

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

# *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

by H. G. Wells

Copyright © 2000 by Prestwick House Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938. 1-800-932-4593.  
[www.prestwickhouse.com](http://www.prestwickhouse.com) Permission to copy this unit for classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her  
personal use. This material, in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.

ISBN 13: 978-1-58049-226-3  
Reorder No. 300550

# *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

## Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. infer about characters and events when the meanings are not explicitly stated.
2. define vocabulary words as they are used in the story.
3. comment on how the author's semi-documentary writing style helps to add realism to the story.
4. cite incidents from the story, which support the following overall theme: Man's sense of morality must keep pace with his scientific advances or these advances will be the cause of his own destruction.
5. point out which incidents in the story that constitute the rising action, climax, and falling action.
6. point out examples of foreshadowing in the story.
7. comment on Montgomery and why he is both physically and morally flawed.
8. discuss the extent to which the following generalizations about life appear in this novel:
  - the events in a man's life are largely due to chance;
  - humans tolerate immoral behavior of others so long as this behavior is concealed from view;
  - despite efforts to alter their natures, man and animals will feel compelled to return to their original character;
  - a man will commit an immoral act to save his own life.
9. comment on how Dr. Moreau justifies inflicting pain on animals and how he views their use for research.
10. discuss how Montgomery and Prendick view using animals for research.
11. cite incidents from the story to support the following theme: man and animals are born with natural wants and to deny or distort these wants results in unhappy, tortured lives.

# *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

## Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Define the following nautical terms: Aft, bulwark, fore, gunwhale, piggin, schooner, painter. Why is the painter important to Prendick?
2. Point out how Wells' semi-documentary style of writing helps to make this science fiction novel more realistic?
3. In what way does this novel qualify as part of the science fiction genre?
4. Cite an incident in the story for each of the following plot elements: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
5. Write a character sketch of Montgomery. Include the reasons he saves Prendick's life on the ship and why, at the end of the story, Prendick knows he cannot rely on Montgomery's help to escape the island.
6. Cite incidents from the story to support or refute Montgomery's assertion that everything in his life is due to chance.
7. Why is Moreau able to dismiss the suffering he inflicts on his subjects as if their pain is of no consequence?
8. In what ways does Prendick both agree and disagree with the idea of using animals for scientific research?
9. List the Laws of the Beast People. Cite incidents from the story in which many of these laws are broken, even before Moreau's death.
10. Write a brief essay illustrating how the lives of the Beast People on the island is a microcosm for the world. Include the role of religion in their lives, their struggles to conquer their desires, and their social structure.
11. Moreau is dissatisfied with the Beast People, which is why he turns them loose on the island. List the ways he considers his work to be flawed.
12. One passage in the story states, "The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature." (Pg. 56) Do you believe Prendick might agree or disagree with this statement. Cite incidents from the story to support your answer.

# *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

## Study Guide Student Copy

### Chapter The First - In the Dingey of the “Lady Vain”

1. Define the following vocabulary words:

dingey –

privations –

thwart –

schooner –

gunwale –

fore –

tacking –

soddened –

2. How did the narrator and the other three men in the dingey try to help Constans? Why does the narrator say it is “lucky” that Constans never reached the men in the dingey?
3. Why do the narrator and the other men in the dingey agree to draw lots? What evidence is there that the narrator is willing to go through with their terrible pact?

## Chapter The Fifth – The Landing on the Island

1. Define the following vocabulary words:  
  
petulance –  
  
derisively –  
  
unvictualled –  
  
tumultuous –  
  
perforce –  
  
sot –
2. Many critics refer to Wells' narrative as being semi-documentary or similar to a newspaper report. Find a passage in this chapter which contains the type of information that might be part of a newspaper story (Who, What, Where, Why, How).
3. There are five main plot elements: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and the resolution. Which of these plot elements is present in this chapter? Cite incidents from the chapter to support your choice.

4. Why do you suppose the Thing follows Prendick? What evidence is there that the Thing may be dangerous even though it seems to lack the courage to attack Prendick?
5. Prendick, weaponless, attacks whatever it is that chases him. What does the method he use signify?

## Chapter the Tenth – The Crying of the Man

1. Define “abominations.”
2. What does Prendick “realize” in the following passage from the story? What literary term is used in the selection?

“The rest I did not hear. I picked myself up and stood trembling, my mind a chaos of the most horrible misgiving. Could the vivisection of men be possible? The question shot like lightning across a tumultuous sky. And suddenly the clouded horror of my mind condensed into a vivid realization of my danger.” (Pg. 36-37)

3. Cite incidents from the story to support or refute the following statement: Prendick supports the use of animals for scientific research, but draws the line at using human subjects for the advancement of scientific knowledge.

## Chapter The Fifteenth – Concerning the Beast Folk

1. Define the following vocabulary words:  
  
glutinous –  
  
fumaroles –  
  
prognathous –  
  
metamorphosed –  
  
votary –
2. How does Montgomery feel about the Beast people? Why is M'ling's relationship with Montgomery?
3. Why is the Leopard Man more dangerous at night?
4. What does Prendick observe about the female Beast People?
5. Find a passage in this chapter which illustrates Wells' documentary writing style.

## Chapter the Twentieth – Alone with the Beast Folk

1. Define the following vocabulary words:

spasmodically –

morass –

2. What mistake with the Beast Folk does Prendick make that weakens his authority over them?