Reading Model

Objectives

Students will
- analyze the plot and setting
- summarize a short story

Preteach

Read with a Purpose Ask volunteers to tell what they might do with three wishes. Point out that in this story, what the main character does with her wishes forms the events of the plot. Have students draw cause-and-effect boxes in their **Reader/Writer Notebooks** to record Melinda Alice's wishes and their effects.

Direct Teach

Guided Practice

? Reading Focus

In paragraph 2, what details show that Melinda Alice is cruel? ***Possible response:*** *She calls a new girl "Contamination" and says that anything she touches has to be cleaned.*

SKILLS FOCUS pp. 10–12

Literary Skills
- Analyze plot and setting.

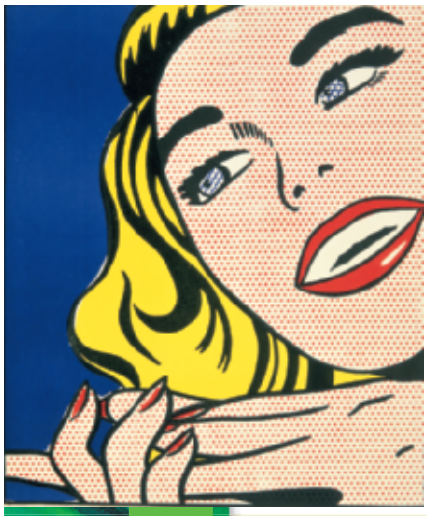
Reading Skills
- Summarize to enhance comprehension of text.

SKILLS IN ACTION

Reading Model

SHORT STORY

Girl, 1963, by Roy Lichtenstein. © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein.



Analyzing Visuals **Viewing and Interpreting** Does the woman in this painting remind you of Melinda Alice? Why or why not?

Read with a Purpose

Read this story to find out what Melinda Alice does with the wishes she is granted.

Those Three Wishes

by **Judith Gorog**

No one ever said that Melinda Alice was nice. That wasn't the word used. No, she was clever, even witty. She was called—never to her face, however—Melinda Malice.[1] Melinda Alice was clever and cruel. Her mother, when she thought about it at all, hoped Melinda would grow out of it. To her father, Melinda's very good grades mattered.

It was Melinda Alice, back in the eighth grade, who had labeled the shy, myopic[2] new girl "Contamination" and was the first to pretend that anything or anyone touched by the new girl had to be cleaned, inoculated,[3] or avoided. High school had merely given Melinda Alice greater scope for her talents.

Reading Focus

Analyzing Details Details that reveal the time and place of the story are "back in the eighth grade" and "High school."

The surprising thing about Melinda Alice was her power; no one trusted her, but no one avoided her either. She was always

1. **malice** (MAL ihs): a wish to hurt others; ill will.
2. **myopic** (my AHP ihk): nearsighted.
3. **inoculated** (ih NAHK yuh layt ihd): vaccinated.

Selection Readability	
Easily Accessible Accessible Challenging	familiar setting and situations; dialogue; subject-forward syntax; familiar language; familiar theme
Lexile	**790**

Selection Summary

When a snail offers Melinda Alice three wishes, Melinda Alice believes she is being clever when she asks for her next thousand wishes to come true. However, she soon finds out the meaning of the saying "Be careful what you wish for" when she accidentally wishes she were dead.

included, always in the middle. If you had seen her, pretty and witty, in the center of a group of students walking past your house, you'd have thought, "There goes a natural leader."

Melinda Alice had left for school early. She wanted to study alone in a quiet spot she had because there was going to be a big math test, and Melinda Alice was not prepared. That A mattered; so Melinda Alice walked to school alone, planning her studies. She didn't usually notice nature much, so she nearly stepped on a beautiful snail that was making its way across the sidewalk.

"Ugh. Yucky thing," thought Melinda Alice, then stopped. Not wanting to step on the snail accidentally was one thing, but now she lifted her shoe to crush it.

"Please don't," said the snail.

"Why not?" retorted Melinda Alice.

"I'll give you three wishes," replied the snail evenly.

"Agreed," said Melinda Alice. "My first wish is that my next," she paused a split second, "my next thousand wishes come true." She smiled triumphantly and opened her bag to take out a small notebook and pencil to keep track.

Melinda Alice was sure she heard the snail say, "What a clever girl," as it made it to the safety of an ivy bed beside the sidewalk.

During the rest of the walk to school, Melinda was occupied with wonderful ideas. She would have beautiful clothes. "Wish number two, that I will always be perfectly dressed," and she was just that. True, her new outfit was not a lot different from the one she had worn leaving the house, but that only meant that Melinda Alice liked her own taste.

After thinking awhile, she wrote, "Wish number three. I wish for pierced ears and small gold earrings." Her father had not allowed Melinda to have pierced ears, but now she had them anyway. She felt her new earrings and shook her beautiful hair in delight. "I can have anything: stereo, tapes, TV videodisc, moped, car, anything! All my life!" She hugged her books to herself in delight.

By the time she reached school, Melinda was almost an altruist;[4] she could wish for peace. Then she wondered, "Is the snail that

4. **altruist** (AL troo ihst): person who helps others without expecting anything in return.

Literary Focus

Plot and Setting Here the writer explains Melinda Alice's **conflict**—she is not prepared for her math test—and describes the **setting**—a sidewalk on the way to school.

Reading Focus

Summarizing Here's one way to summarize what has happened: "Melinda Alice almost steps on a snail, who offers her three wishes. Her first wish is to be granted her next thousand wishes."

Reading Focus

Tracking Story Events Melinda Alice has now made three wishes: to have a thousand wishes, to be perfectly dressed, and to have pierced ears and earrings.

Guided Practice

? Literary Focus

What detail about the setting seems important? How does the writer emphasize its importance? ***Possible response:*** *The detail about the snail seems important. The writer emphasizes it by pointing out that Melinda Alice did not usually notice nature.*

? Reading Focus

Which of the summarizing tips could you use to summarize the story up to this point? ***Possible response:*** *You could state the title and author, identify the main character, describe the setting, and relate an event.*

Which words in the highlighted text help you keep track of the order of events? ***Possible response:*** *"after", and "three"*

Which phrase in the last paragraph on this page helps the reader track events and indicates a change of setting? ***Possible response:*** *"by the time she reached school"*

How do Melinda Alice's three wishes display what kind of person she is? ***Possible response:*** *The wishes reveal what Melinda Alice values and desires.*

Analyzing Visuals

Viewing and Interpreting: *Yes; the woman in the painting seems similar to Melinda Alice. She looks well-groomed, happy, and artificial, just as the text describes her.*

Differentiating Instruction

English-Language Learners/ Readers Gaining Proficiency

To help students understand the selection, introduce them to the following words or expressions.

- **cruel**—knowingly causing pain to others. *It is cruel to say untrue things about people.*
- **scope**—space or opportunity for action. *The actress moved to Hollywood because there was greater scope for her talents.*
- **clever**—intelligent. *The clever mouse found a way to get the cheese out of the trap.*
- **blow it**—perform poorly. *Jenna studied for her test so she didn't blow it and get a poor grade.*

Then, give students this statement to show how the words relate to the selection.

Melinda Alice is cruel and clever. She is mean and thinks she is smarter than other students. She makes a wish to have a thousand wishes. The scope of this wish makes it easy for her to make an unwise wish. She blows it when she wishes she were dead.

Guided Practice

? Literary Focus

How do you think the story will be resolved? ***Possible response:*** *Melinda Alice will get her last wish.*

Review

Guided Practice

Read with a Purpose Have students summarize how Melinda Alice handles her wishes. Then, have students evaluate her actions. ***Possible response:*** *She handled her wishes the way she handled her life, thinking only of herself.*

More About the Writer

Judith Gorog has been described as one who always knew she would be a writer. She worked as an editor and a writer in a science laboratory. Perhaps this is why many of Gorog's books are science fiction. This genre allows her to combine two things she knows and loves.

Think About the Writer

Help students infer characteristics of the author from the text (for example, she is well-traveled, adventurous, and imaginative). Then, ask them to describe the author based on these qualities.

For Independent Reading

Suggest that students read *A Well-Timed Enchantment*, Vivian Vande Velde's story about a girl whose life is changed when she falls into a wishing well.

Reading Model

powerful?" She felt her ears, looked at her perfect blouse, skirt, jacket, shoes. "I could make ugly people beautiful, cure cripples . . ." She stopped. The wave of altruism had washed past. "I could pay people back who deserve it!" Melinda Alice looked at the school, at all the kids. She had an enormous sense of power. "They all have to do what I want now." She walked down the crowded halls to her locker. Melinda Alice could be sweet; she could be witty. She could—The bell rang for homeroom. Melinda Alice stashed her books, slammed the locker shut, and just made it to her seat.

"Hey, Melinda Alice," whispered Fred. "You know that big math test next period?"

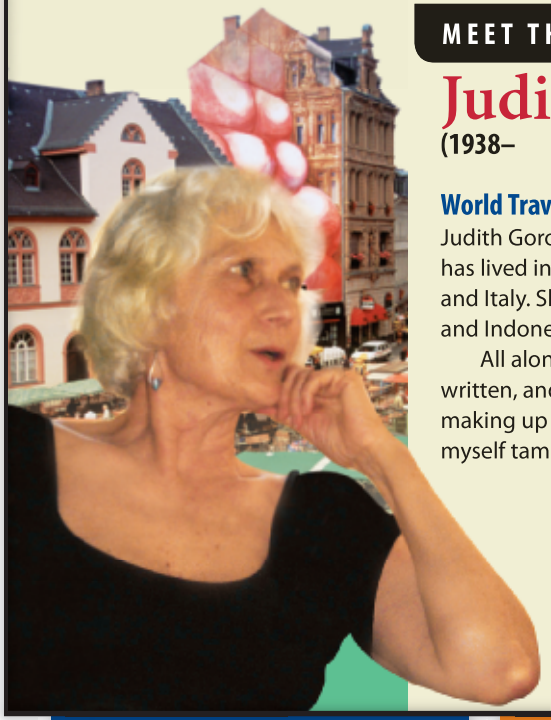
"Oh, no," grimaced Melinda Alice. Her thoughts raced; "That stupid snail made me late, and I forgot to study."

"I'll blow it," she groaned aloud. "I wish I were dead."

Literary Focus

Plot Melinda Alice makes her final wish here at the **climax** of the story—the point when we know what will happen. But the **resolution**, or final part of the story, is left to your imagination.

Read with a Purpose What do you think about the way Melinda Alice handles her wishes?



MEET THE WRITER

Judith Gorog

(1938–)

World Traveler

Judith Gorog has been traveling all her life. Born in Wisconsin, she has lived in many parts of the United States and also in Germany and Italy. She has traveled far and wide—to Peru, Japan, Europe, and Indonesia.

All along the way, Judith wrote stories. She says, "I have always written, and began to write stories for children when I was a child, making up stories and plays and rewriting the Greek myths with myself taming Pegasus."

Think About the Writer Based on the information above, how would you describe the author?

Resources

Collection 1 Resources, Literary and Academic Vocabulary Skill Builder, p. 6

PowerNotes, interactive lesson presentations with activities go.hrw.com

Teacher One Stop™, on-level lesson plans and all print resources

WordSharp: An Interactive Vocabulary Tutor, more practice with Academic Language go.hrw.com

Academic Vocabulary

Writing About Short Stories

Tell students they will encounter Academic Vocabulary words in standardized test questions and writing prompts. Write the following questions about "Those Three Wishes" on the board, and have students work in groups to answer them.

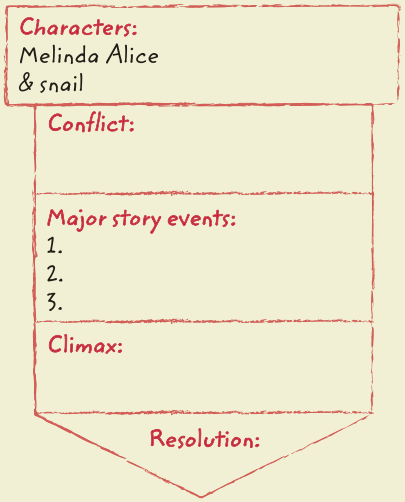
- What do Melinda's actions **reveal** about her personality? Support your response with details from the selection. ***Possible response:*** *The wishes Melinda makes reveal her as selfish and materialistic. The way she treats her classmates and the snail reveals her as unkind and self-absorbed.*

SKILLS IN ACTION

Wrap Up

Into Action: Story Map

"Those Three Wishes" is a very short story with a dramatic climax. Fill in a story map like the one below to summarize the story.



Talk About . . .

1. With a partner, discuss the plot and setting of "Those Three Wishes." Try to use each Academic Vocabulary word listed at the right at least once in your discussion.

Write About . . .

Answer the following questions about "Those Three Wishes."

2. Using the structure in your story map above, write a summary of the story's plot.
3. Would the story's outcome have been more effective if it had included a resolution? Why or why not?
4. What theme, or insight about life, does the story reveal?

Writing Focus

Think as a Reader/Writer

The short stories in Collection 1 have interesting plots and settings. The Writing Focus activities on the Preparing to Read pages will guide you in understanding how writers construct their plots and settings. On the Applying Your Skills pages, you'll have a chance to practice using those writers' techniques.

Academic Vocabulary for Collection 1

Talking and Writing About Stories

Academic Vocabulary is the language you use to write and talk about literature. Use these words to discuss the stories you read in this collection. The words are underlined throughout the collection.

effective (uh FEHK tihv) *adj.*: bringing about a desired result. *I found the ending of the story to be surprising but effective.*

outcome (OWT kuhm) *n.*: result; ending. *The outcome of this story is left to the reader's imagination.*

reveal (rih VEEL) *v.*: make known. *Melinda Alice's cruel actions reveal her personality.*

structure (STRUHK chuhr) *n.*: arrangement of parts. *A plot diagram shows the structure of the story.*

Your Turn

Copy these Academic Vocabulary words into your *Reader/Writer Notebook,* and try to use them as you answer questions about the stories in the collection.

Independent Practice

Into Action: Story Map

Make sure students' story maps cover all of the elements in the story. If necessary, model using one section of the map to retell part of the story.

Talk About . . .

1. *Model for students how to use the Academic Vocabulary. For example, say: "I was surprised by the outcome of this story because I didn't expect Melinda Alice to make such a foolish wish."*

Write About . . .

Possible Responses:

2. *Melinda Alice meets a snail who grants her three wishes. Her first wish is for a thousand more wishes. Melinda Alice then mistakenly wishes she were dead.*
3. *No; the story is more interesting because the outcome allows readers to use their imagination.*
4. *The story reveals that you must be careful what you wish for, or, your character determines your future.*

Writing Focus

The Think as a Reader/Writer activities in the collection focus on the reading-writing relationship. Use the activities to help students explore the writer's craft in a text and to practice this aspect of craft in their own writing.

- Was the ending of this story **effective?** Explain. ***Possible response:*** *It was effective because it did not state the ending; it left it to the reader's imagination.*
- Was the **outcome** of the story what you expected? Why or why not? ***Possible response:*** *It was not what I expected because I thought Melinda Alice would choose her words more carefully.*
- How did the **structure** of the plot hold your interest? ***Possible response:*** *The structure presented Melinda Alice's wishes in the order in which she made them. I wanted to keep reading to find out what she would wish for next and what the effect of each wish would be.*

SKILLS FOCUS p. 13

Literary Skills
- Analyze plot and setting.

Reading Skills
- Summarize to enhance comprehension of text.