose writing that tells an invented or imaginary story. *Prose* is writing that uses straightforward language and differs from poetry because it doesn't have a rhythmic pattern. Some fiction, such as the historical novel, is based on fact, while other forms, such as the fantasy tale, are highly unrealistic. Fictional works may vary in structure and length.

Forms of Fiction

The oldest form of fiction is the stories told in the oral, or folk, tradition, which include myths, legends, and fables. The most common forms of fiction are short stories, novels, and novellas.

THE SHORT STORY. A **short story** is a brief work of fiction that tells a story. It usually focuses on a single episode or scene and involves a limited number of characters. Although a short story contains all the main elements of fiction—character, setting, plot, and theme—it may not fully develop each element. The selections in this unit are examples of short stories.

THE NOVEL. A **novel** is a long work of fiction that usually has more complex elements than a short story. Its longer format allows the elements of fiction to be more fully developed. A **novella** is a work of fiction that is longer than a typical short story but shorter than a typical novel.

Types of fiction include **romances**, tales that feature the adventures of legendary figures such as Alexander the Great and King Arthur; **historical fiction**, which is partly based on actual historical events and is partly invented; and **science fiction**, imaginative literature based on scientific principles, discoveries, or laws that often deals with the future, the distant past, or worlds other than our own.

Reading TIP

The term fiction comes from the Latin *factio*, meaning something invented.

NOTE THE FACTS

Is a novella longer or shorter than a typical novel?

Elements of Fiction

CHARACTER. A **character** is a person (or sometimes an animal) who takes part in the action of a story. The following are some useful terms for describing characters.

protagonist (main character)	central figure in a story
antagonist	character who struggles against the protagonist
major character	character with a significant role in the action of the story
minor character	character who plays a lesser role
one-dimensional character (flat character)	character who exhibits a single dominant quality (character trait)
three dimensional character (full or rounded character)	character who exhibits the complexity of traits of a human being
static character	character who does not change during the course of the story
dynamic character	character who does change during the course of the story
stock character	character found again and again in different literary works

NOTE THE FACTS

What is the difference between a static character and a dynamic character?

Reading TIP

Motivation is the force that moves a character to think, feel, or behave a certain way. For example, a character may be motivated by greed, love, or friendship.

CHARACTERIZATION. **Characterization** is the use of literary techniques to create characters and make them come alive. Writers use the following techniques to create characters:

direct description	describing the physical features, dress, and personality of the character
behavior	showing what the character says or does
interaction with others	showing what other characters say or think about the character
internal state	revealing the character's private thoughts and emotions

SETTING. The **setting** of a work of fiction is the time and place in which the events take place. In fiction, setting is most often revealed by description of landscape, scenery, buildings, weather, and season. Setting reveals important information about the time period, geographical location, cultural environment, and physical conditions in which the characters live.

MOOD AND TONE. **Mood** is the atmosphere or emotion created by a literary work. A writer creates mood by using concrete details to describe the setting, characters, or events. The mood of a work might be dark, mysterious, gloomy, cheerful, inspiring, or peaceful.

Tone is the writer's attitude toward the subject or toward the reader of a work. The tone of a work might be familiar, ironic, playful, sarcastic, serious, or sincere.

POINT OF VIEW. **Point of view** is the vantage point from which a story is told. You need to consider point of view to understand the perspective from which the events in the story are being told. Stories are typically written from the following points of view:

first-person point of view	narrator uses words such as <i>I</i> and <i>we</i>
second-person point of view	narrator uses <i>you</i>
third-person point of view	narrator uses words such as <i>he</i> , <i>she</i> , <i>it</i> , and <i>they</i>

Most of the literature you read will be told from either the first-person or third-person point of view. In stories written from a first-person point of view, the narrator may be a participant or a witness of the action. In stories told from a third-person point of view, the narrator generally stands outside the action. In some stories, the narrator's point of view is *limited*. In this case the narrator can reveal only his or her private, internal thoughts or those of a single character. In other stories, the narrator's point of view is *omniscient*. In such stories the narrator can reveal the private, internal thoughts of any character.

CONFLICT. A **conflict** is a struggle between two forces in a literary work. A plot involves the introduction, development, and eventual resolution of a conflict. A struggle that takes place between a character and an outside force is called an *external conflict*. A struggle that takes place within a character is called an *internal conflict*.

PLOT. When you read short stories or novels, it helps to know the parts of a plot. The plot is basically what happens in a story. A **plot** is a series of events related to a central conflict, or struggle. A typical plot involves the introduction of a conflict, its development, and its eventual resolution. The elements of plot include the following:

Reading TIP

The writer can create mood, or cause in the reader an emotional response—such as fear, discomfort, or longing—by working carefully with descriptive language and sensory details.

NOTE THE FACTS



In what point of view can the narrator reveal the private, internal thoughts of any character?

Reading TIP

One side of the central conflict in a work of fiction is usually taken by the main character. That character may struggle against another character, against the forces of nature, against society or social norms, against fate, or against some elements within himself or herself.

THINK AND REFLECT



In which plot part would you expect to first learn about the major characters and where they live?

(Apply)

exposition

inciting incident

rising action

climax

falling action

resolution

dénouement

sets the tone or mood, introduces the characters and setting, and provides necessary background information

event that introduces a central conflict develops a central conflict and rises toward a high point of intensity

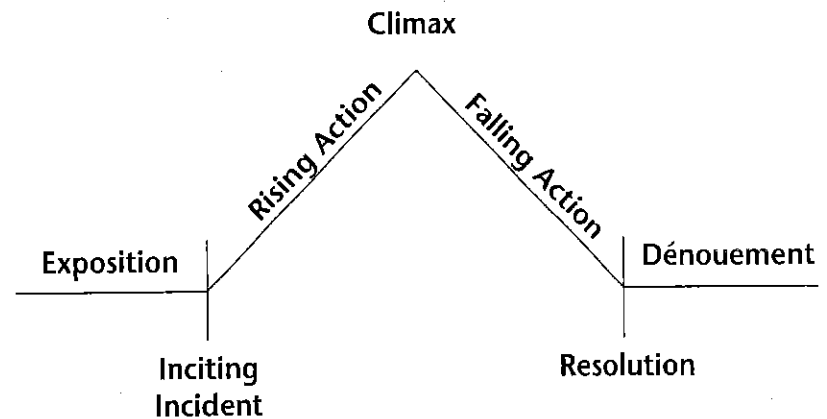
the high point of interest or suspense in the plot where something decisive happens

the events that follow the climax

the point at which the central conflict is ended or resolved

any material that follows the resolution and that ties up loose ends

Use a **plot diagram** like the one that follows to chart the plot of a literature selection.



Become an Active Reader

The instruction in this unit gives you an in-depth look at how to use one active reading strategy for each story. Questions and tips in the margins keep your attention focused on reading actively. White space in the margins allows you to add your own comments and strategy ideas. Brief margin notes guide your use of additional strategies. Learning how to use several strategies in combination will ensure your complete understanding of what you are reading. When you have difficulty, use fix-up ideas to correct the problem. For further information about the active reading strategies, see Unit 1, pages 4–15.

Active Reading Strategy Checklists

When reading fiction, you need to be aware of the plot (or what happens), the characters, and the setting. The following checklists offer things to consider as you read fiction.

1 READ WITH A PURPOSE. Before reading about imagined events and characters, give yourself a purpose, or something to look for, as you read. Say to yourself

- ☐ I want to look for . . .
- ☐ I need to learn what happens to . . .
- ☐ I want to experience what it is like in . . .
- ☐ I want to understand . . .

2 CONNECT TO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE. Being aware of what you already know and thinking about it as you read can help you keep track of what's happening and will increase your knowledge. As you read, say to yourself

- ☐ I already know this about the story . . .
- ☐ This part of the story reminds me of . . .
- ☐ I think this part of the story is like . . .
- ☐ My experience tells me that . . .
- ☐ I like this description because . . .

3 WRITE THINGS DOWN. As you read short stories or novels, writing things down is very important. Possible ways to write things down include:

- ☐ Underline characters' names.
- ☐ Write messages on sticky notes.
- ☐ Highlight the setting.
- ☐ Create a graphic organizer to keep track of plot elements.
- ☐ Use a code in the margin that shows how you respond to the characters, setting, or events. For instance, you can mark a description you like with a "+."

4 MAKE PREDICTIONS. Because fiction includes information about characters, settings, and events, make predictions about these story elements. Your predictions will help you think about what lies ahead. Make predictions like the following:

- ☐ I predict that this character will . . .
- ☐ The setting of this story makes me think that . . .
- ☐ I bet there will be a conflict between . . .
- ☐ This event in the story makes me guess that . . .

Reading TIP

Sometimes a purpose will be a directive from a teacher: "Look for foreshadowing." Other times you can set your own purpose by previewing the title, the opening paragraphs, and instructional information that are part of the story.

Reading TIP

Instead of writing down a short response, use a symbol or a short word to indicate your response. Use codes like the ones listed below.

- + I like this.
- I don't like this.
- ✓ This is important.
- Yes I agree with this.
- No I disagree with this.
- ? I don't understand this.
- ! This is like something I know.
- ↺ I need to come back to this later.

5 VISUALIZE. Visualizing, or allowing the words on the page to create images in your mind, is one of the most important things to do while reading fiction. Become part of the action. "See" what the author describes. Make statements like

- ☐ I imagine the setting to look like . . .
- ☐ This description of the main character makes me . . .
- ☐ I picture that this is what happens in this section . . .
- ☐ I envision myself in the action by . . .

6 USE TEXT ORGANIZATION. Fiction writing has a plot that you can follow. Use the plot, or the series of events, to keep track of what is happening. Say to yourself

- ☐ The exposition, or introduction, tells me . . .
- ☐ The central conflict centers on . . .
- ☐ The climax, or high point of interest, occurs when . . .
- ☐ The resolution, or the outcome, of this story lets me know . . .
- ☐ Signal words like *first*, *then*, and *finally* explain . . .

7 TACKLE DIFFICULT VOCABULARY. Difficult words in a story can get in the way of your ability to follow the events in a work of fiction. Use aids that a text provides, consult a dictionary, or ask someone about words you do not understand. When you come across a word you do not know, say to yourself

- ☐ The context tells me that this word means . . .
- ☐ A dictionary definition provided in the story shows that the word means . . .
- ☐ My work with the word before class helps me know that the word means . . .
- ☐ A classmate said that the word means . . .
- ☐ I can skip knowing the exact meaning of this word because . . .

8 MONITOR YOUR READING PROGRESS. All readers encounter difficulty when they read, especially if the reading material is not self-selected. When you have to read something, note problems you are having and fix them. The key to reading success is knowing when you are having difficulty. To fix problems, say to yourself

- ☐ Because I do not understand this part, I will . . .
- ☐ Because I am having trouble staying interested in the story, I will . . .
- ☐ Because the words are too hard, I will . . .
- ☐ Because the story is very long, I will . . .
- ☐ Because I cannot remember what I have just read, I will . . .

FIX-UP IDEAS

- Reread
- Ask a question
- Read in shorter chunks
- Read aloud
- Retell
- Work with a partner
- Unlock difficult words
- Vary your reading rate
- Choose a new reading strategy
- Create a mnemonic device

How to Use Reading Strategies with Fiction

Read the following excerpts to discover how you might use reading strategies as you read fiction.

Excerpt 1. Note how a reader uses active reading strategies while reading this excerpt from “Thank You, M’am,” page 146.

READ WITH A PURPOSE

After reading this paragraph, I want to know what happens to the boy.

VISUALIZE

I picture a tall, angry woman with huge hands and a big black purse. The boy she is shaking looks scared.

She was a large woman with a large purse that had everything in it but hammer and nails. It had a long strap, and she carried it slung across her shoulder. It was about eleven o’clock at night, dark, and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to snatch her purse. The snap broke with the single tug the boy gave it from behind. But the boy’s weight and the weight of the purse combined caused him to lose his balance. Instead of taking off full blast as he had hoped, the boy fell on his back on the sidewalk and his legs flew up. The large woman simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue-jeaned sitter. Then she reached down, picked the boy up by his shirtfront, and shook him until his teeth rattled.

CONNECT TO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

This makes me think of the purse that my grandmother carries.

MAKE PREDICTIONS

I bet she turns the boy in to the police.

Excerpt 2. Note how a reader uses active reading strategies while reading this excerpt from “The Gift of the Magi,” page 110.

WRITE THINGS DOWN

I can keep track of what happens in a sequence chart.

USE TEXT ORGANIZATION

Words like *now*, *one was*, and *the other* was signal important ideas.

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one’s cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas...

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim’s gold watch that had been his father’s and his grandfather’s. The other was Della’s hair. Had the Queen of Sheba³ lived in the flat across the air shaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty’s jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

TACKLE DIFFICULT VOCABULARY

The definitions of *imputation* and *parsimony* at the bottom of the page help me know that “bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher” means that Della got these stores to lower their prices.

MONITOR YOUR READING PROGRESS

I will use this break in the story to retell what has happened so far.

Reader's resource

"The Monkey's Paw" was published in 1902. It is for this story that W. W. Jacobs (1863–1943) is most well known. A classic horror story, it creates in the reader a sense of foreboding dread. Jacobs achieves this suspenseful effect by introducing into the ordinary everyday life of the White family the odd artifact of the monkey's paw. As you read, note the details that help to create its suspenseful mood.

Word watch

PREVIEW VOCABULARY

amiably	keenly
apathy	liability
attribute	maligned
avaricious	oppressive
averted	persist
burly	poised
compensation	presumptuous
condole	proffered
credulity	prosaic
dubiously	provoke
enthralled	reverberate
frivolous	simian
furtively	subdued
inaudible	torrent
intercept	

Reader's journal

If you were granted three wishes, what would they be?

"The Monkey's Paw"

by W. W. Jacobs

Active READING STRATEGY

MAKE PREDICTIONS

Before Reading

PREVIEW THE SELECTION

- ☐ Read the Reader's Resource and discuss how other horror stories you know create a sense of foreboding, or dread.
- ☐ **Foreshadowing**, the act of presenting materials that hint at events to occur later in a story, can help you make predictions about what will happen as you read.
- ☐ Prepare to use a graphic organizer during reading to record examples of foreshadowing and make predictions by previewing the Predictions Chart below.

Graphic Organizer

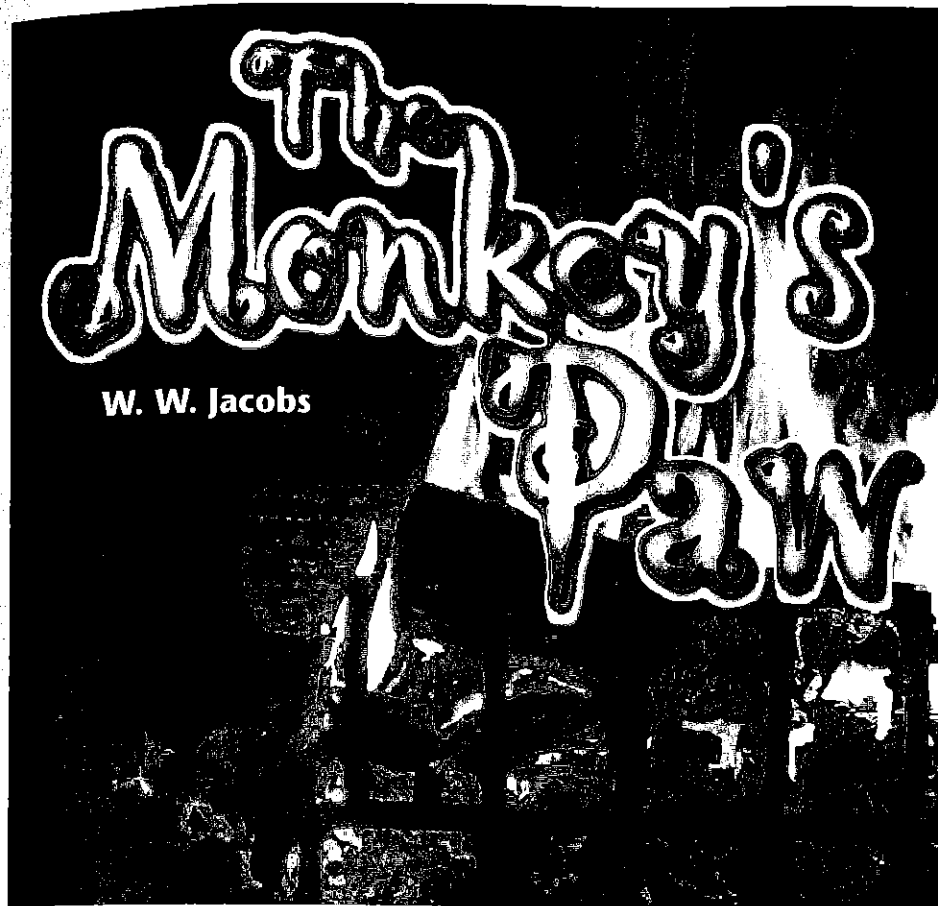
Foreshadowing	Predictions	Adjustments to My Predictions

MAKE PREDICTIONS

- ☐ Follow along in the text as you or your teacher read the beginning of the story aloud.
- ☐ Work with the class to record foreshadowing from the text and form predictions about events to come.
- ☐ Record examples of foreshadowing in the first column of your chart. From the foreshadowing, make predictions about what will happen later.
- ☐ Read the remainder of the story on your own. Stop at the end of each page to record foreshadowing, make predictions, and adjust and verify previous predictions in your chart.

READ ALOUD

Find descriptive passages that create a suspenseful mood and read them aloud. Use your voice to underscore the mood.



Without, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlor of Laburnum 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.

“Hark at the wind,” said Mr. White, who, having seen a fatal mistake after it was too late, was amiably desirous of preventing his son from seeing it.

“I’m listening,” said the latter, grimly surveying the board as he stretched out his hand. “Check.”

“I should hardly think that he’d come tonight,” said his father, with his hand poised over the board.

words for everyday use

pro • voke (prō vōk') vt., stir up action or feeling. *Mary's teasing provoked a sharp response from Jeff.*

a • mi • a • bly (ā mē ə blē) adv., pleasantly. *Mr. Stuart greeted me amiably and shook my hand.*

poised (poizd) part., suspended. *The kitten sat motionless, poised to pounce on the mouse.*

MARK THE TEXT



Underline or highlight the words and phrases in lines 17-22 that create a suspenseful, ominous mood.

Literary TOOLS

SETTING. The **setting** of a literary work is the time and place in which it occurs, together with all the details used to create a sense of a particular time and place. As you read, pay attention to how the setting in this story helps to create the mood.

"Mate,"¹ replied the son.

20 "That's the worst 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."

"Never mind, dear," said his wife soothingly. "Perhaps you'll win the next one."

Mr. White looked up sharply, just in time to intercept a knowing glance between mother and son. The words died away on his lips, and he hid a guilty grin in his thin gray beard.

30 "There he is," said Herbert White, as the gate banged loudly and heavy footsteps came toward the door.

The old man rose with hospitable haste, and opening the door, was heard condoling with the new arrival. The new arrival also condoled with himself, so that Mrs. White said, "Tut, tut!" and coughed gently as her husband entered the room, followed by a tall, burly man, beady of eye and rubicund of visage.²

"Sergeant-Major Morris," he said, introducing him.

40 The sergeant-major shook hands, and taking the proffered seat by the fire, watched contentedly while his host got out whisky and tumblers and stood a small copper kettle on the fire.

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 doughty³ deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

"Twenty-one years of it," said Mr. White, nodding at his

1. **Mate.** The winning move in chess, capturing your opponent's king, is announced with "Checkmate."

2. **rubicund of visage.** Pink-faced

3. **doughty.** Brave

words for everyday use

tor • rent (tôr'ant) *n.*, swift, violent stream. The gentle stream becomes a raging torrent when the snow melts.

in • ter • cept (in'tər sept') *vt.*, seize or stop on the way. In class Reggie intercepted the note Sandy was sending to Brian.

con • dole (kən dōl') *vi.*, sympathize. I condoled with Yolanda about her failing grade.

bur • ly (bər'lē) *adj.*, big and strong. Although not burly like many football players, John has speed and agility that make him a good running back.

prof • fered (prăf'ərd) *part.*, offered courteously. The cookie proffered to me by the hostess was dry and tasteless.

wife and son. "When he went away he was a slip of a youth in the warehouse. Now look at him."

50 "He don't look to have taken much harm," said Mrs. White politely.

"I'd like to go to India myself," said the old man, "just to look round a bit, you know."

"Better where you are," said the sergeant-major, shaking his head. He put down the empty glass, and sighing softly, shook it again.

"I should like to see those old temples and fakirs⁴ and jugglers," said the old man. "What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw or something, Morris?"

60 "Nothing," said the soldier hastily. "Leastways, nothing worth hearing."

"Monkey's paw?" said Mrs. White curiously.

"Well, it's just a bit of what you might call magic, perhaps," said the sergeant-major offhandedly.

His three listeners leaned forward eagerly. The visitor absentmindedly put his empty glass to his lips and then set it down again. His host filled it for him.

70 "To look at," said the sergeant-major, fumbling in his pocket, "it's just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy."

He took something out of his pocket and proffered it. Mrs. White drew back with a grimace, but her son, taking it, examined it curiously.

"And what is there special about it?" inquired Mr. White as he took it from his son, and having examined it, placed it upon the table.

80 "It had a spell put on it by an old fakir," said the sergeant-major, "a very holy man. He wanted to show that fate ruled people's lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow. He put a spell on it so that three separate men could each have three wishes from it."

His manner was so impressive that his hearers were conscious that their light laughter jarred somewhat.

"Well, why don't you have three, sir?" said Herbert White cleverly.



THINK AND REFLECT

Reread lines 77–81. Do you find the sergeant-major's story believable? Why, or why not?

(Evaluate)

4. fakirs. Persons who, for religious purposes, live a thoughtful life of poverty and self-denial

Use THE STRATEGY

MAKE PREDICTIONS. What might the sergeant-major's reply be foreshadowing?

FIX-UP IDEA

Read Short Sections

If you have difficulty applying the reading strategy, read in shorter sections. Instead of stopping at the end of each page, you might stop as you encounter foreshadowing to record it and form predictions. You might also stop as soon as you have enough information to adjust or verify a previous prediction. Continue applying the fix-up idea as you read.

The soldier regarded him in the way that middle age is wont to regard presumptuous youth. "I have," he said quietly, and his blotchy face whitened.

90 "And did you really have the three wishes granted?" asked Mrs. White.

"I did," said the sergeant-major, and his glass tapped against his strong teeth.

"And has anybody else wished?" persisted the old lady.

"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.

100 "If you've had your three wishes, it's no good to you now, then, Morris," said the old man at last. "What do you keep it for?"

The soldier shook his head. "Fancy, I suppose," he said slowly. "I did have some idea of selling it, but I don't think I will. It has caused enough mischief already. Besides, people won't buy. They think it's a fairy tale; some of them, and those who do think anything of it, want to try it first and pay me afterward."

"If you could have another three wishes," said the old man, eyeing him keenly, "would you have them?"

"I don't know," said the other. "I don't know."

110 He took the paw, and dangling it between his forefinger and thumb, suddenly threw it upon the fire. White, with a slight cry, stooped down and snatched it off.

"Better let it burn," said the soldier solemnly.

"If you don't want it, Morris," said the other, "give it to me."

"I won't," said his friend doggedly. "I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don't blame me for what happens. Pitch it on the fire again like a sensible man."

120 The other shook his head and examined his new possession closely. "How do you do it?" he inquired.

words for everyday use

pre • sump • tu • ous (prē zump'chōō əs) *adj.*, arrogant. Allan was presumptuous to tell everyone he was the new class president before the votes were counted.
per • sist (pər sist') *vi.*, continue insistently. Alicia persisted in talking to a classmate, even after the teacher asked for silence.
keen • ly (kēn'lē) *adv.*, sharply. Jerome listened keenly to Jim's play-by-play account because he didn't want to miss a detail about the game he hadn't been able to attend.

"Hold it up in your right hand and wish aloud," said the sergeant-major, "but I warn you of the consequences."

"Sounds like the *Arabian Nights*," said Mrs. White, as she rose and began to set the supper. "Don't you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me?"

Her husband drew the talisman⁵ from his pocket, and then all three burst into laughter as the sergeant-major, with a look of alarm on his face, caught him by the arm.

130 "If you must wish," he said gruffly, "wish for something sensible."

Mr. White dropped it back into his pocket, and placing chairs, motioned his friend to the table. In the business of supper, the talisman was partly forgotten, and afterward the three sat listening in an enthralled fashion to a second installment of the soldier's adventures in India.

"If the tale about the monkey's paw is not more truthful than those he has been telling us," said Herbert, as the door closed behind their guest, just in time for him to catch the last train, "we shan't make much out of it."

140 "Did you give him anything for it, Father?" inquired Mrs. White, regarding her husband closely.

"A trifle," said he, coloring slightly. "He didn't want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away."

"Likely," said Herbert, with pretended horror. "Why, we're going to be rich, and famous and happy. Wish to be an emperor, Father, to begin with; then you can't be henpecked."

150 He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned Mrs. White armed with an antimacassar.⁶

Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. "I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact," he said slowly. "It seems to me I've got all I want."

5. **talisman**. Magic charm

6. **antimacassar**. Cover on a chair or sofa, which prevents soiling

**words
for
everyday
use**

en • thrall (en thrôld') *adj.*, captivated. Enthralled by the puppet show, the kindergarten class fell silent.

ma • lign (mə lînd') *adj.*, slandered. The maligned plaintiff was seeking punitive damages.

du • bi • ous • ly (doo' bē əs lē) *adv.*, skeptically, doubtfully. The teacher listened dubiously to Charlene's excuse for being late to class.

NOTE THE FACTS

Why is the sergeant-major alarmed?

MARK THE TEXT

Underline the sentence that tells why Mr. White doesn't know what to wish for.

NOTE THE FACTS



What happens when Mr. White makes his wish?

Use THE STRATEGY

MAKE PREDICTIONS. Make sure to stop at the end of each page to record foreshadowing, make predictions, and adjust previous predictions.

"If you only cleared the house, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you?" said Herbert, with his hand on his shoulder. "Well, wish for two hundred pounds, then; that'll just do it."

His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman, as his son, with a solemn face, somewhat marred by a wink at his mother, sat down at the piano and struck a few impressive chords.

"I wish for two hundred pounds," said the old man distinctly.

A fine crash from the piano greeted the words, interrupted by a shuddering cry from the old man. His wife and son ran toward him.

"It moved," he cried, with a glance of disgust at the object as it lay on the floor. "As I wished, it twisted in my hand like a snake."

"Well, I don't see the money," said his son as he picked it up and placed it on the table, "and I bet I never shall."

"It must have been your fancy, Father," said his wife, regarding him anxiously.

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

They sat down by the fire again while the two men finished their pipes. Outside, the wind was higher than ever, and the old man started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs. A silence unusual and depressing settled upon all three, which lasted until the old couple rose to retire for the night.

"I expect you'll find the cash tied up in a big bag in the middle of your bed," said Herbert, as he bade them good night, "and something horrible squatting up on top of the wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains."

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.

words for everyday use

cre • du • li • ty (krə dōō' lə tē) *n.*, tendency to believe too readily. *Brian took advantage of his little sister's credulity and told her eating more than three pieces of Halloween candy would make her sick.*

sim • i • an (sīm' ē ən) *adj.*, like an ape or a monkey. *Jake's simian antics made his friends laugh.*

In the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table, he laughed at his fears. There was an air of prosaic wholesomeness about the room that it had lacked on the previous night, and the dirty, shrivelled little paw was pitched on the sideboard with a carelessness which betokened⁷ no great belief in its virtues.

200 “I suppose all old soldiers are the same,” said Mrs. White. “The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted in these days? And if they could, how could two hundred pounds hurt you, Father?”

“Might drop on his head from the sky,” said the frivolous Herbert.

“Morris said the things happened so naturally,” said his father, “that you might if you so wished attribute it to coincidence.”

“Well, don’t break into the money before I come back,” said Herbert as he rose from the table. “I’m afraid it’ll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you.”

210 His mother laughed, and following him to the door, watched him down the road; and returning to the breakfast table, was very happy at the expense of her husband’s credulity. All of which did not prevent her from scurrying to the door at the postman’s knock, nor prevent her from referring somewhat shortly to retired sergeant-majors of bibulous⁸ habits when she found that the post brought a tailor’s bill.

“Herbert will have some more of his funny remarks, I expect, when he comes home,” she said, as they sat at dinner.

220 “I dare say,” said Mr. White, pouring himself out some beer. “But for all that, the thing moved in my hand; that I’ll swear to.”

“You thought it did,” said the old lady soothingly.

“I say it did,” replied the other. “There was no thought

THINK AND REFLECT



What are the family’s feelings about the wish in the morning? (*Infer*)

7. betokened. Indicated

8. bibulous. Tending to drink too much

words for everyday use

pro • sa • ic (prō zā’ik) *adj.*, commonplace; dull. *Prosaic* objects, such as vases and bowls, are the focus of many still-life paintings.

friv • o • lous (friv’ə las) *adj.*, not properly serious. “If you don’t change this frivolous attitude toward practicing,” warned Mr. Linnehan, “you’ll never become a good flute player.”

at • trib • ute (ə trib’yoot) *vt.*, think of as resulting from. Chandra *attributes* her sculpting ability to natural talent and hard work.

av • a • ri • clous (av’ə rish’əs) *adj.*, greedy. Scrooge’s *avaricious* habits left him without friends.

WHAT DO YOU WONDER?

about it; I had just—What's the matter?"

His wife made no reply. 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 connection with the two hundredpounds, she noticed that the stranger was well
230 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 hands upon it, and then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path. Mrs. White at the same moment placed her hands behind her, and hurriedly unfastening the strings of her apron, put that useful article of apparel beneath the cushion of her chair.

She brought the stranger, who seemed ill at ease, into the room. He gazed at her furtively, and listened in a preoccupied fashion as the old lady apologized for the
240 appearance of the room, and her husband's coat, a garment that he usually reserved for the garden. She then waited, as patiently as her sex would permit, for him to broach his business; but he was at first strangely silent.

"I—was asked to call," he said at last, and stooped and picked a piece of cotton from his trousers. "I come from Maw and Meggins."

The old lady started. "Is anything the matter?" she asked breathlessly. "Has anything happened to Herbert? What is it? What is it?"

250 Her husband interposed. "There, there, Mother," he said hastily. "Sit down, and don't jump to conclusions. You've not brought bad news, I'm sure, sir," and he eyed the other wistfully.

"I'm sorry—" began the visitor.

"Is he hurt?" demanded the mother wildly.

The visitor bowed in assent. "Badly hurt," he said quietly, "but he is not in any pain."

"Oh, thank God!" said the old woman, clasping her hands. "Thank God for that! Thank—"

260 She broke off suddenly as the sinister meaning of the

words for everyday use

fur • tive • ly (fur'tiv lē) adv., stealthily; not openly. Kim looked around furtively before dropping her suggestion in the suggestion box.

assurance dawned upon her, and she saw the awful confirmation of her fears in the other's averted face. She caught her breath, and turning to her slower-witted husband, laid her trembling old hand upon his. There was a long silence.

"He was caught in the machinery," said the visitor at length in a low voice.

"Caught in the machinery," repeated Mr. White, in a dazed fashion, "yes."

270 He sat staring blankly out at the window, and taking his wife's hand between his own, pressed it as he had been wont to do in their old courting days nearly forty years before.

"He was the only one left to us," he said, turning gently to the visitor. "It is hard."

The other coughed, and rising, walked slowly to the window. "The firm wished me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss," he said, without looking round. "I beg that you will understand I am only their servant and merely obeying orders."

280 There was no reply. The old woman's face was white, her eyes staring, and her breath inaudible. On the husband's face was a look such as his friend the sergeant-major might have carried into his first action.

"I was to say that Maw and Meggins disclaim all responsibility," continued the other. "They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son's services, they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation."

290 Mr. White dropped his wife's hand, and rising to his feet, gazed with a look of horror at his visitor. His dry lips shaped the words, "How much?"

"Two hundred pounds," was the answer.

Unconscious of his wife's shriek, the old man smiled faintly, put out his hands like a sightless man, and dropped, a senseless heap, to the floor.

In the huge new cemetery, some two miles distant, the old

words for everyday use

a • vert • ed (ə vɜrt' id) *adj.*, turned away. *The averted drought saved hundreds of farmers from bankruptcy.*

in • au • di • ble (in ôd' ə bəl) *adj.*, that cannot be heard. *Although the whistle on the car is inaudible to humans, it signals deer and other animals that danger is approaching.*

li • a • bil • i • ty (lī' ə bil' ə tē) *n.*, state of legal obligation. *I don't see how the company can escape liability for selling dangerous toys.*

com • pen • sa • tion (kəm' pən sâ' shən) *n.*, payment in amends for something. *Sherry expected generous compensation for baby-sitting the Blacks' three unruly children.*

NOTE THE FACTS



How does the first wish come true?

ASK A QUESTION

people buried their dead, and came back to a house steeped in shadow and silence. It was all over so quickly that at first they could hardly realize it, and remained in a state of expectation as though of something else to happen—
 300 something else that was to lighten this load, too heavy for old hearts to bear.

But the days passed, and expectation gave place to resignation—the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes miscalled apathy. Sometimes they hardly exchanged a word, for now they had nothing to talk about, and their days were long to weariness.

It was about a week after, that the old man, waking suddenly in the night, stretched out his hand and found himself alone. The room was in darkness, and the sound of subdued weeping
 310 came from the window. He raised himself in bed and listened.

“Come back,” he said tenderly. “You will be cold.”

“It is colder for my son,” said the old woman, and wept afresh.

The sound of her sobs died away on his ears. The bed was warm, and his eyes heavy with sleep. He dozed fitfully, and then slept, until a sudden wild cry from his wife awoke him with a start.

“*The paw!*” she cried wildly. “The monkey’s paw!”

He started up in alarm. “Where? Where is it? What’s the
 320 matter?”

She came stumbling across the room toward him. “I want it,” she said quietly. “You’ve not destroyed it?”

“It’s in the parlor, on the bracket,” he replied, marvelling. “Why?”

She cried and laughed together, and bending over, kissed his cheek.

“I only just thought of it,” she said hysterically. “Why didn’t I think of it before? Why didn’t *you* think of it?”

“Think of what?” he questioned.

330 “The other two wishes,” she replied rapidly. “We’ve only had one.”

“Was not that enough?” he demanded fiercely.

words for everyday use

ap • a • thy (ap'ə thē) *n.*, indifference; lack of emotion. *The media blamed low voter turnout on citizens' apathy over the mayoral candidates.*

sub • dued (səb dōō'd) *part.*, diminished; lessened in intensity. *The art exhibit balanced the intense colors of Monica's oil paintings with the more subdued tones of Vanessa's watercolors.*

"No," she cried triumphantly. "We'll have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again."

The man sat up in bed and flung the bedclothes from his quaking limbs. "Good God, you are mad!" he cried, aghast.

"Get it," she panted. "Get it quickly, and wish—Oh, my boy, my boy!"

340 Her husband struck a match and lit the candle. "Get back to bed," he said unsteadily. "You don't know what you are saying."

"We had the first wish granted," said the old woman feverishly. "Why not the second?"

"A coincidence," stammered the old man.

"Go and get it and wish," cried his wife, quivering with excitement.

350 The old man turned and regarded her, and his voice shook. "He has been dead ten days, and besides he—I would not tell you else, but—I could only recognize him by his clothing. If he was too terrible for you to see then, how now?"

"Bring him back," cried the old woman, and dragged him toward the door. "Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?"

360 He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlor, 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 upon 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.

Even his wife's face seemed changed as he entered the room. It was white and expectant, and to his fears, seemed to have an unnatural look upon it. He was afraid of her.

"*Wish!*" she cried, in a strong voice.

"It is foolish and wicked," he faltered.

370 "*Wish!*" repeated his wife.

He raised his hand. "I wish my son alive again."

The talisman fell to the floor, and he regarded it fearfully. Then he sank trembling into a chair as the old woman, with burning eyes, walked to the window and raised the blind.

He sat until he was chilled with the cold, glancing

NOTE THE FACTS



Why does Mrs. White want the monkey's paw?

READ ALOUD



Read aloud the highlighted text on this page. What fear does Mr. White have?

NOTE THE FACTS



Why does Mr. White make a second wish? Why does he hesitate before making the wish?

DRAW A PICTURE

occasionally at the figure of the old woman peering through the window. The candle-end, which had burned below the rim of the china candlestick, was throwing pulsating shadows on the ceiling and walls, until, with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired. The old man, with an unspeakable sense of relief at the failure of the talisman, crept back to his bed, and a minute or two afterward the old woman came silently and apathetically beside him.

Neither spoke, but lay silently listening to the ticking of the clock. A stair creaked, and a squeaky mouse scurried noisily through the wall. The darkness was oppressive, and after lying for some time screwing up his courage, he took the box of matches, and striking one, went downstairs for a candle.

At the foot of the stairs the match went out, and he paused to strike another; and at the same moment a knock, so quiet and stealthy as to be scarcely audible, sounded on the front door.

The matches fell from his hand and spilled in the passage. He stood motionless, his breath suspended until the knock was repeated. Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room, and closed the door behind him. A third knock sounded through the house.

"*What's that?*" cried the old woman, starting up.

"A rat," said the old man in shaking tones—"a rat. It passed me on the stairs."

His wife sat up in bed listening. A loud knock resounded through the house.

"It's Herbert!" she screamed. "It's Herbert!"

She ran to the door, but her husband was before her, and catching her by the arm, held her tightly.

"What are you going to do?" he whispered hoarsely.

"It's my boy; it's Herbert!" she cried, struggling mechanically. "I forgot it was two miles away. What are you holding me for? Let go. I must open the door."

"For God's sake, don't let it in," cried the old man, trembling.

"You're afraid of your own son," she cried, struggling.

words for everyday use

op • pres • sive (ə pres'iv) *adj.*, hard to put up with. *The heavy silence of libraries is oppressive to me; I prefer to study at home with music in the background.*

"Let me go. I'm coming, Herbert; I'm coming."

There was another knock, and another. The old woman, with a sudden wrench, broke free and ran from the room. Her husband followed to the landing, and called after her appealingly as she hurried downstairs. He heard the chain rattle back and the bottom bolt drawn slowly and stiffly from the socket. Then the old woman's voice, strained and panting.

"The bolt," she cried loudly. "Come down. I can't reach it."

But her husband was on his hands and knees, groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If he could only find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade⁹ 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.

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 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. ■

9. **fusillade.** Simultaneous discharge of many firearms

**words
for
everyday
use**

re • ver • ber • ate (ri vər' bā rāt') *vi.*, resound; echo. *Must you play your music so loudly that it reverberates throughout the whole house?*

THINK AND REFLECT



Why is the man afraid to open the door?

(Interpret)

THINK AND REFLECT



What was Mr. White's third wish? (Infer)

Reflect ON YOUR READING

After Reading

ANALYZE THE FORESHADOWING

When you finish your Predictions Chart, review the foreshadowing you recorded. Then, write a paragraph discussing how foreshadowing helped create the suspenseful, foreboding mood in the story. Share your paragraph with a partner, and discuss how the foreshadowing and atmosphere affected your reading experience.

THINK-ALOUD NOTES

Reading Skills and Test Practice

ANALYZE LITERARY ELEMENTS

READ, THINK, AND EXPLAIN. How do the setting and the foreshadowing work together to create a suspenseful, foreboding mood? Support your answer with evidence from the text. Use your own paper as needed.

REFLECT ON YOUR RESPONSE. Compare your response with that of your partner and talk about how the information you wrote down while reading helped form your response.

Investigate, Inquire, and Imagine

RECALL: GATHER FACTS

1a. What spell was put on the monkey's paw by a fakir? Why did the fakir put the spell on the paw?

→ INTERPRET: FIND MEANING

1b. What relationship between human life and fate is described in this story? How are the fakir's ideas about fate proved true?

ANALYZE: TAKE THINGS APART

2a. What human weaknesses are revealed by members of the White family in this story?

→ SYNTHESIZE: BRING THINGS TOGETHER

2b. Why does Mr. White make a third wish?

EVALUATE: MAKE JUDGMENTS

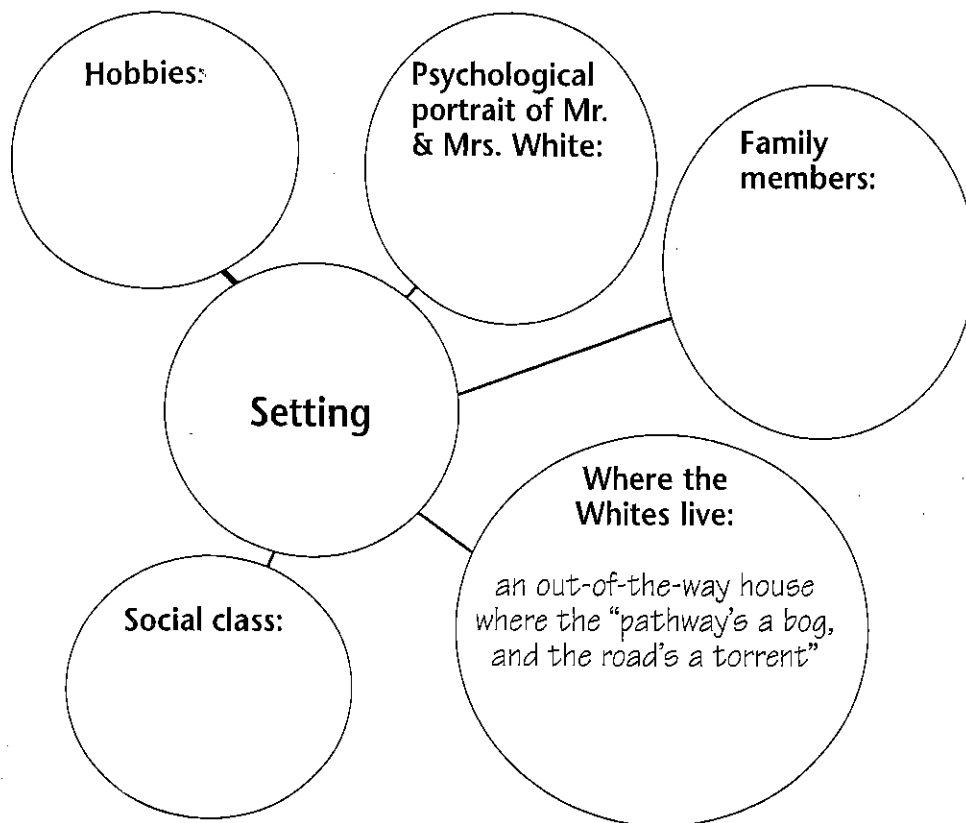
3a. Who believes most strongly in the power of the monkey's paw—Sergeant-Major Morris, Mr. White, or Mrs. White? Explain your answer.

→ EXTEND: CONNECT IDEAS

3b. Do you believe fate, coincidence, or human will determines your future? Explain your answer.

Literary Tools

SETTING. The **setting** of a literary work is the time and place in which it occurs, together with all the details used to create a sense of a particular time and place. Complete the cluster chart below to describe the setting. One example has been done for you.



WordWorkshop

WORD ROOTS. Word roots are word parts that cannot stand alone but that have meaning that can aid you in deciphering the meanings of words that you don't know. A helpful clue about word roots: when you strip away the prefix and/or suffix from a word, you are left with a word root.

EXAMPLE

apathy (word root: *path*, meaning feeling or suffering)

prefix: *a*, meaning not or without

suffix: *y*, meaning characterized by

word meaning: characterized by not feeling or by not suffering

Several of the Words for Everyday Use for this selection contain commonly used Greek and Latin word roots. For each of the words below, define the prefix and/or suffix that joins with the word root. Then, define the complete word as a sum of its parts. The meaning of the word root for each word has been given. Compare your derived definitions with those given in the Words for Everyday Use boxes in your textbook. For a list of prefixes and suffixes and their definitions, see Unit 9, pages 482–484.

1. amiably (word root: *am/ami*, meaning love or friend)

2. compensation (word root: *pen/pend*, meaning weigh; estimate; pay; hang)

3. credulity (word root: *cred*, meaning believe or trust)

4. inaudible (word root: *aud*, meaning hear)

5. provoke (word root: *voc/vok*, meaning voice; call)

Read-Write Connection

Imagine that you are Mr. White. Reflect on the night of Sergeant-Major Morris's visit, when he brought the monkey's paw to your home. Explain how your view of the monkey's paw changed after that.

Beyond the Reading

RESEARCH FATE. Research the concept of fate as it is expressed in the literature, religions, and philosophy of various cultures. What does fate mean to you? Do you believe in fate? Why, or why not?

Go ONLINE. Visit the EMC Internet Resource Center at emcp.com to find links and additional activities for this selection.