**![C:\Users\Bronwen\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\MPE4M96H\MC900326844[1].wmf]()![C:\Users\Bronwen\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\KG1UWB7U\MC900157197[1].wmf]()"The Possibility of Evil" – Shirley Jackson**

**Reading Notes**

**Short Story Focus**: irony, foreshadowing, description (detail)

Power Write # 1: Look at the title of the story and *predict* what you think it will be about.

Describe *Miss Strangeworth*. Use quotes from the story to support your answer

Describe the *other characters in the story.* How do they act around Miss Strangeworth? Use quotes from the story to support your answer.

Describe Miss Strageworth’s *interaction*s with the people in her neighbourhood*.* Use quotes from the story to

support your answer.

Describe *Miss Strangeoworth’s property*. Use quotes to support your answer.

Power Write # 2: Based on what you have read, *predict* why Miss Strangeworth has different types of paper for letters. Provide evidence to support your prediction.

Explain what Miss Strangeworth does with her letters? Why does she write them? Who are they for? Use quotes to support your answer.

Power Write # 3: Based on what you have read, *predict how you think the story will end.* Provide evidence to support your prediction.

**Putting It All Together**

Explain why the ending is *ironic?* What type of irony is it? Use quotes to support your answer.

**Explain the irony in this line:** “Although Miss Strangeworth had never given the matter any particular thought, she had always made a point of mailing her letters very secretly; it would, of course, not have been wise to let anyone see her mail them.”

**Consider this line at the end of the story**: “She washed her soft old face and brushed her teeth, still sound in spite of the seventy-one years and dressed herself carefully in her sweet, soft clothes and buttoned shoes.” **Compare this image with the other side of Miss Strangeworth that is exposed in the story.**

![d:\Users\teacher\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\FW1SM1JC\MC900434389[1].wmf]()**Comprehension Check -- “The Possibility of Evil" Shirley Jackson**

1. Who is the protagonist of “The Possibility of Evil”?

a) The townsfolk c) Miss Strangeworth

b) Mr. Lewis d) Mrs. Harper

2. What is Miss Strangeworth’s first name?

a) Gladys c) Mary

b) Helen d) Adela

3. What is Miss Strangeworth’s most prized possession?

a. Her home

b. Her closet full of flowery skirts

c. A china doll

d. Her rose bushes

4. What does Miss Strangeworth do that deceives the townspeople?

a. She writes nasty letters

b. She steals roses from her neighbours

c. She gossips about people behind their backs

d. She writes a column in the newspaper telling of everyone’s secrets

5. What best describes the conflict in this story?

a) External: person vs. person c) External: person vs. fate

b) Internal: person vs. self d) External: person vs. society

6. Who is Mr. Lewis?

a) The local grocer c) A school-teacher

b) The librarian d) Miss Strangeworth’s boyfriend

7. What is the significance of the colour of the envelopes and writing paper?

a. The colour is not important at all

b. They were Miss Strangewoth’s favourite colours

c. Many people in the town had the same paper, so the letters could be written anonymously

d. The colour was the same shade as her beautiful home

8. What does Miss Strageworth write and ‘warn’ Mrs. Foster about?

a) the doctor falling asleep during her operation

b) the doctor’s knife “slipping” accidentally

c) her nephew plotting against her

d) her not being able to pay for the operation

9. From what point of view is the story told?

a) First person

b) Omniscient

c) Limited omniscient

d) Objective