

## LANGUAGE ARTS: HANDOUT B3

### Summary of *Monkey, A Journey to the West*

#### STUDENT SAMPLE

*Monkey, A Journey to the West* is a satirical story written in sixteenth century China. The story is about Monkey—an irreverent, audacious, greedy, arrogant, mischievous, self-centered, and supernatural monkey. In the first part of the story, Monkey becomes king of Flower and Fruit Mountain. After many years, he decides to try to achieve immortality, but does more, learning the art of magic as well. Still not content, he steals a magical iron pillar, which he turns into a cudgel. The Jade Emperor of Heaven notices Monkey's rise to power and decides to give him a job in the Celestial Palace in order to keep an eye on him. Eventually Monkey realizes this and the Jade Emperor, to resume his vigil, gives Monkey a higher ranked job: tending the heavenly peaches. Monkey, however, eats all the peaches and flees. He is pursued, but he defeats the armies sent after him, and wreaks destruction on the Celestial Palace. Monkey causes so much havoc that the Great Buddha is compelled to interfere, and imprisons Monkey under the Mountain of Five Elements.

The second part of the story begins five hundred years later, when Monkey is given a chance to repent by Guanyin, the bodhisattva of compassion. He was to accompany the monk Xuanzang on his quest to recover Buddhist scriptures from India. Two other repenting persons, Pigsy and Sandy, also journey with them. The four face many challenges, but prevail. At the end of their adventure, they are received by the Great Buddha, and Xuanzang and Monkey are made buddhas, while Pigsy is made the Altar Cleaner and Sandy is made the Golden-Bodied Arhat. Monkey and Xuanzang read the sacred texts and gain enlightenment. Xuanzang returns to China and preaches from the scriptures.

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