English 4
Focus: The Storyteller

By Saki

Hector Hugh Munro (1870-1916) was a British author who wrote under the pen name Saki and often satirized old Victorian values, such as what was considered "proper" behavior. In the following short story, a man on a train tells a story to three young children. As you read, take notes on the author's use of humor.

It was a hot afternoon, and the railway carriage was correspondingly sultry, and the next stop was at Templecombe, nearly an hour ahead. The occupants of the carriage were a small girl, and a smaller girl, and a small boy. An aunt belonging to the children occupied one corner seat, and the further corner seat on the opposite side was occupied by a bachelor who was a stranger to their party, but the small girls and the small boy emphatically occupied the compartment. Both the aunt and the children were conversational in a limited, persistent way, reminding one of the attentions of a housefly that refuses to be discouraged. Most of the aunt's remarks seemed to begin with "Don't," and nearly all of the children's remarks began with "Why?" The bachelor said nothing out loud. "Don't, Cyril, don't," exclaimed the aunt, as the small boy began smacking the cushions of the seat, producing a cloud of dust at each blow.

"Come and look out of the window," she added.
The child moved reluctantly to the window. "Why are those sheep being driven out of that field?" he asked.

"I expect they are being driven to another field where there is more grass," said the aunt weakly.

"But there is lots of grass in that field," protested the boy; "there's nothing else but grass there. Aunt, there's lots of grass in that field."

"Perhaps the grass in the other field is better," suggested the aunt fatuously.

"Why is it better?" came the swift, inevitable question.

"Oh, look at those cows!" exclaimed the aunt. Nearly every field along the line had contained cows or bullocks, but she spoke as though she were drawing attention to a rarity.

"Why is the grass in the other field better?" persisted Cyril.

The frown on the bachelor's face was deepening to a scowl. He was a hard, unsympathetic man, the aunt decided in her mind. She was utterly unable to come to any satisfactory decision about the grass in the other field.

The smaller girl created a diversion by beginning to recite "On the Road to Mandalay." She only knew the first line, but she put her limited knowledge to the fullest possible use. She repeated the line over and over again in a dreamy but resolute and very audible voice; it seemed to the bachelor as though some one had had a bet with her that she could not repeat the line aloud two thousand times without stopping. Whoever it was who had made the wager was likely to lose his bet.

"Come over here and listen to a story," said the aunt, when the bachelor had looked twice at her and once at the communication cord.

The children moved listlessly towards the aunt's end of the carriage. Evidently her reputation as a storyteller did not rank high in their estimation.
In a low, confidential voice, interrupted at frequent intervals by loud, petulant questionings from her listeners, she began an unenterprising and deplorably uninteresting story about a little girl who was good, and made friends with every one on account of her goodness, and was finally saved from a mad bull by a number of rescuers who admired her moral character.

"Wouldn’t they have saved her if she hadn’t been good?” demanded the bigger of the small girls. It was exactly the question that the bachelor had wanted to ask.

"Well, yes," admitted the aunt lamely, "but I don’t think they would have run quite so fast to her help if they had not liked her so much."

"It’s the stupidest story I’ve ever heard," said the bigger of the small girls, with immense conviction.

"I didn’t listen after the first bit, it was so stupid," said Cyril.

The smaller girl made no actual comment on the story, but she had long ago recommenced a murmured repetition of her favourite line.

"You don’t seem to be a success as a story-teller," said the bachelor suddenly from his corner.

The aunt bristled in instant defence at this unexpected attack.

"It’s a very difficult thing to tell stories that children can both understand and appreciate," she said stiffly.

"I don’t agree with you," said the bachelor.

"Perhaps you would like to tell them a story," was the aunt’s retort.

"Tell us a story," demanded the bigger of the small girls.

"Once upon a time," began the bachelor, "there was a little girl called Bertha, who was extra-ordinarily good."

The children’s momentarily-aroused interest began at once to flicker; all stories seemed dreadfully alike, no matter who told them.
"She did all that she was told, she was always truthful, she kept her clothes clean, ate milk puddings as though they were jam tarts, learned her lessons perfectly, and was polite in her manners."

"Was she pretty?" asked the bigger of the small girls.

"Not as pretty as any of you," said the bachelor, "but she was horribly good."

There was a wave of reaction in favour of the story; the word horrible in connection with goodness was a novelty that commended itself. It seemed to introduce a ring of truth that was absent from the aunt's tales of infant life.

"She was so good," continued the bachelor, "that she won several medals for goodness, which she always wore, pinned on to her dress. There was a medal for obedience, another medal for punctuality and a third for good behaviour. They were large metal medals and they clicked against one another as she walked. No other child in the town where she lived had as many as three medals, so everybody knew that she must be an extra good child."

"Horribly good," quoted Cyril.

"Everybody talked about her goodness, and the Prince of the country got to hear about it, and he said that as she was so very good she might be allowed once a week to walk in his park, which was just outside the town. It was a beautiful park, and no children were ever allowed in it, so it was a great honour for Bertha to be allowed to go there."

"Were there any sheep in the park?" demanded Cyril.

"No;" said the bachelor, "there were no sheep."

"Why weren't there any sheep?" came the inevitable question arising out of that answer.

The aunt permitted herself a smile, which might almost have been described as a grin.

"There were no sheep in the park," said the bachelor, "because the Prince's mother had once had a dream that her son would either be killed by a sheep or else by a clock falling on him. For that reason the Prince never kept a sheep in his park or a clock in his palace."
The aunt suppressed a gasp of admiration.

"Was the Prince killed by a sheep or by a clock?" asked Cyril.

"He is still alive, so we can't tell whether the dream will come true," said the bachelor unconcernedly; "anyway, there were no sheep in the park, but there were lots of little pigs running all over the place."

"What colour were they?"

"Black with white faces, white with black spots, black all over, grey with white patches, and some were white all over."

The storyteller paused to let a full idea of the park's treasures sink into the children's imaginations; then he resumed:

"Bertha was rather sorry to find that there were no flowers in the park. She had promised her aunts, with tears in her eyes, that she would not pick any of the kind Prince's flowers, and she had meant to keep her promise, so of course it made her feel silly to find that there were no flowers to pick."

"Why weren't there any flowers?"

"Because the pigs had eaten them all," said the bachelor promptly. "The gardeners had told the Prince that you couldn't have pigs and flowers, so he decided to have pigs and no flowers."

There was a murmur of approval at the excellence of the Prince's decision; so many people would have decided the other way.

"There were lots of other delightful things in the park. There were ponds with gold and blue and green fish in them, and trees with beautiful parrots that said clever things at a moment's notice, and humming birds that hummed all the popular tunes of the day. Bertha walked up and down and enjoyed herself immensely, and thought to herself: 'If I were not so extraordinarily good I should not have been allowed to come into this beautiful park and enjoy all that there is to be seen in it,' and her three medals clinked against one another as she walked and helped to remind her how very good she really was. Just then an enormous wolf came prowling into the park to see if it could catch a fat little pig for its supper."

"What colour was it?" asked the children, amid an immediate quickening of interest.
"Mud-colour all over, with a black tongue and pale grey eyes that gleamed with unspeakable ferocity. The first thing that it saw in the park was Bertha; her pinafore was so spotlessly white and clean that it could be seen from a great distance. Bertha saw the wolf and saw that it was stealing towards her, and she began to wish that she had never been allowed to come into the park. She ran as hard as she could, and the wolf came after her with huge leaps and bounds. She managed to reach a shrubbery of myrtle bushes and she hid herself in one of the thickest of the bushes. The wolf came sniffing among the branches, its black tongue lolling out of its mouth and its pale grey eyes glaring with rage. Bertha was terribly frightened, and thought to herself: 'If I had not been so extraordinarily good I should have been safe in the town at this moment.' However, the scent of the myrtle was so strong that the wolf could not sniff out where Bertha was hiding, and the bushes were so thick that he might have hunted about in them for a long time without catching sight of her, so he thought he might as well go off and catch a little pig instead. Bertha was trembling very much at having the wolf prowling and sniffing so near her, and as she trembled the medal for obedience clinked against the medals for good conduct and punctuality. The wolf was just moving away when he heard the sound of the medals clinking and stopped to listen; they clinked again in a bush quite near him. He dashed into the bush, his pale grey eyes gleaming with ferocity and triumph, and dragged Bertha out and devoured her to the last morsel. All that was left of her were her shoes, bits of clothing, and the three medals for goodness."

"Were any of the little pigs killed?"

"No, they all escaped."

"The story began badly," said the smaller of the small girls, "but it had a beautiful ending."

"It is the most beautiful story that I ever heard," said the bigger of the small girls, with immense decision.

"It is the only beautiful story I have ever heard," said Cyril.

A dissentient opinion came from the aunt.

"A most improper story to tell to young children! You have undermined the effect of years of careful teaching."

"At any rate," said the bachelor, collecting his belongings preparatory to leaving the carriage, "I kept them quiet for ten minutes, which was more than you were able to do."
"Unhappy woman!" he observed to himself as he walked down the platform of Templecombe station; "for the next six months or so those children will assail her in public with demands for an improper story!"

"The Storyteller" by Saki (1888) is in the public domain

What Students are Learning:

Students are reading the fictional story, *The Storyteller*. Students should understand the theme of Morality as it related to the text. Students are to examine and attempt to answer the question: “What is good and how do we know?”

Standards Work:

Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the themes; provide an objective summary of the text.

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and conclusions based on and related to an author’s implicit and explicit assumptions and beliefs.

Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.

Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college- and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Demonstrate knowledge of foundational works of literature that reflect a variety of genres in the respective major periods of literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

Background and Context:

Saki was the pseudonym of short story writer Hector Hugh Munro. He adopted the name in 1900, and it's believed to have been taken from a character from the works of the Persian poet, Omar Khayyam. Most famous for his short stories, Saki also wrote novels and many articles of journalism. He remains an important figure in the tradition of modern English writers, although his politics and ideas may seem somewhat distant to us today.
The center of Munro’s oeuvre is his short stories. They are not particularly popular in America, but the English continue to read them, although Munro is frequently upstaged by authors of his time, such as Wilde, Kipling, and Wodehouse. For the most part, his stories stand the test of time. As Christopher Hitchens wrote, Munro “is among those few writers, inspirational when read at an early age, who definitely retain their magic when revisited decades later.”

At his best, Munro is considerably funny. His book *The Westminster Alice* retells Lewis Carroll’s famous story, casting Alice not in Wonderland but in Parliament, a bewildered girl forced to make sense of all the madness. One story, “Toys of Peace,” is about a pair of parents who are trying to direct their children away from referencing militaristic and violent acts in their play. A fort becomes a municipal building, guns become ploughs and tools of industry. No matter the parents’ valiant effort, the children win out in the end, and end.

**Supports for Learning:**

- **Word Study:**
  1. **Sultry** *(adjective)*: hot, humid
  2. **Diversion** *(noun)*: a distraction
  3. **Confidential** *(adjective)*: indicating that what one says is private or secret
  4. **Deplorably** *(adverb)*: terrible; worthy of disapproval
  5. **Conviction** *(noun)*: a firmly held belief or opinion
  6. **Punctuality** *(noun)*: being on time
  7. **Dissentient** *(adjective)*: differing, especially from the majority opinion

- **While reading think about:**
  - How does conflict between the aunt and the bachelor shape the actions of the characters in the story?
  - How do the children’s reaction to the bachelor create humor in the story?
  - How should the actions of the characters be summarized?

**Online Resources for Students:**

**Video:**

*The Storyteller: A Short Film*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_COyOjzagQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_COyOjzagQ)

*The Storyteller: An audio recording*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmaW70A1rD4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmaW70A1rD4)

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**Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board: The Storyteller**

**Directions:** Read the Storyteller. Choose 4 activities from the choice board below. You should complete at least two activities from each row.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Activity 3</th>
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</table>
|       | Based on your reading of the text, write an informational essay identifying the author’s likely purpose in *The Storyteller*. Cite evidence from the text to support your answer. | Write a summary of *The Storyteller*.  
- Describe the concept of “right” and “wrong” in connection to the behavior of the character’s in the story. Use evidence from the story to support your claims. | Word Study: Review the critical vocabulary from the text  
- Write a sentence for each of the identified words listed under wordstudy.  
  - The sentences are to be grade appropriate and use at least eight words in each sentence |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 2</th>
<th>Activity 4</th>
<th>Activity 5</th>
<th>Activity 6</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Create a Venn Diagram comparing the action of the aunt in relationship to the action of the bachelor.</td>
<td>Lists ways in which the character’s behavior was “right” and “wrong”. Cite evidence from the text to support your claims.</td>
<td>Questions Connections: Create and answer ten questions connected to the text. The questions should provide others with key information connected to the text.</td>
</tr>
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**Lesson Three and Four**

**Focus:** *The Story of the Bad Little Boy*
By Mark Twain

Samuel Clemens (1835-1910), recognized by his pen name Mark Twain, was an American author and humorist, perhaps best known for his novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. This story centers around a badly-behaved young boy named Jim, whose life is not at all like a “Sunday-school book.” As you read, take notes on Jim’s behavior and its origins, as well as Twain’s use of irony.

Once there was a bad little boy whose name was Jim—though, if you will notice, you will find that bad little boys are nearly always called James in your Sunday-school books. It was strange, but still it was true that this one was called Jim.

He didn’t have any sick mother either—a sick mother who was pious and had the consumption, and would be glad to lie down in the grave and be at rest but for the strong love she bore her boy, and the anxiety she felt that the world might be harsh and cold towards him when she was gone. Most bad boys in the Sunday-books are named James, and have sick mothers, who teach them to say, “Now, I lay me down,” etc. and sing them to sleep with sweet, plaintive voices, and then kiss them good-night, and kneel down by the bedside and weep. But it was different with this fellow. He was named Jim, and there wasn’t anything the matter with his mother—no consumption, nor anything of that kind. She was rather stout than otherwise, and she was not pious; moreover, she was not anxious on Jim’s account. She said if he were to break his neck it wouldn’t be much loss. She always spanked Jim to sleep, and she never kissed him good-night; on the contrary, she boxed his ears when she was ready to leave him.
Once this little bad boy stole the key of the pantry, and slipped in there and helped himself to some jam, and filled up the vessel with tar, so that his mother would never know the difference; but all at once a terrible feeling didn’t come over him, and something didn’t seem to whisper to him, “Is it right to disobey my mother? Isn’t it sinful to do this? Where do bad little boys go who gobble up their good kind mother’s jam?” and then he didn’t kneel down all alone and promise never to be wicked any more, and rise up with a light, happy heart, and go and tell his mother all about it, and beg her forgiveness, and be blessed by her with tears of pride and thankfulness in her eyes. No; that is the way with all other bad boys in the books; but it happened otherwise with this Jim, strangely enough. He ate that jam, and said it was bully in his sinful, vulgar way; and he put in the tar, and said that was bully also, and laughed, and observed “that the old woman would get up and snort” when she found it out; and when she did find it out, he denied knowing anything about it, and she whipped him severely, and he did the crying himself. Everything about this boy was curious—everything turned out differently with him from the way it does to the bad James in the books.

Once he climbed up in Farmer Acorn’s apple-tree to steal apples, and the limb didn’t break, and he didn’t fall and break his arm, and get torn by the farmer’s great dog, and then languish on a sick bed for weeks, and repent and become good. Oh! no; he stole as many apples as he wanted and came down all right; and he was all ready for the dog too, and knocked him endways with a brick when he came to tear him. It was very strange—nothing like it ever happened in those mild little books with marbled backs, and with pictures in them of men with swallow-tailed coats and bell-crowned hats, and pantaloons that are short in the legs, and women with the waists of their dresses under their arms, and no hoops on. Nothing like it in any of the Sunday-school books.
Once he stole the teacher’s pen-knife, and, when he was afraid it would be found out and he would get whipped, he slipped it into George Wilson’s cap—poor Widow Wilson’s son, the moral boy, the good little boy of the village, who always obeyed his mother, and never told an untruth, and was fond of his lessons, and infatuated with Sunday-school. And when the knife dropped from the cap, and poor George hung his head and blushed, as if in conscious guilt, and the grieved teacher charged the theft upon him, and was just in the very act of bringing the switch down upon his trembling shoulders, a white-haired improbable justice of the peace did not suddenly appear in their midst, and strike an attitude and say, “Spare this noble boy—there stands the cowering culprit! I was passing the school-door at recess, and unseen myself, I saw the theft committed!” And then Jim didn’t get whaled, and the venerable justice didn’t read the tearful school a homily and take George by the hand and say such a boy deserved to be exalted, and then tell him to come and make his home with him, and sweep out the office, and make fires, and run errands, and chop wood, and study law, and help his wife to do household labors, and have all the balance of the time to play, and get forty cents a month, and be happy. No; it would have happened that way in the books, but it didn’t happen that way to Jim. No meddling old clam of a justice dropped in to make trouble, and so the model boy George got thrashed, and Jim was glad of it because, you know, Jim hated moral boys. Jim said he was “down on them milk-sops.” Such was the coarse language of this bad, neglected boy.

But the strangest thing that ever happened to Jim was the time he went boating on Sunday, and didn’t get drowned, and that other time that he got caught out in the storm when he was fishing on Sunday, and didn’t get struck by lightning. Why, you might look, and look, all through the Sunday-school books from now till next Christmas, and you would never come across anything like this. Oh no; you would find that all the bad boys who go boating on Sunday invariably get drowned; and all the bad boys who get caught out in storms when they are fishing on Sunday infallibly get struck by lightning. Boats with bad boys in them always upset on Sunday, and it always storms when bad boys go fishing on the Sabbath. How this Jim ever escaped is a mystery to me.
This Jim bore a charmed life—that must have been the way of it. Nothing could hurt him. He even gave the elephant in the menagerie a plug of tobacco, and the elephant didn't knock the top of his head off with his trunk. He browsed around the cupboard after essence of peppermint, and didn't make a mistake and drink aqua fortis. He stole his father's gun and went hunting on the Sabbath, and didn't shoot three or four of his fingers off. He struck his little sister on the temple with his fist when he was angry, and she didn't linger in pain through long summer days, and die with sweet words of forgiveness upon her lips that redoubled the anguish of his breaking heart. No; she got over it. He ran off and went to sea at last, and didn't come back and find himself sad and alone in the world, his loved ones sleeping in the quiet churchyard, and the vine-embowered home of his boyhood tumbled down and gone to decay. Ah! no; he came home as drunk as a piper, and got into the station-house the first thing.

And he grew up and married, and raised a large family, and brained them all with an axe one night, and got wealthy by all manner of cheating and rascality, and now he is the infernalist wickedest scoundrel in his native village, and is universally respected, and belongs to the Legislature.

So you see there never was a bad James in the Sunday-school books that had such a streak of luck as this sinful Jim with the charmed life.

The Story of the Bad Little Boy by Mark Twain is in the public domain

What Students are Learning:

Students will read the short story by Mark Twain, The Story of the Bad Little Boy. Students will understand the themes of Justice, and Equality and Morality as they relate to the text. Students will examine and attempt to answer the questions: “What is fair?” and “What is good and how do we know?”

Standards Work:

Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the themes; provide an objective summary of the text.

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and conclusions based on and related to an author’s implicit and explicit assumptions and beliefs.

Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.

Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.
Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college- and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Demonstrate knowledge of foundational works of literature that reflect a variety of genres in the respective major periods of literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

Background and Context:

The name Mark Twain is a pseudonym of Samuel Langhorne Clemens. Clemens was an American humorist, journalist, lecturer, and novelist who acquired international fame for his travel narratives, especially The Innocents Abroad (1869), Roughing It (1872), and Life on the Mississippi (1883), and for his adventure stories of boyhood, especially The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876) and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885). A gifted raconteur, distinctive humorist, and irascible moralist, he transcended the apparent limitations of his origins to become a popular public figure and one of America's best and most beloved writers.

Supports for Learning:

- Word Study:

1. Pious (adjective): religiously faithful
2. Consumption: a progressive wasting away of the body, especially from a disease called pulmonary tuberculosis that affects the lungs
3. "Now I lay me down": A reference to the classic children's bedtime prayer from the 18th century
4. Plaintive (adjective): expressing deep sorrow or suffering
5. Bully: an outdated term meaning "very good; first rate"
6. Languish (verb): to become feeble or weak; to become dispirited
7. Repent (verb): to feel or express regret about a wrongdoing
8. Penknife: a small pocket knife with a blade that folds into the handle
9. Venerable (adjective): worthy of a great deal of respect, especially because of age, wisdom, or character
10. Homily: a religious commentary that follows a reading of scripture
11. Exalt (verb): to raise in rank, power, or character; to elevate by praise or in estimation
12. A "milk-sop" is an old term for a weak or ineffectual person.
13. In the Judea-Christian tradition, the Sabbath is kept as a day of rest – Jim hunting or fishing on the Sabbath would have been considered in poor moral or religious form.
14. Menagerie (noun): a varied collection of animals, people, or objects (especially for display)
15. **Fortis**: also known as nitric acid, a corrosive liquid

16. **Rascality**: the character or actions of a rascal

17. Government or parliament; Twain was known for his satire of government, especially corrupt officials

- While reading think about:
  - What is the distinct difference between the main character Jim and the other characters in the Sunday-school books?
  - How is Jim’s mother in connection to the other mothers in the Sunday school?
  - How is irony displayed within the text?

**Online Resources for Students**:

**Video**:

- **A Reading of The Story of the Bad Little Boy**
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mW8PrZ0ma9o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mW8PrZ0ma9o)

- **A Reading of the Story of the Good Little Boy**
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nl7YX0buQqw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nl7YX0buQqw)

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**Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board: The Bad Little Boy**

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|       | **Activity 2** | Write a summary of the *The Bad Little Boy*.  
- Describe in your summary how the theme of the story is revealed through the actions and thoughts of James, the main character. Cite evidence from the text to support your claim. |
|       | **Activity 3** | Word Study: Review the critical vocabulary from the text  
- Write a sentence for each of the identified words listed under wordstudy.  
  ○ The sentences are to be grade appropriate and use at least eight words in each sentence |
| Row 2 | **Activity 4** | Make a connection: Write an informational essay discussing how the theme of *The Bad Little Boy* is similar to the theme of *The Storyteller*. |
|       | **Activity 5** | Create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the theme of how “right” and “wrong” behavior was illustrated in the *The Bad Little Boy* and *The Storyteller*. |
|       | **Activity 6** | Questions Connections: Create and answer ten questions connected to the text. The questions should provide others with key information connected to the text. |

**Lesson Five and Six**
All passions\footnote{All passions} have a phase when they are merely disastrous, when they drag down their victim with the weight of stupidity—and a later, very much later phase when they wed the spirit, when they “spiritualize” themselves. Formerly, in view of the element of stupidity in passion, war was declared on passion itself, its destruction was plotted; all the old moral monsters are agreed on this: \textit{il faut tuer les passions}.\footnote{The most famous formula for this is to be found in the New Testament, in that Sermon on the Mount, where, incidentally, things are by no means looked at from a height. There it is said, for example, with particular reference to sexuality: “If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out.” Fortunately, no Christian acts in accordance with this precept.} Destroying the passions and cravings, merely as a preventive measure against their stupidity and the unpleasant consequences of this stupidity—today this itself strikes us as merely another acute form of stupidity. We no longer admire dentists who “pluck out” teeth so that they will not hurt any more.
To be fair, it should be admitted, however, that on the ground out of which Christianity grew, the concept of the “spiritualization of passion” could never have been formed. After all, the first church, as is well known, fought against the “intelligent” in favor of the “poor in spirit.” How could one expect from it an intelligent war against passion? The church fights passion with excision in every sense: its practice, its “cure,” is castratism. It never asks: “How can one spiritualize, beautify, deify a craving?” It has at all times laid the stress of discipline on extirpation (of sensuality, of pride, of the lust to rule, of avarice, of vengefulness). But an attack on the roots of passion means an attack on the roots of life: the practice of the church is hostile to life.

The same means in the fight against a craving—castration, extirpation—is instinctively chosen by those who are too weak-willed, too degenerate, to be able to impose moderation on themselves; by those who are so constituted that they require La Trappe, to use a figure of speech, or (without any figure of speech) some kind of definitive declaration of hostility, a cleft between themselves and the passion. Radical means are indispensable only for the degenerate; the weakness of the will—or, to speak more definitely, the inability not to respond to a stimulus—is itself merely another form of degeneration. The radical hostility, the deadly hostility against sensuality, is always a symptom to reflect on: it entitles us to suppositions concerning the total state of one who is excessive in this manner.

This hostility, this hatred, by the way, reaches its climax only when such types lack even the firmness for this radical cure, for this renunciation of their “devil.” One should survey the whole history of the priests and philosophers, including the artists: the most poisonous things against the senses have been said not by the impotent, nor by ascetics, but by the impossible ascetics, by those who really were in dire need of being ascetics.
The spiritualization of sensuality is called love: it represents a great triumph over Christianity. Another triumph is our spiritualization of hostility. It consists in a profound appreciation of the value of having enemies: in short, it means acting and thinking in the opposite way from that which has been the rule. The church always wanted the destruction of its enemies; we, we immoralists and Antichristians, find our advantage in this, that the church exists. In the political realm too, hostility has now become more spiritual—much more sensible, much more thoughtful, much more considerate. Almost every party understands how it is in the interest of its own self-preservation that the opposition should not lose all strength; the same is true of power politics. A new creation in particular—the new Reich\textsuperscript{17}, for example—needs enemies more than friends: in opposition alone does it feel itself necessary, in opposition alone does it become necessary.

Our attitude to the “internal enemy” is no different: here too we have spiritualized hostility; here too we have come to appreciate its value. The price of fruitfulness is to be rich in internal opposition; one remains young only as long as the soul does not stretch itself and desire peace. Nothing has become more alien to us than that desideratum\textsuperscript{18} of former times, “peace of soul,” the Christian desideratum; there is nothing we envy less than the moralistic cow and the fat happiness of the good conscience. One has renounced the great life when one renounces war.

In many cases, to be sure, “peace of soul” is merely a misunderstanding—something else, which lacks only a more honest name. Without further ado or prejudice, a few examples. “Peace of soul” can be, for one, the gentle radiation of a rich animality\textsuperscript{19} into the moral (or religious) sphere. Or the beginning of weariness, the first shadow of evening, of any kind of evening. Or a sign that the air is humid, that south winds are approaching. Or unrecognized gratitude for a good digestion (sometimes called “love of man”). Or the attainment of calm by a convalescent\textsuperscript{20} who feels a new relish in all things and waits. Or the state which follows a thorough satisfaction of our dominant passion, the well-being of a rare repletion. Or the senile\textsuperscript{21} weakness of our will, our cravings, our vices. Or laziness, persuaded by vanity to give itself moral airs. Or the emergence of certainty, even a dreadful certainty, after long tension and torture by uncertainty. Or the expression of maturity and mastery in the midst of doing, creating, working, and willing—calm breathing, attained “freedom of the will.” Twilight of the Idols\textsuperscript{22}—who knows? Perhaps also only a kind of “peace of soul.”
I reduce a principle to a formula. Every naturalism in morality—that is, every healthy morality—is dominated by an instinct of life, some commandment of life is fulfilled by a determinate canon of “shalt” and “shalt not”; some inhibition and hostile element on the path of life is thus removed. Anti-natural morality—that is, almost every morality which has so far been taught, revered, and preached—turns, conversely, against the instincts of life: it is condemnation of these instincts, now secret, now outspoken and impudent. When it says, “God looks at the heart,” it says “no” to both the lowest and the highest desires of life, and posits God as the enemy of life. The saint in whom God delights is the ideal eunuch. Life has come to an end where the “kingdom of God” begins.

Once one has comprehended the outrage of such a revolt against life as has become almost sacrosanct in Christian morality, one has, fortunately, also comprehended something else: the futility, apparentness, absurdity, and mendaciousness of such a revolt. A condemnation of life by the living remains in the end a mere symptom of a certain kind of life: the question whether it is justified or unjustified is not even raised thereby. One would require a position outside of life, and yet have to know it as well as one, as many, as all who have lived it, in order to be permitted even to touch the problem of the value of life: reasons enough to comprehend that this problem is for us an unapproachable problem. When we speak of values, we speak with the inspiration, with the way of looking at things, which is part of life: life itself forces us to posit values; life itself values through us when we posit values. From this it follows that even that anti-natural morality which conceives of God as the counter-concept and condemnation of life is only a value judgment of life—but of what life? Of what kind of life? I have already given the answer: of declining, weakened, weary, condemned life. Morality, as it has so far been understood—as it has in the end been formulated once more by Schopenhauer, as “negation of the will to life”—is the very instinct of decadence, which makes an imperative of itself. It says: “Perish!” It is a condemnation pronounced by the condemned.
Let us finally consider how naive it is altogether to say: “Man ought to be such and such!” Reality shows us an enchanting wealth of types, the abundance of a lavish play and change of forms—and some wretched loafer of a moralist comments: “No! Man ought to be different.” He even knows what man should be like, this wretched bigot and prig: he paints himself on the wall and comments, “Ecce homo!” But even when the moralist addresses himself only to the single human being and says to him, “You ought to be such and such!” he does not cease to make himself ridiculous. The single human being is a piece of fatum from the front and from the rear, one law more, one necessity more for all that is yet to come and to be. To say to him, “Change yourself!” is to demand that everything be changed, even retroactively. And indeed there have been consistent moralists who wanted man to be different, that is, virtuous—they wanted him remade in their own image, as a prig: to that end, they negated the world! No small madness! No modest kind of immodesty!

Morality, insofar as it condemns for its own sake, and not out of regard for the concerns, considerations, and contrivances of life, is a specific error with which one ought to have no pity—an idiosyncrasy of degenerates which has caused immeasurable harm.

We others, we immoralists, have, conversely, made room in our hearts for every kind of understanding, comprehending, and approving. We do not easily negate; we make it a point of honor to be affirmers. More and more, our eyes have opened to that economy which needs and knows how to utilize everything that the holy witlessness of the priest, the diseased reason in the priest, rejects—that economy in the law of life which finds an advantage even in the disgusting species of the prigs, the priests, the virtuous. What advantage? But we ourselves, we immoralists, are the answer.

Morality as Anti-Nature by Friedrich Nietzsche is in the public domain.

What Students are Learning:

Students are reading the non-fiction text, Morality. Students are to understand the theme of Morality as it relates to the text. Students are continuing to examine and attempt to answer the question: “What is good and how do we know?”

Standards Work:

Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more central ideas of a text, including
the development and interaction of the central ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and conclusions based on and related to an author’s implicit and explicit assumptions and beliefs.

Analyze the interaction and development of a complex set of ideas, sequence of events, or specific individuals over the course of the text.

Evaluate how an author’s point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

**Background and Context:**

Nietzsche was a German philosopher, essayist, and cultural critic. His writings on truth, morality, language, aesthetics, cultural theory, history, nihilism, power, consciousness, and the meaning of existence have exerted an enormous influence on Western philosophy and intellectual history.

Nietzsche spoke of “the death of God,” and foresaw the dissolution of traditional religion and metaphysics. Some interpreters of Nietzsche believe he embraced nihilism, rejected philosophical reasoning, and promoted a literary exploration of the human condition, while not being concerned with gaining truth and knowledge in the traditional sense of those terms. However, other interpreters of Nietzsche say that in attempting to counteract the predicted rise of nihilism, he was engaged in a positive program to reaffirm life, and so he called for a radical, naturalistic rethinking of the nature of human existence, knowledge, and morality. On either interpretation, it is agreed that he suggested a plan for “becoming what one is” through the cultivation of instincts and various cognitive faculties, a plan that requires constant struggle with one’s psychological and intellectual inheritances.

Nietzsche claimed the exemplary human being must craft his/her own identity through self-realization and do so without relying on anything transcending that life—such as God or a soul. This way of living should be affirmed even were one to adopt, most problematically, a radical vision of eternity, one suggesting the “eternal recurrence” of all events. According to some commentators, Nietzsche advanced a cosmological theory of “will to power.” But others interpret him as not being overly concerned with working out a general cosmology. Questions regarding the coherence of Nietzsche’s views—questions such as whether these views could all be taken together without contradiction, whether readers should discredit any particular view if proven incoherent or incompatible with others, and the like—continue to draw the
attention of contemporary intellectual historians and philosophers.

Supports for Learning:

- **Word Study:**

1. **Nihilist (noun)**: one who rejects all religious and moral principles in the belief that life is meaningless
2. **Relativist (noun)**: one who believes that points of view have no absolute truth or validity, having only relative, subjective value according to differences in perception and consideration
3. **Passions (noun)**: in this context, strong emotions or desires
4. “We must kill passion.” (French)
5. **Precept (noun)**: a rule that governs behavior
6. **Excision (noun)**: cutting out, surgical removal
7. Here, Nietzsche figuratively refers to Church policies of abstinence and general repression of sexuality.
8. **Deify (verb)**: to make holy, or godlike
9. **Extirpation (noun)**: destruction, removal
10. **Avarice (noun)**: greed
11. **Degenerate (adjective)**: lacking moral fiber
12. **La Trappe** is a Roman Catholic religious order of monks who practice extreme self-restraint.
13. **Suppositions (noun)**: assumptions, conclusions
14. **Renunciation (noun)**: rejection
15. **Impotent (adjective)**: unable to have sex
16. **Ascetics (noun)**: a group of Christians who completely rejected physical comfort and pleasure, sometimes even inflicting discomfort and pain on themselves.
17. **Reich** is German for realm or empire.
18. **Desideratum (noun)**: something that is needed or wanted
19. **Animality (noun)**: primal, basic part of human nature, animal instincts and desires
20. **Convalescent (noun)**: someone recovering from an illness
21. **Senile (adjective)**: showing a decline or deterioration of physical strength or mental functioning
22. **Idol (noun)**: an image of a deity other than God
23. **Impudent (adjective)**: not showing due respect; impertinent
24. **Eunuch (noun)**: a castrated, abstinent man
25. **Sacro sanct (adjective)**: holy
26. **Mendaciousness (noun)**: dishonesty
27. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) was a German, atheistic philosopher who had significant impact on Nietzsche’s ideas. He was known for characterizing the phenomenal world, and consequently all human action, as the product of a blind, insatiable, and malignant metaphysical will.
28. **Decadence (noun)**: moral or cultural decline as characterized by excessive indulgence in pleasure
or luxury

29. **Prig** *(noun)*: a self-righteously moralistic person who behaves as if superior to others

30. “Behold Man!” (Latin Phrase). This is the title of a famous painting of Christ—Nietzsche employs this phrase both to describe the actions of the moralist and accuse Christians of being the worst moralists of all.

31. **Fate, destiny** *(Latin)*

32. **Retroactively** *(adverb)*: working from back to front, from present to past

33. **Contrivances** *(noun)*: things that come about

34. **Idiosyncrasy** *(noun)*: something strange, unusual or quirky

- While reading think about:
  - How does society come to define and understand morality?
  - How does the author structure his arguments?
  - How is religion and society, as a whole, illustrated in the author’s writing? Why?

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**Online Resources for Students:**

**Video:**

**Nietzsche**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHWbZmg2hzU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHWbZmg2hzU)

**Power Library:** is the online portal to all that Pennsylvania libraries offer. This is the place to find 24/7 access to newspapers, magazines, journals, historical documents and photos, online databases, and eBooks. Research a subject. Learn about your family history. Locate a title. Explore career options. It’s all here at POWER Library.

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When you access this link from home you will need to log in with the barcode number on your library card. If you do not have a library card, click on the link that reads: Apply for an e-card now. You will need to enter your email and zip code. You will receive a login to Powerlibrary.

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**Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board: Morality as Anti-Nature**

**Directions:** Read *Morality as Anti-Nature*. Choose 4 activities from the choice board below. You should complete at least two activities from each row.
**Lesson Seven and Eight**

**Focus:** *Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature*

By David Hume

David Hume (1711-1776) was a Scottish philosopher and historian. Hume was a naturalist, and his writings influenced such great minds as Adam Smith, Emanuel Kant and even Charles Darwin. Hume primarily wrote about metaphysics, morality, and human nature. In this essay, Hume grapples with the age-old question: Are people inherently good or evil? As you read, take notes on Hume’s approach to this question, as well as his dissection of other approaches.
There are certain sects, which secretly form themselves in the learned world, as well as factions in the political; and though sometimes they come not to an open rupture, they give a different turn to the ways of thinking of those who have taken part on either side. The most remarkable of this kind are the sects founded on the different sentiments with regard to the *dignity of human nature*; which is a point that seems to have divided philosophers and poets, as well as divines, from the beginning of the world to this day. Some exalt our species to the skies, and represent man as a kind of human demigod, who derives his origin from heaven, and retains evident marks of his lineage and descent. Others insist upon the blind sides of human nature, and can discover nothing, except vanity, in which man surpasses the other animals, whom he affects so much to despise. If an author possess the talent of rhetoric and declamation, he commonly takes part with the former: if his turn lie towards irony and ridicule, he naturally throws himself into the other extreme.
I am far from thinking that all those who have depreciated our species have been enemies to virtue, and have exposed the frailties of their fellow-creatures with any bad intention. On the contrary, I am sensible that a delicate sense of morals, especially when attended with a splenetic temper, is apt to give a man a disgust of the world, and to make him consider the common course of human affairs with too much indignation. I must, however, be of opinion, that the sentiments of those who are inclined to think favourably of mankind, are more advantageous to virtue than the contrary principles, which give us a mean opinion of our nature. When a man is prepossessed with a high notion of his rank and character in the creation, he will naturally endeavour to act up to it, and will scorn to do a base or vicious action which might sink him below that figure which he makes in his own imagination. Accordingly, we find, that all our polite and fashionable moralists insist upon this topic, and endeavour to represent vice unworthy of man, as well as odious in itself.

We find new disputes that are not founded on some ambiguity in the expression; and I am persuaded that the present dispute, concerning the dignity or meanness of human nature, is not more exempt from it than any other. It may therefore be worth while to consider what is real, and what is only verbal, in this controversy.

That there is a natural difference between merit and demerit, virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, no reasonable man will deny, yet it is evident that, in affixing the term, which denotes either our approbation or blame, we are commonly more influenced by comparison than by any fixed unalterable standard in the nature of things. In like manner, quantity, and extension, and bulk, are by every one acknowledged to be real things: but when we call any animal great or little, we always form a secret comparison between that animal and others of the same species; and it is that comparison which regulates our judgment concerning its greatness. A dog and a horse may be of the very same size, while the one is admired for the greatness of its bulk, and the other for the smallness. When I am present, therefore, at any dispute, I always consider with myself whether it be a question of comparison or not that is the subject of controversy; and if it be, whether the disputants compare the same objects together, or talk of things that are widely different.
In forming our notions of human nature, we are apt to make a comparison between men and animals, the only creatures endowed with thought that fall under our senses. Certainly this comparison is favorable to mankind. On the one hand, we see a creature whose thoughts are not limited by any narrow bounds, either of place or time; who carries his researches into the most distant regions of this globe, and beyond this globe, to the planets and heavenly bodies; looks backward to consider the first origin, at least the history of the human race; casts his eye forward to see the influence of his actions upon posterity and the judgments which will be formed of his character a thousand years hence; a creature, who traces causes and effects to a great length and intricacy, extracts general principles from particular appearances; improves upon his discoveries; corrects his mistakes; and makes his very errors profitable. On the other hand, we are presented with a creature the very reverse of this; limited in its observations and reasonings to a few sensible objects which surround it; without curiosity, without foresight; blindly conducted by instinct, and attaining, in a short time, its utmost perfection, beyond which it is never able to advance a single step. What a wide difference is there between these creatures! And how exalted a notion must we entertain of the former, in comparison of the latter.

There are two means commonly employed to destroy this conclusion: First, By making an unfair representation of the case, and insisting only upon the weakness of human nature. And, secondly, By forming a new and secret comparison between man and beings of the most perfect wisdom. Among the other excellences of man, this is one, that he can form an idea of perfections much beyond what he has experience of in himself; and is not limited in his conception of wisdom and virtue. He can easily exalt his notions, and conceive a degree of knowledge, which, when compared to his own, will make the latter appear very contemptible, and will cause the difference between that and the sagacity of animals, in a manner, to disappear and vanish. Now this being a point in which all the world is agreed, that human understanding falls infinitely short of perfect wisdom, it is proper we should know when this comparison takes place, that we may not dispute where there is no real difference in our sentiments. Man falls much more short of perfect wisdom, and even of his own ideas of perfect wisdom, than animals do of man; yet the latter difference is so considerable, that nothing but a comparison with the former can make it appear of little moment.
It is also usual to compare one man with another; and finding very few whom we can call wise or virtuous, we are apt to entertain a contemptible notion of our species in general. That we may be sensible of the fallacy of this way of reasoning, we may observe, that the honorable apppellations of wise and virtuous are not annexed to any particular degree of those qualities of wisdom and virtue, but arise altogether from the comparison we make between one man and another. When we find a man who arrives at such a pitch of wisdom, as is very uncommon, we pronounce him a wise man: so that to say there are few wise men in the world, is really to say nothing; since it is only by their scarcity that they merit that appellation. Were the lowest of our species as wise as Tully or Lord Bacon, we should still have reason to say that there are few wise men. For in that case we should exalt our notions of wisdom, and should not pay a singular homage to any one who was not singularly distinguished by his talents. In like manner, I have heard it observed by thoughtless people, that there are few women possessed of beauty in comparison of those who want it; not considering that we bestow the epithet of beautiful only on such as possess a degree of beauty that is common to them with a few. The same degree of beauty in a woman is called deformity, which is treated as real beauty in one of our sex.

As it is usual, in forming a notion of our species, to compare it with the other species above or below it, or to compare the individuals of the species among themselves; so we often compare together the different motives or actuating principles of human nature, in order to regulate our judgment concerning it. And, indeed, this is the only kind of comparison which is worth our attention, or decides any thing in the present question. Were our selfish and vicious principles so much predominant above our social and virtuous, as is asserted by some philosophers, we ought undoubtedly to entertain a contemptible notion of human nature.
There is much of a dispute of words in all this controversy. When a man denies the sincerity of all public spirit or affection to a country and community, I am at a loss what to think of him. Perhaps he never felt this passion in so clear and distinct a manner as to remove all his doubts concerning its force and reality. But when he proceeds afterwards to reject all private friendship, if no interest or self-love intermix itself; I am then confident that he abuses terms, and confounds the ideas of things; since it is impossible for any one to be so selfish, or rather so stupid, as to make no difference between one man and another, and give no preference to qualities which engage his approbation and esteem. Is he also, say I, as insensible to anger as he pretends to be to friendship? And does injury and wrong no more affect him than kindness or benefits? Impossible: he does not know himself: he has forgotten the movements of his heart; or rather, he makes use of a different language from the rest of his countrymen and calls not things by their proper names. What say you of natural affection? (I subjoin). Is that also a species of self-love? Yes; all is self-love. Your children are loved only because they are yours; your friend for a like reason; and your country engages you only so far as it has a connection with yourself. Were the idea of self removed, nothing would affect you: you would be altogether unactive and insensible: or, if you ever give yourself any movement, it would only be from vanity, and a desire of fame and reputation to this same self. I am willing, reply I, to receive your interpretation of human actions, provided you admit the facts. That species of self-love which displays itself in kindness to others, you must allow to have great influence over human actions, and even greater, on many occasions, than that which remains in its original shape and form. For how few are there, having a family, children, and relations, who do not spend more on the maintenance and education of these than on their own pleasures? This, indeed, you justly observe, may proceed from their self-love, since the prosperity of their family and friends is one, or the chief of their pleasures, as well as their chief honour. Be you also one of these selfish men, and you are sure of every one's good opinion and good-will; or, not to shock your ears with their expressions, the self-love of every one, and mine among the rest, will then incline us to serve you, and speak well of you.

In my opinion, there are two things which have led astray those philosophers that have insisted so much on the selfishness of man. In the first place, they found that every act of virtue or friendship was attended with a secret pleasure; whence they concluded, that friendship and virtue could not be disinterested. But the fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous sentiment or passion produces the pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend, because I love him; but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure.
In the second place, it has always been found, that the virtuous are far from being indifferent to praise; and therefore they have been represented as a set of vainglorious men, who had nothing in view but the applauses of others. But this also is a fallacy. It is very unjust in the world, when they find any tincture of vanity in a laudable action, to depreciate it upon that account, or ascribe it entirely to that motive. The case is not the same with vanity, as with other passions. Where avarice or revenge enters into any seemingly virtuous action, it is difficult for us to determine how far it enters, and it is natural to suppose it the sole actuating principle. But vanity is so closely allied to virtue, and to love the fame of laudable actions approaches so near the love of laudable actions for their own sake, that these passions are more capable of mixture, than any other kinds of affection; and it is almost impossible to have the latter without some degree of the former. Accordingly we find, that this passion for glory is always warped and varied according to the particular taste or disposition of the mind on which it falls. Nero had the same vanity in driving a chariot, that Trajan had in governing the empire with justice and ability. To love the glory of virtuous deeds is a sure proof of the love of virtue.

Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature by David Hume is in the public domain

What Students are Learning:

Students are reading non-fiction text, Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature. Students are to understand the theme of Morality as it relates to the text. Students are continuing to examine and attempt to answer the question: “What is good and how do we know?”

Standards Work:

Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the central ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and conclusions based on and related to an author’s implicit and explicit assumptions and beliefs.

Analyze the interaction and development of a complex set of ideas, sequence of events, or specific individuals over the course of the text.

Evaluate how an author’s point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

**Background and Context:**

David Hume's philosophy is built around a single powerful observation: that the key thing we need to get right in life is feeling rather than rationality. It sounds like an odd conclusion. Normally we assume that what we need to do is train our minds to be as rational as possible: to be devoted to evidence and logical reasoning and committed to preventing our feelings from getting in the way. But Hume insisted that, whatever we may aim for, ‘reason is the slave of passion.’ We are more motivated by our feelings than by any of the comparatively feeble results of analysis and logic. Few of our leading convictions are driven by rational investigation of the facts; we decide whether someone is admirable, what to do with our spare time, what constitutes a successful career or who to love on on the basis of feeling above anything else. Reason helps a little, but the decisive factors are bound up with our emotional lives – with our passions as Hume calls them.

Hume’s moral thought carves out numerous distinctive philosophical positions. He rejects the rationalist conception of morality whereby humans make moral evaluations, and understand right and wrong, through reason alone. In place of the rationalist view, Hume contends that moral evaluations depend significantly on sentiment or feeling. Specifically, it is because we have the requisite emotional capacities, in addition to our faculty of reason, that we can determine that some action is ethically wrong, or a person has a virtuous moral character. As such, Hume sees moral evaluations, like our evaluations of aesthetic beauty, as arising from the human faculty of taste. Furthermore, this process of moral evaluation relies significantly upon the human capacity for sympathy, or our ability to partake of the feelings, beliefs, and emotions of other people. Thus, for Hume there is a strong connection between morality and human sociability.

**Supports for Learning:**

- **Word Study**

  1. **Affects**: Tries
  2. **Declamation** *(noun)*: eloquent speech
  3. **Splenetic** *(adjective)*: sad, short-tempered, cynical
  4. **Vicious** *(adjective)*: in philosophy, vicious is the opposite of virtuous
  5. Hume writes, "Women are generally much more flattered in their youth than men, which may proceed from this reason among others, that their chief point of honour is considered as much more difficult than ours, and requires to be supported by all that decent pride which can be instilled into them."
  6. **Meanness** *(noun)*: the opposite of dignity; common, worthless
  7. **Approbation** *(noun)*: praise
  8. **Moment** *(noun)*: in this context, important
  9. **Appellations** *(noun)*: title, label
  10. **Annexed** *(adjective)*: tied, linked, correlated
  11. **Homage** *(noun)*: honor
12. Hume writes, “I may perhaps treat more fully of this subject in some future Essay. In the meantime I shall observe, what has been proved beyond question by several great moralists of the present age, that the social passions are by far the most powerful of any, and that even all the other passions, receive from them their chief force and influence. Whoever desires to see this question treated at large, with the greatest force of argument and eloquence, may consult my Lord Shaftesbury’s Enquiry concerning Virtue.”

13. Insensible (adjective) : unaffected
14. Subjoin (verb) : to add in, make note of, append
15. Attended (adjective) : in this context, accompanied
16. Disinterested (adjective) : without ulterior motives; without thought of personal gain
17. Tincture (noun) : trace

- While reading think about:
  - How is the central idea of the text revealed to the reader?
  - Why would a person focus on the “meanness” of man?
  - How are comparisons used to support the point of view of the author?

### Online Resources for Students:

**Video:**

- Are You Born Good or Bad
  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W72vC48kWyo

- David Hume on Philosophy
  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ2qjVkJ6s

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### Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board: Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature

**Directions:** Read Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature. Choose 4 activities from the choice board below. You should complete at least two tasks from each row.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 1</th>
<th>Activity 2</th>
<th>Activity 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Based on your reading of the text, write an informational essay identifying the author’s point of view on the concept of morality. Cite evidence from the text to support your claims. | Write a summary of the *Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature*.  
- Describe in your summary how the “meanness of man” impacts morality. Use evidence from the text to support your claims. | Word Study: Review the critical vocabulary from the text  
- Write a sentence for each of the identified words listed under word study.  
  - The sentences are to be grade appropriate and use at least eight words in each sentence |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 4</th>
<th>Activity 5</th>
<th>Activity 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a connection: Write an informational essay comparing and contrasting how Hume in <em>Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature</em> and Nietzsche in <em>Morality as Anti-Nature</em> depict the concept of morality. Cite evidence from the text to support your claims.</td>
<td>Create a Venn Diagram to demonstrate how morality is depicted in fictional stories, like <em>The Storyteller</em>, and non-fiction pieces such as <em>Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature</em>.</td>
<td>Questions Connections: Create and answer ten questions connected to the text. The questions should provide others with key information and details connected to the text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus: Stanley Williams
By CommonLit Staff

Stanley “Tookie” Williams III (1953-2005) was a leader of the Crips, an infamous gang that began in Los Angeles in 1969. He spent much of his life in prison. Today, he is well known for the writing that he did while in jail, which included anti-gang activist literature and children’s books. As you read the text below, make notes in the margins and looks for evidence to answer the following questions: How did Stanley Williams change, and why did he change?

"Los Angeles" by Whilshire Boulevard is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

CHILDHOOD

Williams was born on December 28, 1953, in Shreveport, Louisiana. His mother was seventeen when he was born, and his father left the family when he was a baby. In 1959, Williams and his mother moved to Los Angeles, California. They lived in an apartment on the West Side of South Central Los Angeles. His mother had to work several jobs to support them, so Williams was often on his own and began to engage in mischief on the street as a child. He would hang out in abandoned houses and vacant lots in his neighborhood, where he would watch adults get drunk, use illegal drugs, gamble, and stage dog fights. Williams later talked about how the adults who organized the dog fights often had the neighborhood children fight each other as well. Williams participated in these street fights regularly; the adults would bet on him and give him part of their winnings if he won the fight. Williams was bullied by some of the older boys in his neighborhood, so by the age of twelve he began to carry around a knife to protect himself.

TEENAGE YEARS
By the time Williams was a teenager, he had developed a reputation as a vicious street fighter. He was kicked out of several Los Angeles high schools for fighting, and spent several periods in juvenile detention center. When he was fifteen, he became the leader of a clique that was regularly involved in street crime on the West Side. In 1969, at age sixteen, Williams was arrested for stealing a car and was sent to juvenile prison again. He became interested in weight lifting during this prison stint and he became physically much bigger and more muscular. According to Williams, when he was being released from prison, the review board asked him what his future plans were. Williams responded that he planned on “being the leader of the biggest gang in the world.”

Williams soon went on to found the Crips gang with several other teenagers. The purpose of the gang was initially to eliminate all other neighborhood gangs on the West Side and to create a powerful force that could protect the neighborhood. The Crips quickly became a highly violent gang, however, particularly in their brutal rivalry with the other dominant neighborhood gang, the Bloods. Willliams engaged in many random acts of violence against rival gang members and innocent people alike, causing great fear in the residents of South Central, Watts and Compton. During his time as leader of the Crips, he was allegedly involved in robbery, drug crimes, and murder.

PRISON YEARS

In 1979, Williams was convicted of four counts of murder and sentenced to death. As an inmate at San Quentin State Prison, Williams spent 6½ years in solitary confinement because of assaults on guards and other inmates. He refused to help police investigate his gang, and he was implicated in multiple escape plots as well. In 1993, however, Williams began to change his behavior. He became non-violent, and he eventually became an anti-gang activist while on death row. He wrote nine books warning children and teenagers about the dangers of gang life. He rejected his previous gang affiliation and apologized for his role in creating the Crips, although he still would not help police investigate the gang. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace prize five times and the Nobel Prize for Literature once. While in prison he also wrote a “peace protocol” to help rival gangs work out disagreements.
Because of the serious personal change Williams made in his life, a popular movement gathered to protest and prevent his execution. The movement was unsuccessful, however; clemency was rejected by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and on December 13, 2005, Stanley Williams was executed by lethal injection. Before his execution, Williams was quoted on WBAI Pacific radio stating:

“[…] I just stand strong and continue to tell you, your audience, and the world that I am innocent and, yes, I have been a wretched person, but I have redeemed myself. And I say to you and all those who can listen and will listen that redemption is tailor-made for the wretched, and that’s what I used to be […]. [...] Redemption] is not predicated on color or race or social stratum or one’s religious background. It’s accessible for everybody. That’s the beauty about it. And whether others choose to believe that I have redeemed myself or not, I worry not, because I know and God knows, and you can believe that all of the youths that I continue to help, they know, too. So with that, I am grateful…I say to you and everyone else, God bless. So take care.”

His life and death stirred intense, emotional debate about the death penalty and its place in American society. A biographical TV-movie called Redemption: The Stan Tookie Williams Story was made in 2004, featuring Jamie Foxx as Williams.

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**What Students are Learning:**

Students are reading a nonfiction text, Stanley Williams. Students are to understand the theme of Identity as it relates to the text. Students continue to examine and attempt to answer the questions: “Can you change your identify?” and “How is your identity connected to other’s view of morality?”

**Standards Work:**

Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the central ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and conclusions based on and related to an author’s implicit and explicit assumptions and beliefs.

Analyze the interaction and development of a complex set of ideas, sequence of events, or specific individuals over the course of the text.
Evaluate how an author's point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

**Background and Context:**

The Crips are a gang based in the coastal regions of southern California. They were founded in Los Angeles, California, in 1969 mainly by Raymond Washington and Stanley Williams. Once a single alliance between two autonomous gangs, they are now a loosely connected network of individual "sets", often engaged in open warfare with one another. Its members traditionally wear blue clothing, a practice that has waned somewhat due to police crackdowns specifically targeting gang members.

The Crips have over 800 sets with 30,000 to 35,000 members and associate members, including more than 13,000 members in Los Angeles. The states with the highest estimated number of "Crips sets" are California, Texas, Oklahoma, and Missouri.

Stanley Tookie Williams is best known for founding the violent Crips gang. He later stated his regrets about his life choices in prison but was executed at San Quentin in 2005. As the kid, Williams had to quickly learn how to defend himself from neighborhood bullies, and was often thrown into the middle of physical conflicts. "As a member of the black male species living in the ghetto microcosm, circumstances dictated that I be either prey or predator," Williams later said about his adolescence. "It didn't require deep reflection to determine which of the two I preferred." Immersed in a culture of violence and drugs and without a strict parental influence, Williams grew up idolizing criminals and "mimicking pimps and drug dealers." During his early teens, Williams was paid a few dollars to water, feed and patch up dogs that had been mauled in illegal dogfights. Later, these dogs would be shot or beaten to death by the gamblers and hustlers in his neighborhood. The betting progressed to fights between young boys, and Williams was paid to box other young boys to unconsciousness. The experiences hardened Williams, who kept the horrors he saw—and performed—from his mother.

In 1981, Williams was tried and convicted in Los Angeles Superior Court of all four murders plus two counts of robbery, and was sentenced to death. On April 20 of that year, he was sent to San Quentin State Prison to sit on death row. Williams did not adjust well to prison life, and by the mid 1980s he was given a six and a half year stay in solitary confinement for multiple assaults on guards and fellow inmates.

After two years in solitary, Williams started to examine his life choices and repented for his past actions. He attributed his transformation to God and began speaking out against gang violence. He filed for a federal appeal in 1988, and told court officials he was a changed man, but his appeal was denied. In 1994, he was released from solitary. With his new mindset, he began writing a book and in 1996, with the help of co-author Barbara Cottman Becnel, he published the first of eight *Tookie Speaks Out Against Gang Violence* anti-gang books aimed at children. The next year, Williams wrote an apology for his role in creating the Crips. "I am no longer part of the problem. Thanks to the Almighty, I am no longer sleepwalking through life," he wrote. He also wrote the book *Life in Prison*, a short non-fiction work explaining the horrors of jail.
Supports for Learning:

- **Word Study:**

  1. **Stint:** term, shift, or period of time
  2. **Rivalry (noun):** competition to be superior at the same thing
  3. **Convicted:** to be charged with
  4. **Implicated:** shown to be involved in a crime
  5. **Affiliation (noun):** a close connection or association
  6. **Lethal (adjective):** deadly
  7. **Redeem (verb):** to change for the better or make up for previous faults or wrongs
  8. **Predicated:** founded or based on
  9. **Stratum:** level or class

- While reading think about:
  - What motivated Stanley Williams?
  - How was Stanley Williams idea of morality shaped?
  - What does Williams mean by “innocent”?
  - How does Williams’s own words help to develop the ideas of the text?

Online Resources for Students:

**Video:**

*Stanley William - A Life Story*

[https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x27gw5q](https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x27gw5q)

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**Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board: Stanley Williams**

**Directions:** Read *Stanley Williams*. Choose 4 activities from the choice board below. You should complete at least two activities from each row.
## PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT DOMAIN SCORING GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>STYLE</th>
<th>CONVENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The single controlling point made with an awareness of task (mode)</td>
<td>The presence of ideas developed through facts, examples, anecdotes, data, opinions, statistics, reasons and/or explanations.</td>
<td>The order developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using transitional devices including introduction and conclusion.</td>
<td>The choice, use and arrangement of words and sentence structures that create tone and voice.</td>
<td>The use of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp, distinct controlling point made about a single topic with evident awareness of task (mode)</td>
<td>Substantial, specific and/or illustrative content demonstrating strong development and sophisticated ideas.</td>
<td>Sophisticated arrangement of content with evident and/or subtle transitions.</td>
<td>Precise, illustrative use of a variety of words and sentence structures to create consistent writer’s voice and tone appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apparent point made about a single topic with sufficient awareness of task (mode)</td>
<td>Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation.</td>
<td>Functional arrangement of content that sustains a logical order with some evidence of transitions.</td>
<td>Generic use of a variety of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer’s voice and tone appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No apparent point but evidence of a specific topic</td>
<td>Limited content with inadequate elaboration or explanation.</td>
<td>Confused or inconsistent arrangement of content with or without attempts at transition.</td>
<td>Limited word choice and control of sentence structures that inhibit voice and tone.</td>
<td>Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal evidence of a topic</td>
<td>Superficial and/or minimal content.</td>
<td>Minimal control of content arrangement.</td>
<td>Minimal variety in word choice and minimal control of sentence structures.</td>
<td>Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity 1**
Based on your reading of the text, write an informational essay detailing how Stanley William’s identity was shaped both inside and outside of prison. Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

**Activity 2**
Write a summary of the *Stanley Williams*.
- Describe how Stanley’s moral view may have been shaped by his experiences. Cite evidence from the text to support your answers.

**Activity 3**
Word Study: Review the critical vocabulary from the text.
- Write a sentence for each of the identified words listed under wordstudy.
  - The sentences are to be grade appropriate and use at least eight words in each sentence.

**Activity 4**
Make a connection: Write an informational essay explaining how the life of Stanley Williams may serve to complicate moral views and one’s sense of identity. Cite evidence from the text to support your claims.

**Activity 5**
Extension Activity: Write an argumentative essay explaining how you viewed Stanley’s six year isolation in prison as either moral or immoral. Cite evidence from the text to support your position.

**Activity 6**
Questions Connections: Create and answer ten questions connected to the text. The questions should provide others with key information and details connected to the text.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Domain</th>
<th>Score Point 4</th>
<th>Score Point 3</th>
<th>Score Point 2</th>
<th>Score Point 1</th>
<th>Score Point 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Usage</td>
<td>demonstrates command of standard English grammar and usage</td>
<td>demonstrates control of standard English grammar and usage</td>
<td>demonstrates limited or inconsistent control of standard English grammar and usage</td>
<td>demonstrates minimal control of standard English grammar and usage</td>
<td>demonstrates little or no control of standard English grammar and usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>demonstrates command of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</td>
<td>demonstrates control of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</td>
<td>demonstrates limited or inconsistent control of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</td>
<td>demonstrates minimal control of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</td>
<td>demonstrates little or no control of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Formation</td>
<td>demonstrates command of sentence formation</td>
<td>demonstrates control of sentence formation</td>
<td>demonstrates limited or inconsistent control of sentence formation</td>
<td>demonstrates minimal control of sentence formation</td>
<td>demonstrates little or no control of sentence formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summation</td>
<td>At this score point, the writer makes few errors, and errors do not interfere with reader understanding.</td>
<td>At this score point, the writer makes few errors, and errors do not interfere with reader understanding.</td>
<td>At this score point, the writer makes errors, and errors may interfere with reader understanding.</td>
<td>At this score point, the writer makes errors, and errors often interfere with reader understanding.</td>
<td>At this score point, the writer makes errors, and errors consistently interfere with reader understanding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>