9th Grade Summer Reading Project

The Miracle Worker – A Play by William Gibson

Obtain a copy of The Miracle Worker by William Gibson (purchase or borrow from the library). Write the following "Read to discover" ideas and the answers you find as you read through the play. Make sure your MLA heading is in the upper left-hand corner (see page 10 of this packet). The title is 9th Grade Summer Reading Project. Bring your completed project to class. Be prepared to take a test and write about the following:

• Character traits of each of the major characters
• Motivations for the actions of the major characters
• The purpose and effect of the flashbacks in the play
• The use of literary devices such as similes, metaphors, personification, and symbolism. (definitions on page 9 of this packet)

***Honors additional research project is listed on page 11 of this packet***

Please contact Mrs. Samuels at psamuels@lfcsinc.org with any questions.

Notice as you read that acts are marked, but scenes in the script are not. A short description of each scene is given here to help you follow with the book.

In the beginning pages, before the actual speaking starts, read to discover:

1. the time period of the play.
2. the location of most of the play’s events.
3. the location of some of the play’s events.
4. the number of characters in the play’s cast. (Count plural nouns as single characters.)

ACT ONE

Act One, Scene 1 (I,i) Night, Keller Homestead – Read to discover:

1. the description of the three characters (besides the baby).
2. how we can tell Kate is not Keller's first wife.
3. the doctor’s diagnosis (what he felt was the baby’s sickness).
4. what Kate reveals about Keller's occupation.
5. how Kate proves that Helen can neither see nor hear.

Act One, Scene 2 (I,ii) Outside the Keller house at the pump – Read to discover:

6. how the playwright symbolizes time’s passage.
7. how much time has passed since Scene 1.
8. Helen’s current age.
9. the "toy" with which the three children are playing.
10. the reason Percy says that Helen will become angry.
11. what the "scissors fight" reveals about Helen's character.
12. the change in Kate's character over the last five years.
13. the tone (attitude) that James uses when he says, "[Helen] only dug Martha's eyes out. Almost dug. No point worrying 'til it happens, is there?"
14. the name and location of the oculist whom Aunt Ev suggests. What is an oculist?
15. what Keller reveals about his character when he says, "I've stopped believing in wonders."
16. what Kate reveals about her character when she answers, "Any number of times."
17. to what James refers when he says, "Father stands up; that makes it a fact."
18. where James suggests the family send Helen.
19. the reason James wants Helen sent away.
20. why Helen damages her aunt's blouse.
21. what the brief exchange between James and Keller reveals about their relationship.
22. why Helen empties the baby's cradle of its contents.
23. the two issues which the Kellers must realistically face as they decide what to do with Helen.
24. what Keller finally agrees to do at the scene's close.
25. what this scene's main events seem to reveal about Helen and about the Kellers.

Act One, Scene 3 (I,iii) In Boston, at the Perkins School for the Blind

Read to discover:

26. the famous person who apparently received the letter which Keller sent to Dr. Chisholm, then passed it on to Professor Anagnos (who is recommending Annie Sullivan, his oldest student).
27. what Anagnos means when he says that Annie "lacks all tact or talent to bend to others."
28. the metaphor Anagnos uses to refer to Annie's childhood at Tewksbury, the poorhouse.
29. the simile Anagnos uses to describe the mysterious Helen.
30. what is revealed about Annie's character when she says, "The only time I have trouble is when I'm right" and when Anagnos says, "Annie, be humble."
31. the line where Anagnos alludes (refers) to the play's title.
32. Annie's ANNUAL (yearly) salary, based on her monthly fee.
33. the school's going-away gift for Annie.
34. the effect of Jimmie's death on Annie.
35. what the Perkins Institute taught Annie.
36. the young children's gift for Annie.
37. the children's gift for Annie to give to Helen.
38. concerning the series of voices at the end of the scene. The plot technique used is called *flashback*. The scene reflects her thoughts of an earlier time.
   • in what location did this conversation occur?
   • what was Jimmy's disability?
   • what caused Jimmy to cry in terror?

   **Act One, Scene 4 (I, iv) Back at the Keller home - Read to discover:**

39. the reason for Kate's anxiousness at the scene's opening.
40. what the actions of Kate, Viney, and Keller show about the way they "control" Helen's behavior.
41. the metaphor used when Viney reacts to Keller's giving Helen some candy by saying, "How'm I gone get her to eat her supper, you fill her up with that trash?"

   **Act One, Scene 5 (I, v) The train station - Read to discover:**

42. James' family relationship to Helen.
43. why Kate sounds disappointed in Annie.
44. the simile which Annie uses to dispute the way Dr. Howe used to treat disabled children.
45. the three advantages Annie has over someone like Dr. Howe.
   • She has read _________________________________
   • She has _________________________________
   • She has, like Helen, _______________________________
46. the one thing Annie plans to teach Helen.
47. the analogy that Annie uses to compare language to light.
48. the simile that Annie uses to show her nervousness.
49. what Annie reveals about her character when she says, "Oh strangers aren't so strange to me. I've known them all my life!"

   **Act One, Scene 6 (I, vi) The Keller house (out front and indoors)**

Read to discover:

50. the first conflict between Annie and Keller.
51. the first conflict between Annie and Helen.
52. the four things about Annie which upset Keller.
53. what made the first word Annie teaches Helen should be meaningful to Helen.
54. what James feels is Helen's chief skill.
55. who Annie says invented the sign-language alphabet.
56. what made the second word Annie teaches Helen should be meaningful to Helen.
57. why Annie does not leave her room after Helen runs out.
58. what is missing from Annie’s mouth as a result of this scene.
59. what the flashback reveals about Jimmie.

**Act One, Scene 7 (I, vii) Suppertime—Read to discover:**

60. the irony in Viney’s saying, “Somehow [Helen] didn’t have much of an appetite tonight.” (saying one thing and meaning something quite different)
61. the motivation for James’s not revealing (to the Kellers) Annie’s predicament.
62. the irony in Keller’s asking James for a ladder.
63. where the key has been hidden since Helen left Annie’s room.
64. where Helen now hides the key.
65. what Helen’s action seems to symbolize.
66. what we can predict about Annie when she says, “You have a thing or two to learn first.”
67. the two things Helen “won” as a result of confining Annie to her room.

**ACT TWO**

**Act Two, Scene 1 (II,i) Annie’s room in the evening—Read to discover:**

1. how Helen shows some maternal (motherly) instinct.
2. what Annie writes to Professor Anagnos is her greatest problem.
3. why Helen smashes the water pitcher on the floor, despite the lesson Annie just taught her.
4. the simile which Kate uses to show how little confidence Keller has in Annie’s method.
5. the similarity in the way both Mildred and Helen learn to talk.
6. the simile Annie uses to describe Helen’s intelligence.
7. the hyperbole Annie uses to describe when Helen will learn.
8. the metaphor Kate uses to explain why the family spoils Helen.
9. the metaphor Annie uses to explain how children learn.

**Act Two, Scene 2 (II,ii) The next morning—Read to discover:**

10. the general topic of the argument between James and his father.
11. what James says Union General Grant was that no Yankee general before him had been, resulting in his victory at Vicksburg.
12. what Helen is doing while her father and brother argue.
13. why Helen begins to fight and flail.
14. why Keller defends Helen's feeding habit.
15. the way in which Annie characterizes Helen, upsetting Keller but causing James to say, "Hear, hear."
16. why Annie feels the Kellers choose to feel sorry for Helen rather than to teach her anything.
17. the two things Keller expects from Annie, or he'll fire her.
18. how, despite his tough words, Keller shows his lack of backbone.
19. how Kate points out James's own cowardice before his father.
20. the effect when the author uses the technique of personification when he describes that Helen touches Kate's cheek, "and then waits for the world to answer."
21. the characteristic which Annie displays during the rest of the scene (a trait which James mentioned in #11, above).

**Act Two, Scene 3 (II, iii) Helen and Annie alone in the dining room - Read to discover:**

22. how long the "table manners" lesson lasted, assuming breakfast began at 6 a.m.
23. the kind of prejudice which Aunt Ev shows against Annie.
24. what Viney says that shows the family's attitude against Helen.
25. the three eating utensils which Helen used correctly.
26. what Annie's success means to Kate.
27. what the First and Second Crones urged Annie to do.
28. why Annie's goal upset her little brother.
29. what the doctor implied would soon happen to Jimmie.
30. the connection between the flashbacks that occur in this scene - what was similar each of these three times when Annie heard the voices from her past at Tewksbury?
31. the decision Annie makes at the end of scene 3.

**Act Two, Scene 4 (II, iv) Kate and Keller in the garden house- Read to discover:**

32. of the four adjectives (describers) that Keller uses to describe Annie, the one which Kate proves is inaccurate.
33. how Keller again avoids responsibility for what he says should happen to Annie.
34. how Keller's speech shows his reluctance to fire Annie.
35. the simile which Keller uses to compare Annie to a disease.
36. what Helen was able to do when six months old.
37. the simile Kate uses to show her love for Helen, and the parable to which she refers.
38. what Annie says is Helen's worst handicap.
39. the simile Annie uses to emphasize the Kellers' treatment of Helen.
40. the irony in Annie's words when she says, "Give up? Why, I only today saw what has to be done to begin!"
41. the two conditions of Annie's continuing to work with Helen.
42. the effect Annie says that living her childhood in such horrifying conditions as Tewksbury had on her.
43. the location where Annie wants to live with Helen.
44. to what Annie compares working with Helen.
45. how much time until Annie's deadline.

**Act Two, Scene 5 (II,v)** The garden house turned into a living space.

Some at the main house. - Read to discover:

46. what, if not force, Annie intends to use to teach Helen.
47. what James recommends that Annie do.
48. how Annie feels about James's solution.
49. why Helen has no idea where she is.
50. Helen's gesture which means, "I want Mommy."
51. the simile which describes the way Helen careens around the room.
52. the reason for James's jealousy of Annie.
53. what James means: he answers his father's question ("What do you want out of me?") by saying, "Everything you forgot when you forgot my mother."
54. what Keller realizes about himself when he says, "You'd think I treat him as hard as this girl does Helen."
55. the two people Kate could be referring to when she asks Keller, "Do you like the child?"

**Act Two, Scene 6 (II, vi)** The belfry chimes 2 o'clock.

First a flashback, then to the garden house - Read to discover:

56. what Annie must be feeling, even in her sleep, based on the flashback occurring at the scene's opening.
57. how Helen seems to feel about Percy.
58. the part of Helen's character that Annie uses to get Helen to let her spell into her hand again.
59. a new side of Annie's character, based on her behavior with Helen's doll at the scene's end, something she has in common with Helen.
ACT THREE

Act Three, Scene 1 (III,i) Garden house and homestead

Read to discover:

1. the simile which Annie uses to explain how simple learning language is.
2. why the simile (in #1, above) is ironic.
3. the metaphor which Annie uses to coax Helen out into the world.
4. the only way out for Helen, according to Annie.
5. why we are not surprised by James's reaction to Helen's two-week absence.
6. the two people Keller could be referring to when he speaks about the separation a parent feels as a result of a disappointing child.
7. what Annie feels more and more (a word she looks up in the dictionary).
8. what Annie thinks she needs, as much as Helen does.
9. the metaphor that James uses to explain to Kate his father's effect on James.
10. what special favor James asks of Kate.
11. how Kate responds to James's request.
12. the character trait which Annie sees in herself, another word she has trouble locating in a dictionary.
13. the simile which Annie uses to show the unpredictability of spelling rules.
14. the number of nouns and verbs Helen can now spell.
15. the extent to which Helen understands the meaning of her hand movements.
16. the simile which Annie uses to show how naturally we use words.
17. a few of the things Helen has learned to do.
18. the personification which Annie uses to convince Kate that Helen can learn to speak with her fingers.
19. why Annie's "main worry" is that the Kellers are eager to have Helen back in their arms.
20. the three adjectives (describers) that Keller uses to describe Helen, words which don't impress Annie at all.
21. what Annie feels is more important for Helen to learn than keeping herself clean.
22. why it is ironic for Keller not to appreciate the importance of words and language in Helen's future.
23. why Keller concludes that Helen will never learn to communicate.
Act Three, Scene 2 (III,ii) Garden house, daytime—Read to discover:

24. the ideas compared in the three metaphors which Annie uses to try to reach Helen—
   • "I wanted to teach you everything on earth that's ours for a wink and it's gone."
   • "You can see five thousand years back in a light of words."
   • "One word and I can put the world in your hand."

25. two adjectives that show Helen has not learned yet.

26. the simile that shows Annie's defeated emotions.

27. the likely reason that Annie again has a "Tewksbury flashback.

28. "Resurrection" means "returning to life from death." Then what might be the "new life"
   • Annie's voice referred to in her flashback? ("I think God must owe me a resurrection.")
   • Annie feels she now owes the world? ("And I owe God one.")

29. the reason Keller doesn't feel that Annie's pay is enough.

30. the reason Annie feels that she hasn't yet succeeded.

31. the way in which Annie has changed her mind about the importance of obedience to a child's learning.

32. Annie's plan for how next to try to reach Helen.

33. the simile that Annie uses to show Helen's undeveloped language skill.

34. the lie that Annie doesn't want Helen to come to accept.

35. how you can tell that Annie seems to have won over Keller, as the scene closes.

Act Three, Scene 3 (III, iii) Inside the homestead and then outside—

Read to discover:

36. the motivation for Helen's gathering the front and rear door keys.

37. how you can tell that James may have changed his attitude toward Annie, through gesture and words.

38. in the "grace" that James says before dinner, who does Jacob represent? Who does the angel represent?

39. what Helen does three times which upsets Annie.

40. what Annie means in the metaphor, "I don't think we should play tug-of-war for her."

41. how Helen is testing the Kellers.

42. how Helen is testing Annie.

43. what Helen does to prompt Annie to take her to the pump.
44. what James does that finally earns Keller’s respect.
45. the three ideas that come together at the same time when “the miracle happens.”
46. how the water pump symbolizes the role Annie plays in Helen’s break-through.
47. the name Helen gives to Annie.
48. the symbolism in Helen’s giving Annie the keys.
49. Annie’s changed feelings toward Helen, the one thing that Annie said she had not been able
to do since her brother’s death.
50. the significance of Annie’s not hearing the flashback voices anymore.
51. Looking back, the Tewksbury flashbacks tended to occur at times of ______________ for
Annie and symbolized ________________.
52. how miracles occurred between:
   •  James and Keller
   •  Keller and Helen
   •  Keller and Kate
   •  James and Kate
   •  Keller and Annie

Literary terms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>analogy</td>
<td>a point-by-point comparison between two things that are alike in some respect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>flashback</td>
<td>a conversation, an episode, or an event that happened before the beginning of a story.</td>
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<td>irony (ironic)</td>
<td><strong>Irony</strong> is the contrast between appearance and reality. <strong>Verbal irony</strong> occurs when someone knowingly exaggerates or says one thing and means another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>metaphor</td>
<td>a comparison between two things that are basically dissimilar in which one thing becomes another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>personification</td>
<td>the act of giving human qualities to something that is not human.</td>
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<td>simile</td>
<td>a comparison between two things that are basically dissimilar using “like” or “as” to make the comparison.</td>
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<tr>
<td>symbol (symbolized)</td>
<td>a person, a place, and activity, or an object that stands for something beyond itself.</td>
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Liberty High School  
Format for Headings for All Papers in All Classes

For word processed papers:

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<th>Student name (Example: Libby Lion)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class information (Example: English)</td>
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Center the Title of the Essay

Set margins to 1 inch on every side. Set everything in the whole essay to straight double space. There are no extra spaces by the title or between paragraphs.

Set font to Times New Roman size 12. Each paragraph is indented by hitting the tab button once. Last name and page number is placed to the right in the header.

For handwritten papers:

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Center the Title of the Assignment

Indent about 1 thumb’s width to begin paragraph. The red line marks the left margin. Make sure and leave a 1-inch margin on the right side, also. Double space if teacher requests.
Ninth Grade Honors English Additional Summer Project

Research

Students entering ninth grade honors English in the fall are expected to complete the same reading guide and take the same test in September as the college prep students. In addition, honors students are expected to conduct independent research to support their study and analysis of the play.

Honors students will research
1. the life of the playwright, William Gibson (especially look for quotes that show his beliefs or attitudes regarding the play and its subject)
2. the life of Helen Keller
3. the life of Anne Sullivan
4. Perkin’s School for the Blind
5. State Almshouse at Tewksbury

For each area above, provide
1. two different sources (use easybib.com or something like it to produce MLA-format citations)
2. a paragraph summary for each source (describe the information and the most important points)
3. two quotes from each source

Altogether there will be 10 sources with summary paragraphs, plus 20 quotes. Place quotes with their appropriate sources.

Once research is complete, honors students will write an essay (1-2 pages typed, MLA format) discussing
• any discrepancies found between what was read in the play and what was found while researching
• any deeper understandings of the play found because of the research.

The completed reading guide, research list with citations, summaries, and quotations, along with the one-page essay are due the first day of school in September.

Please contact Mrs. Samuels at psamuels@lfcsinc.org for any questions.