

'The Monkey's Paw' Lesson Plan

Teaching focus

- Using inference to fill gaps in stories

Engagement

- Tell students to imagine they have been granted three wishes which they are guaranteed will come true. Ask them to write down what their three wishes would be. Students read out what they wrote.
- Point that sometimes when we wish for something it does not always turn out how we expect. Give example from your own experience or makes one up (e.g. puppy who turned into terrible dog who had to be put down). Ask students for examples from their own experience
- Tell students that they are going to read a story about some people who were granted their wishes but things went horribly wrong. Mention this story is quite famous and was used as the basis for an episode of *The Simpsons* Halloween special.

Scaffold the reading

Scaffold the reading purpose

However in this story there are some important things the story does not tell us. Students will have to fill in the gaps. They will have to pay careful attention to the clues to do this.

Scaffold the language

- The story mentions 200 pounds – about \$400, but worth a lot more in 1902 – enough to pay off a house.
- Simian – monkey-like.

Reading

Explicit teaching

Explain that the story does not directly tell us why the old man wished his son dead again, but it does provide clues. We need to work out the clues to find out why he made the final wish.

Exploration

Tell students to re-read the second last page to find the clues. Students share their findings.

Application

Set the task

Ask students to write the conversation which might occur between the old man and his wife after the last sentence of the story.

Scaffold the task

Teach conventions of punctuation and layout of direct speech, referring to story:

- New line for each speaker
- Words spoken placed in quotation marks
- Words narrated (e.g. he said) do not have quotation marks

Supervise the task

Teacher walks around monitoring work, praising good efforts and occasionally interrupting class to read out good examples,

Sharing the results

Volunteers read their work aloud to class.

Review

Point out that there are many stories like 'The Monkey's Paw' which require readers to fill in the gaps. This can add to the enjoyment of reading because it allows us, the readers, to contribute to making the story make sense. If parts of a story do not seem to make sense, it might be because the reader has to fill in the gaps.