“The Luck Factor”

By Richard Wiseman

**Text-Dependent Questions**

1. What is the author’s viewpoint on luck? Cite one-two pieces of textual evidence to support your answer.
2. How does the following sentence from paragraph 5 contribute to the development of the justification of superstitions?

*“Throughout history, people have recognized that good and bad luck can transform lives.”*

1. What is the most likely reason the author decided to organize the paragraph 1 the way he did? Why did he include that paragraph in the article?
2. Identify the analogy (comparison) used by the author to show how people deal with bad luck.
3. Was the analogy (comparison) the author provided in paragraph 14 effective? Why or why not?
4. Compare/Contrast “The Luck Factor” with *The Monkey’s Paw* in at least one paragraph.

**KEY:**

1. Luck can be a strong determinant of how people’s lives manifest:

“People make their own good and bad fortune…[i]t is possible to enhance the amount of luck that people encounter in their lives.”

“In short, lucky events exert a dramatic influence over our lives. Luck has the power to transform the improbable into the possible, to make the difference between life and death, reward and ruin, happiness and despair.”

2. Superstitions were created, and have survived, because they promise a way of enhancing good fortune.

3. The author wanted to pique attention by including a real-life scenario regarding luck. Wiseman included the anecdote to draw interest from the reader.

4. Student answers should mention the comparison regarding athletes who won the silver and bronze Olympic medals and how the silver-winning athletes tended to be more upset since they were so close to perhaps winning 1st place, whereas bronze-winning athletes were optimistic because they could have been 4th place.

5. Student opinions will vary but should mention the comparison regarding athletes who won the silver and bronze Olympic medals and how the silver-winning athletes tended to be more upset since they were so close to perhaps winning 1st place, whereas bronze-winning athletes were optimistic because they could have been 4th place.

6. Student answers will vary but should include information about how superstitions and/or luck affect people’s lives.

***Vocabulary from Text:***

1. Revenue
2. Criteria
3. Fortuitous
4. Prevalence
5. Determinant
6. Trivial
7. Improbable
8. Amulet
9. Talisman
10. Superstitious
11. Holy Grail
12. New Age
13. Ambition
14. Intuition
15. Resilient
16. Scenario
17. Encounter
18. Counterfactual