Monster by Walter Dean Myers

PRE-READING ACTIVITY:
*Felony Murder Role Play/Dramatic Scenario*
You may do the following activity as a dramatic role play in front of the class (in which case the teacher asks for three student volunteers who will “act out” the roles). Or you may do the following activity in small groups of three students each. Here is the scenario:

*Names can be changed to fit gender of students.*

Kate is a high school student. Kate has a brand new stereo system with super cool speakers. At school, she brags about this stereo system and tells many of her friends that her room is so great now that she has this stereo to listen to whenever she likes.

Jimmy is a high school student who does not have a stereo system. He is jealous of Kate’s stereo system and decides to break into her house and steal the stereo from her bedroom. Since he does not have a car, he asks his friend Alex to participate in the robbery by being the driver and lookout person.

Alex has a car and agrees to help Jimmy steal the stereo system from Kate’s house. During the robbery, Alex will stay in the car at all times and honk to warn Jimmy if there are any problems.

One night while Kate is sleeping in her bedroom, Alex drives Jimmy to Kate’s house. Kate’s bedroom is on the second floor of the house, so Jimmy has to climb a ladder to break in through her window. Alex waits in the car.

While in Kate’s bedroom, Jimmy trips in the dark and wakes Kate up. Jimmy tries to rush out the window with the stereo, but Kate tries to stop him. They wrestle in front of the window, and Kate accidentally falls to her death. Jimmy leaves the stereo in Kate’s room and hurries down the ladder. He feels bad since he didn’t mean for Kate to get hurt. Jimmy runs to the car, and Alex, who is also very upset, drives them away.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: If you are a police officer, who do you arrest and why? If you are a judge, what punishment, if any, do you give to Jimmy? To Alex? Explain.

(Have students discuss their responses in small groups then report these responses to the whole group. After they have finished, go over the definition of FELONY MURDER. Explain that both Alex and Jimmy could be charged with felony murder—committing a crime that results in the death of a person (even if that death is accidental)—and both could receive the same punishment. In some states, this punishment could be life in prison or even execution. Then make the connection that in the novel Monster the protagonist will find himself on trial for felony murder.)
Pre-reading Activity

Making Predictions

1. Examine the cover of *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers. What predictions do you have? What do you think the story will be about? What makes you think that? Write your predictions below.

   Based on the cover and title, my predictions are:

2. In small groups, read pages 1-5 of Monster. What predictions do you have now? Write your predictions below.

   Based on my reading of pages 1-5, my predictions are:

3. Skim pages 7-11. What do you notice about how these pages are written? What predictions do you have now? Write your predictions below.

   Based on my skimming of pages 7-11, my predictions are:
Pre-reading Activity ANTICIPATION GUIDE FOR MONSTER
Directions: Before you begin reading Monster by Walter Dean Myers, fill out this anticipation guide. These questions are designed to get you thinking about some of the themes, events, and ideas that are dealt with in the novel. After reading each statement, write whether you think that statement is true or false. Then write a sentence explaining why you believe this way.

1. Racism and prejudice are not problems today in America. __________
   Explanation:

2. Every decision we make has a consequence. ______________
   Explanation:

3. When on trial, a person is always considered guilty until proven innocent. __________
   Explanation:

4. Monsters are not real. They are imaginary creatures. ______________
   Explanation:

5. Peer pressure is always a negative or bad thing. _________________
   Explanation:

6. People are sometimes discriminated against because of their age. ______________
   Explanation:

7. Only guilty people go to jail. __________
   Explanation:

8. Novels can only be told in narrative form. ________________
   Explanation:

9. People who commit crimes come from bad neighborhoods and bad families or they have some sort of mental illness. ______________
   Explanation:

10. Writing in a journal is a good way to express feelings. __________
Pre-reading Activity ANTICIPATION GUIDE FOR MONSTER  

** TEACHER KEY

** Directions: Before you begin reading Monster by Walter Dean Myers, fill out this anticipation guide. These questions are designed to get you thinking about some of the themes, events, and ideas that are dealt with in the novel. After reading each statement, write whether you think that statement is true or false. Then write a sentence explaining why you believe this way.

1. Racism and prejudice are not problems today in America.  
   **False**
   Explanation: Racism and prejudice are still problems today, though perhaps less apparent than in the past.

2. Every decision we make has a consequence.  
   **True**
   Explanation: There is a consequence (sometimes obvious, sometimes not so obvious) to every decision we make.

3. When on trial, a person is always considered guilty until proven innocent.  
   **False**
   Explanation: It is just the opposite in the American judicial system. A person is supposed to be considered innocent until proven guilty.

4. Monsters are not real. They are imaginary creatures.  
   **False**
   Explanation: Many real life people have been called monsters—Hitler, mass murderers, etc. In the novel, Steve Harmon is called a monster. Possible class discussion: What makes a real life person a monster?

5. Peer pressure is always a negative or bad thing.  
   **False**
   Explanation: Friends and peers can influence a person to make good decisions or bad decisions.

6. People are sometimes discriminated against because of their age.  
   **True**
   Explanation: Often times young people are not considered to be valuable or have good judgment because of their youth. This is a problem Steve Harmon faces in the novel because he is only sixteen.

7. Only guilty people go to jail.  
   **False**
   Explanation: Not everyone who goes to jail is guilty. Some people are falsely accused. Others are in jail because they are awaiting trial and have not yet been found guilty.

8. Novels can only be told in narrative form.  
   **False**
   Explanation: While most novels are told in narrative form, they can also be told in other ways. These ways include journal entries, poems, and even film scripts. Monster, of course, is told in journal entries and script form.

9. People who commit crimes come from bad neighborhoods and bad families or they have some sort of mental illness.  
   **False**
   Explanation: Not always. People from all backgrounds commit crimes. Steve Harmon does live in the ghetto of Harlem. He also has a loving mother and father. Steve’s choice of friends and personal decisions get him into trouble.

10. Writing in a journal is a good way to express feelings.  
    **True**
Explanation: *Many studies have shown that it is important for a person to “vent” or “talk about” feelings. One way to do so is by writing a journal.*

**PRE-READING ACTIVITY**

Discussion question: What makes a person a monster?

(Have students write about this individually then share their answers in small groups. Then have a whole class discussion in which students post their responses on a class chart or poster).

Discussion Question #2: Who are some real life monsters? (Follow same procedures as above).

Prediction Question #3: The protagonist of the novel, Steve Harmon, is referred to as a monster by another character. Why might this be so? (Prediction).
VOCABULARY LIST MONSTER

PART ONE (Introduction – Sunday, July 12th)

Objection—expression of opposition or disapproval
Overruled—the judge does not agree with the objection (therefore, the lawyer can continue with the comment or question)
Sustained—the judge does agree with the objection (therefore, the lawyer cannot continue with the comment or question)
Proposition—statement or assertion
Felony—a serious, often violent crime
Testimony—a witness’s statement under oath
Felony murder—a situation in which a person dies as a result of a crime being committed
Suspect—subject to or deserving of suspicion; a person whom prosecutors believe may be involved in a crime
Shackle—restraint, impediment, chain
Monster—inhumanely cruel or wicked person
Allege—declare, especially without proof
Prosecute—institute legal proceedings against
Prosecutor (District Attorney or D.A.)—the lawyer who represents the state and is trying to persuade the jury to find the accused guilty
Defendant—the person on trial, the accused
Defense—the lawyer who represents the accused and makes sure the defendant gets a fair trial; this lawyer usually tries to persuade the jury to find the accused not guilty
7/10 Chalk—rub, mark, draw, or write with chalk
Merchandise—goods for sale
Evidence—available facts determining truth or validity
Character—collective qualities that distinguish a person or thing; the “core” or personality of a person (Compare and contrast this with the definition of character as a literary element)
Fringe—outer edge or margin
Implicated—show to be involved in
Indulging—yield freely

PART TWO (Monday, July 13th – December, 5 months later)

Acquaintance—slight knowledge; a person you know only casually or slightly
Taint—spot or trace
Incident—an event
Perpetrator—person who commits a crime
Menace—a threat
Implicate—to show involvement in
 Conviction—a decision or judgment in which the accused is found to be guilty
Conviction—a strong belief in something (check context clues to determine which meaning is appropriate)
Technician—a person skilled in a specific trade
Verdict—a decision in a court of law
Accusation—a statement charging a person
Transverse—cross
Consign—to assign; commit
MONSTER by Walter Dean Myers

THEMES

Peer Pressure
One theme of the novel involves the challenges of managing peer pressure and dealing with the consequences of peer pressure. This is especially seen in how Steve associates with young men he knows are individuals with questionable character. There is a sense that he needs to prove his manhood in some way by being with this “tough guy crowd” in spite of the fact that they bring disaster down upon him.

Young African Men in Harlem
Another theme is that of the experience of young African American men in Harlem. The author presents the situation that exists for these young men who are growing up in the middle of poverty, crime, and hopelessness. They often make the wrong choices because they have few positive role models, and they often see themselves as “destined” for prison.

Introspection and Personal Responsibility
The theme of introspection and personal responsibility is one of the most prevalent themes. Steve must come to terms with who he really is. His screenplay and journal entries are ways for him to try to make sense of what he has done or hasn’t done in his life and what has brought him to the point of being on trial for his life. By the end of the novel, his doubts and fears about who he really is and how responsible he is for the death of Mr. Nesbitt have not yet been completely resolved in his mind.

Race and the Justice System
Another important theme is that of race and the justice system. There is a sense that because Steve is young and black, he is “more likely” to have committed the crime in the eyes of the jurors. There is also the sense that if he has been arrested, he must have done it because the police and the prosecution witnesses wouldn’t lie.

MOOD

The mood is very dark and filled with despair as we see Steve learn to cope with what may be the outcome of the trial. The mood brightens somewhat at the end after he is acquitted, but ultimately the mood remains dark even as the novel concludes. Steve must now face the realization that his life is changed forever and that he doesn’t really know who he is anymore.

Setting

The novel takes place in Manhattan and Harlem, New York City, mostly in a city jail or lockup, but sometimes the scenes take us to the neighborhood where Steve Harmon lives.

Point of View

In the journal entry sections, the novel is written in the first person narrative point of view. In the film script sections, the novel is written in third person objective.
**Character List (Major characters)**

Steve Harmon  
He is a sixteen year old young African American man who has been arrested for acting as the lookout in a robbery that goes bad and ends in a murder. He is the narrator of the story, writing it in the form of a screenplay interspersed with his journal entries.

Kathy O’Brien  
She is Steve’s defense attorney who uses his character traits before the crime and makes sure she distances him from the other defendants as a way of getting a not guilty verdict.

Sandra Petrocelli  
She is the Assistant District Attorney who prosecutes the case against Steve and James King. She labels them “monsters.”

James King  
An African American man who is also young, but older than Steve. He encourages Steve to be part of his crew which will rob the drugstore. He is accused of being in the drugstore, wrestling Mr. Nesbitt for the gun, and ultimately shooting the older man to death.

Asa Briggs  
He is the defense attorney who is representing James King and trying to get the jury to find him not guilty.

Richard “Bobo” Evans  
He is the other young man accused of being in the store at the time of the murder. He admits to stealing the money and grabbing the cartons of cigarettes while King is wrestling Nesbitt for the gun. He makes a deal with the prosecution to testify against King and Steve to get a lighter sentence.

Osvaldo Cruz  
He is another participant in the crime. It was his job to stand outside and trip up anyone who tries to catch them after they rob the store. He claims he did it because he was afraid of Bobo, but he is a member of a street gang and slashed someone’s face to be accepted into the gang.

**Minor Characters**

Lorelle Henry  
She is a grandmother who was in the drugstore at the time of the murder. She testifies that she saw two men in the drugstore, and she picks James King from a handful of photos and then from a lineup.

Jose Delgado  
He worked in the drugstore and found Mr. Nesbitt’s body. He also determined that several cartons of cigarettes had been stolen along with money from the cash register.

Steve’s parents  
They are depicted as hard-working people who have tried to raise their sons right. Steve’s mother continues to believe in him no matter what, but his father looks at him like he doesn’t really know him.
Dorothy Moore
James King’s cousin, she testifies that James had brought her a new lamp for Christmas at the time of the murder.

Sal Zinzi
An inmate in prison who testified he heard another prisoner talking about buying cigarettes from a guy who held up a drugstore where the owner was killed.

Wendell Bolden
A prisoner who testified that he bought cigarettes from Bobo Evans. He also testified that Bobo told him a man was killed during the drugstore robbery.

George Nipping
He testifies that James King is left-handed which creates reasonable doubt that King committed the crime since it was more likely that Mr. Nesbitt was shot by a right-handed perpetrator. His testimony is weak, however, because the perpetrator was wrestling with Mr. Nesbitt over the gun.

Alguinaldo Nesbitt
The victim of the crime, he is depicted as a decent, hard-working citizen who lost his life in defense of his property. However, his character isn’t well presented because the focus of the story is Steve and the other young men on trial.

Conflict
External conflict: Steve Harmon is on trial for felony murder and must help his attorney convince the jury that he is not guilty.

Internal conflict: Steve Harmon must deal with his own questions and conscience about his involvement in the crime and about his questions about who he is really as a person.

Protagonist
The protagonist of a story is usually the main character who traditionally goes through some sort of change. He or she must usually overcome some opposing force. In Monster, the protagonist is Steve Harmon, a sixteen year-old African American youth who is on trial for his life.

Antagonists
The antagonist of a story is the force that provides an obstacle for the protagonist. The antagonists include the justice system, the neighborhood which impacts young men like Steve, the people Steve associates with in the neighborhood, and Steve himself.

Climax
The climax of a plot is the major turning point that allows the protagonist to resolve the conflict. The climax of this story occurs when Steve is found not guilty of felony murder.

Outcome
The outcome, resolution, or denouement occurs in the final chapters when Steve is allowed to go home with his parents, but his “imprisonment” continues as he tries to make sense of who he is and the decisions he has made. His final thought concerns what his defense attorney saw in him when he tried to embrace her with gratitude after the verdict. He questions whether he really is a good person.
Synopsis (Plot summary)
A sixteen year-old boy named Steve Harmon finds himself on trial for felony murder after he is accused of acting as a lookout for the young men who actually commit a robbery at a Harlem drugstore and kill the store owner. The story is presented primarily from Steve’s viewpoint in the form of a screenplay and journal entries he writes as he faces the trial and possibility of spending the rest of his life in prison.

Introduction: A young prisoner, Steve Harmon, describes the terror of beatings of inmates by other prisoners. He is scared and cries at night.

Monday, July 6: Steve Harmon describes his life in Cell Block D of the Manhattan Detention Center as though it were a movie. His attorney, Kathy O’Brien, questions him about the felony murder, for which prosecutor Sandra Petrocelli, an assistant district attorney for the state of New York, presses for the death penalty. While dressing for a court appearance, Steve rejects breakfast. O’Brien does not indicate her hope of acquittal.

Handcuffed to a bench, Steve observes the bored judge. Steve flashes back to a film workshop at Stuyvesant High School and the club mentor, George Sawicki. Petrocelli informs the jury that teen killers are monsters and describe the robbery and murder of Alguinaldo Nesbitt at his drugstore on 145th Street in Harlem on December 22 the previous year at 4:00 P.M. She charges Steve with being the lookout for the thief, James King. O’Brien introduces her defense with a reminder of reasonable doubt of Steve’s complicity in the crime.

Jose Delgado, a drugstore employee, testifies that on the day of the crime he left around 4:35 P.M. for dinner and returned to find Nesbitt dead and five cartons of cigarettes stolen. A second witness, Salvatore Zinzi, reports that he was incarcerated at Riker’s Island when he heard Wendell Bolden claim to know who committed the crime. Zinzi charged Detective Gluck and confides that Bolden got two cartons of the stolen cigarettes. O’Brien discredits the information as a means for Zinzi to get out of jail early.

In a flashback, Steve recalls walking with Tony in the park four years earlier. After throwing a rock and hitting a young woman, Steve implicates Tony. The woman’s companion hits Tony, who wants an Uzi to avenge himself for the false accusation.

Tuesday, July 7: Bolden admits being arrested for intending to deal dope and explains that he got cigarettes on December 24 from Bobo Evans, who helped rob the drugstore on Malcolm X Boulevard. In a flashback, Steve and James King sit on a porch on 141st Street with Peaches and Johnny, who consider a “getover” against an illegal alien. After Briggs discredits Bolden’s testimony, the judge adjourns. That night, Steve hears a sexual attack on his inmate. A flashback shows Steve and his eleven year-old brother Jerry discussing superheroes.

Wednesday, July 8: Steve lets Sunset read his screenplay and receives a visit from preacher in the afternoon. Steve wants to feel like a good person. In court, Detective Karyl presents photos of the crime scene. He admits that he found no fingerprints, but received a tip from Sal Zinzi that Bolden knew Evans and King committed the crime. A flashback shows Karyl questioning Steve and implying that he was the trigger man. Officer Williams predicts a sentence of life without parole. Steve fantasizes about being prepared for execution on death row.

Steve recalls a conversation with fourteen year-old Osvaldo Cruz and Freddy Alou. Osvaldo accuses Steve of needing to make a name for himself by acting tough. Osvaldo testifies that Bobo cut a man in the projects. He also claims to have taken part in the crime because he was afraid of King, Evans, and Steve.

Thursday, July 9: Steve worries that his lawyer is losing hope of winning. He knows that she is from Queens and went to New York University Law School. Kings asks Steve if he is making a
deal with prosecutors. O’Brien upbraids Steve for putting his head down in a gesture of despair. Osvaldo testifies that Steve was the lookout. O’Brien questions him about his membership in the Diablos.

At the detention center, Mr. Harmon visits his son. He comforts him but leaves sobbing. Steve recalls hearing women discuss the victim, who immigrated to the United States from St. Kitts. A neighbor reports that a little girl was murdered two months before Nesbitt’s death. While Steve watches the news, Karyl and Williams arrive to take him to the 28th precinct headquarters for questioning. Steve’s mother tries to follow.

Friday, July 10: Steve ponders how Petrocelli kept showing the photos to leave a bad image in the jurors’ minds. He mops the corridors with disinfectant and gags from the smell. He blames himself for wanting to be tough like King and Evans. City Clerk Allen Forbes testifies that Nesbitt got a gun permit in August 1989. Williams reports viewing the crime scene at 5:15 and receiving Evan’s admission of guilt. Dr. James Moody, the medical examiner, testifies that Nesbitt drowned in his own blood.

Saturday, July 11: Steve acknowledges that O’Brien ordered him not to write anything in his notebook that he didn’t want Petrocelli to see. He thinks about spending twenty years in prison and about his mother’s visit. She brings him a Bible with a passage marked and assures him she knows he is innocent. Steve recalls how King planned the robbery and asked him to be lookout.

Sunday, July 12: At 1:15 P.M., Steve sees Jerry and his parents in the street below. Steve anticipates testimony by the state’s star witnesses on Monday.

Monday, July 13: Petrocelli calls Lorelle Henry, a retired school librarian who witnessed the crime. She picked out King’s picture from over twenty police photos and identifies him in a lineup. Briggs complains to the judge that Evans arrives in court in a prison uniform from Greenhaven, where he is serving time for drug dealing. Evans claims that Steve was the lookout, but that Evans and King split the cash without sharing with Steve. Evans admits selling stolen cigarettes to Bolden.

Tuesday, July 14: O’Brien visits Steve to tell him that Evan’s testimony hurt their case. In court, Dorothy Moore, King’s cousin, reports that James King came to her house to give her a lamp at 3:30 P.M. the day of the robbery. George Nipping testifies that King is left-handed, a weak retort to the fact that Nesbitt was shot on the left side, ostensibly by a right-handed shooter.

O’Brien sets up a signal with a cup to indicate how well Steve is testifying. Steve testifies that he wasn’t a lookout and that he didn’t enter the drugstore. He explains that he spent the day taking mental notes for a school film project. George Sawicki states that he has known Steve for three years and that the boy is honest. Briggs concludes that no witnesses saw the murder. O’Brien adds that there is no proof that Steve served as lookout. The judge outlines to jurors the process of returning a verdict of guilty to felony murder. A guard confides that there is a wager pool on the outcome of the trial.

Friday, July 17: The court awaits the arrival of the Nesbitt family. King is found guilty; Steve is exonerated. O’Brien recoils from his embrace.

December: James King begins serving 25 years to life. Osvaldo goes to a reformatory; Evans is in jail. Steve continues making films but worries that his father distances himself because he disapproves of Steve’s friendship with criminals. Steve is still haunted by O’Brien’s opinion of him.
Comprehension Questions

Introduction

1. What causes Steve to cry at night?
2. What details describe the setting?
3. How does the writer use details to create a mood or atmosphere?
4. Why does Steve decide to tell the story of his experience in the form of a movie script?
5. What is the significance of the following quote? “I'll call it what the lady who is the prosecutor called me. Monster.”

Possible responses

1. The lurid atmosphere of the Manhattan Detention Center weighs heavily on sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon. He is scared all the time.
2. Response may vary and may include: Someone being beaten up and screaming for help in the dark, steel sink in the cell, mirror over the sink that is scratched with names of other guys, blood all over the cafeteria, waking up with strangers, sleeping with strangers, going to the bathroom in front of strangers.
3. To typify the daily atmosphere, Steve characterizes the constant need for prisoners “to hurt each other.” He describes his observation as feeling “like I have walked into the middle of a movie.” He fears that he might attract attention by crying at night. He is scared all the time; he is unable to eat or use the toilet and doesn’t recognize his own face in the mirror. The stress of survivalism is never ending in prison, especially when the lights are out. In the opening statement, Steve describes his reaction when “someone is being beaten up and screaming for help.”
4. He wants to make sense of his experience. He is interested in film from his film class at school. He feels like he has walked into the middle of a movie.
5. This metaphor of “being a monster” runs throughout the novel. In this case, Sandra Petrocelli, the assistant district attorney, must prove to the jury that Steve Harmon was the lookout in the robbery that cost drugstore owner Alguinaldo Nesbitt his life. To impress upon jurors the seriousness of the crime, she differentiates between the innocent immigrant who ran the drugstore and the young thugs (monsters) who killed him in a botched holdup. (This argument will become more apparent as the novel progresses).

Monday, July 6

1. What is the significance of “Fade in: Interior: Early morning in Cell Block D, Manhattan Detention Center?”
2. What effect does the author create by using the Voice-over? “VO: Ain’t no use putting the blanket over your head, man. You can’t cut this out; this is reality.”
3. What is the visual effect of Steve’s opening credits?
4. What is the significance of the following quote? “There are also monsters in our communities—people who are willing to steal and to kill, people who disregard the rights of others.”
5. What is Kathy O’Brien’s response to Steve when he tells her he is writing this “whole thing down as a movie?” What does this tell us about her attitude towards him? (inference)
6. For what crime are James King and Steve Harmon on trial?
7. What is Sandra Petrocelli’s responsibility as Prosecutor? What is her opening argument?
8. What is Kathy O’Brien’s responsibility as Defense Attorney? What is her opening argument?
9. What is Asa Briggs’s responsibility as Defense Attorney? What is his opening argument?
10. Briefly summarize the testimony of Jose Delgado.
11. Briefly summarize the testimony of Sal Zinzi.
12. Briefly describe the flashback involving Steve and his friend Tony. What can we infer about Steve’s character from his actions in this scene?

13. What is the difference between the point of view of the journal sections and the point of view of the movie script sections?

Possible Responses:

1. Steve chooses to move into and out of scenes of his experience as though he were directing a documentary film rather than living the hopeless existence of a suspect incarcerated for felony murder. A fade-in slowly focuses on a scene that he considers crucial to the story.

2. Steve enhances settings and actions with voices of male prisoners who comment on Steve’s reaction to incarceration and a criminal trial. They force him to stop trying to escape and to face the reality of a charge that may cost him his freedom or his life.

3. The visual effect of the credits is to give the impression of the opening credits of the film Star Wars. Again, this emphasizes the importance of movies and filmmaking for Steve. This also shows the creative aspect of Steve’s character.

4. In her initial presentation to the jury, Sandra Petrocelli polarizes the figures in the case into two categories—upstanding citizens and monsters. The term so traumatizes Steve that it remains with him to the end, causing him to weigh his worth as a person, to ponder suicide rather than serve twenty years in prison, and to long for acceptance by his parents and defense attorney.

5. Her response is to dismissively say, “whatever.” This suggests that she does not take his efforts seriously, that she does not see the value in his writing, that she may question his character, and that she may believe him to be guilty.

6. They are on trial for felony murder.

7. Petrocelli’s responsibility is to represent the State or People of New York in the case against Harmon and King. Her argument is that she will prove that both King and Harmon are guilty as charged and are, in fact, monsters.

8. O’Brien’s responsibility is to represent or defend Steve Harmon at trial. Her argument is that she will prove that there is reasonable doubt as to whether or not Steve is involved in the crime.

9. Briggs’s responsibility is to represent of defend James King at trial. His argument is that there will not be sufficient evidence to convict James King since many of the witnesses against him have questionable characters.

10. Jose Delgado testifies that he discovered the body of Nesbitt and that he also noted that five cartons of cigarettes were missing along with some money from the cash register.

11. Sal Zinzi testifies that while in prison another inmate told him he bought cigarettes from another inmate who claimed to have stolen the cigarettes during a drugstore hold up during which a man was shot and killed.

12. In the flashback, we learn that Steve throws a rock that hits a young woman. When the tough guy with her angrily questions Steve and his friend Tony, Steve yells, “Tony! Run!” Steve takes off, but the tough guy grabs Tony and punches him. We can infer that Steve does whatever he can to avoid taking responsibility for his actions. We can also infer that perhaps Steve was trying to shift blame to Tony (or not?).

13. The narrative point of view of the journal sections is first person. The narrative point of view of the movie script sections is third person objective.

Tuesday, July 7:

1. Why does Steve “hate, hate, hate” this place?

2. What is Bolden’s testimony and how does it advance Petrocelli’s case?

3. In the flashback scene with Peaches and Johnny, what are the characters debating?

4. How does Briggs try to discredit (make the jury doubt) the truth of Bolden’s testimony?
5. What are two dangers Steve and other inmates face at night in the detention center?
6. What does the flashback between Steve and Jerry reveal about the nature of the brothers’ relationship?

**Wednesday, July 8:**
1. What precaution do the prison guards take and why?
2. What is the significance of the following passage? “It’s funny, but when I’m sitting in the courtroom, I don’t feel like I’m involved in the case. It’s like the lawyers and the judge and everybody are doing a job that involves me, but I don’t have a role. It’s only when I go back to the cells that I know I’m involved.”
3. Considering your answer to question #2, why do you think the author chooses to write the trial scenes as a script and the prison cell scenes as a personal journal?
4. What internal conflict is revealed in the following passage? “I want to look like a good person. I want to feel like I’m a good person because I believe I am. But being in here with these guys makes it hard to think about yourself as being different. We look about the same, and even though I’m younger than they are, it’s hard not to notice that we are all pretty young. I see what Miss O’Brien meant when she said part of her job was to make me look human in the eyes of the jury.” (Conflict, inference, and characterization)
5. What does the following passage reveal about Steve’s character and about the setting? “I hope I didn’t shout out in my sleep. That would look weak to everybody. It’s not good to be weak in here.”
6. What is the testimony of Detective Karyl?
7. Describe Steve’s nightmare/fantasy sequence about Death Row. What does that scene reveal about his emotions and character?
8. O’Brien suggests to Steve that in the eyes of the jury he really isn’t innocent until proven guilty. What does she mean by this? (theme, character)
9. Compare and contrast Osvaldo Cruz’s behavior in the neighborhood flashback with his behavior on the witness stand. What do these behaviors reveal about him? (character)

**Thursday, July 9:**
1. What is Steve’s reaction to O’Brien’s claim that the judge could sentence him to 25 years to life? What is your reaction to this possibility?
2. What literary device is used in the following passage? “I wanted to open my shirt and tell her to look into my heart to see who I really was, who the real Steve Harmon was.” What is the author trying to convey with this passage? (Figurative language—metaphor. Character Development. Theme)
3. Consider the following passage: “While we were waiting, they brought King in and handcuffed him near me. I thought of the movie, of what kind of camera angle I would use. I could smell the different scents of him. He had on aftershave lotion and some kind of grease on his hair. I could separate the smells. Please don’t speak to me, I prayed.” What does this passage reveal about Steve? What does it reveal about James King?
4. Why does Steve say James King can’t scare him?
5. What is the reaction of the kids visiting court when Steve turns and looks at them? How do you think Steve feels about their reaction?
6. Summarize Osvaldo’s testimony.
7. Do you believe Osvaldo when he says, “I was in because I was scared of Bobo?” Explain.
8. Have you ever participated in an activity simply because you were afraid of what others would say or do if you didn’t participate? Do you know of any other people who have done this? Why do you think this happens?
9. How do Briggs and O’Brien try to discredit Osvaldo or show the jury that Osvaldo’s character is questionable?
10. Do you trust Osvaldo? Why or why not?
11. What do we learn about Steve and Mr. Harmon from the scene describing Mr. Harmon’s visit with his son?
12. Steve is deeply shaken by seeing his father cry? Why? Has there ever been a time in your life when the reaction of someone else troubled you greatly? If so, what were the circumstances of the situation? Why do you think it affected you so strongly?
13. What do the two flashback scenes in which Steve learns of Nesbitt’s murder suggest about his emotions at the time? What conclusions can you draw about his probable guilt or innocence?

**Friday, July 10:**
1. Why does Petrocelli show the jury the photographs of the crime scene? (character motivation)
2. What is the external reason Steve is about to throw up?
3. What is the internal reason Steve is about to throw up?
4. What is the significance of the four-way split-screen montage? (Steve’s split-image presentation suggests the reader’s difficulties in coordinating conflicting and contradictory testimony by a group of witnesses. Some evidence, such as testimony of Steve’s relationship with James King and Bobo Evans, indicates guilt. Other testimonies make no connection between Steve and the crime or criminals).
5. According to Moody’s testimony, what caused the death of Mr. Nesbitt?
6. With a partner, sketch the trajectory or path of the bullet through the body (as described by Moody).

**Saturday, July 11:**
1. Why do you think Miss O’Brien warns Steve not to write anything in his notebook that he doesn’t want the prosecutor to see?
2. Why do you think Steve is becoming more and more concerned about what Miss O’Brien thinks about him?
3. How have Steve’s fears changed as he has gone through this experience?
4. As a small group, act out the story of Ernie’s arrest. Then be prepared to share with the class your answers to the following questions:
   a) Why does Ernie believe he is not guilty?
   b) Do you agree with his argument? Why or why not?
5. James King says, “When Bobo shows, he shows correct but sometime he act like a spaceman or something.” What does the simile James King uses to describe Bobo Evans reveal about his attitude towards Bobo?
6. Steve says, “Bob’s not Einstein.” What literary device is being used here and what does it reveal about character?
7. In the flashback where James King asks Steve to be lookout, the author ends the scene before the reader can learn Steve’s answer. Why do you think the author does this? What do you predict was Steve’s answer? Why?

**Sunday, July 12:**
1. Compare and contrast Mrs. Harmon’s response to Steve and his situation to that of Mr. Harmon’s response a few days earlier. What does this reveal about each of their characters?
2. What do you think Steve means when he says, “I need the movie more and more?”
Monday, July 13:
1. Who is Lorelle Henry and what is her testimony?
4. How does Asa Briggs try to make Lorelle Henry’s testimony seem less damaging to King?
5. Why doesn’t O’Brien ask Lorelle Henry any questions?
6. Describe Bobo Evans’s physical appearance when he arrives at court. What does his physical appearance suggest about his character?
7. What is Bobo’s testimony?
8. What does Bobo say that hurts James King’s case?
9. What does Bobo say that hurts Steve Harmon’s case?
10. What does Bobo say (or not say) that might help Steve Harmon’s case?
11. Reread the paragraph on p. 183 in which Bobo describes how he got arrested when people were “dropping dimes” on him. With a partner, summarize in your own words what Bobo is saying. Also summarize what this reveals about Bobo. (Summarizing. Interpreting dialect, idiom, and metaphor. Character analysis).
12. How do Briggs and O’Brien try to discredit Bobo?
13. Describe the joke and metaphor of “The People Rest” cartoon.

Tuesday, July 14:
1. What is O’Brien’s strategy to defend Steve?
2. What do you think Steve wants to tell Jerry when he imagines saying, “Think about all the tomorrows of your life?”
3. What is Dorothy Moore’s testimony and how trustworthy is it? Explain.
4. What is George Nipping’s testimony?
5. Why isn’t James King going to testify?
6. Why does O’Brien believe Steve has to testify?
7. Describe the significance of the turning cup.
9. How does Petrocelli use the acquaintance/friend trick to make Steve look bad in the eyes of the jury?
10. How does Mr. Sawicki serve as a character witness for Steve? How does Petrocelli try to discredit Mr. Sawicki in the eyes of the jury?

Closing Arguments
1. Using a T-chart, summarize the arguments Petrocelli uses to prove that James King should be found guilty versus the arguments Briggs uses to prove that King should be found not guilty. Feel free to add any additional arguments you think of that could be used.
2. Using a T-chart, summarize the arguments Petrocelli uses to prove that Steve Harmon should be found guilty versus the arguments O’Brien uses to prove that Steve Harmon should be found not guilty. Feel free to add any additional arguments you think of that could be used.
3. What does the judge say in his instructions to the jury that really haunts Steve?
4. If you were a member of the jury, would you find James King guilty or not guilty? Why?
5. If you were a member of the jury, would you find Steve Harmon guilty or not guilty? Why?
Friday afternoon, July 17:
1. Describe the internal conflict Steve is going through? How has his understanding of his responsibility in the crime changed since the beginning of the novel?
2. What is the verdict? Do you believe it is a fair verdict? Explain.

December, 5 months later:
1. Briefly describe the resolution.
2. What still haunts Steve? Why do you think he is still haunted by this?
3. Have you ever been haunted by something you have done or by someone’s opinion of you? Explain if you feel comfortable sharing this.
4. What do you think is the answer to Steve’s question: “What did she see?”
5. What do you see when you see Steve Harmon?
1. What is the title of the novel?

2. Who is the author of the novel?

3. Define felony murder.

4. According to the prosecutor, how did each of the following characters participate in the crime?
   James King—
   Steve Harmon—
   Bobo Evans—
   Osvaldo Cruz—

5. After discovering the dead body and the open cash register drawer, Jose Delgado discovers that ______________ are missing.

6. The setting of Monster is ____________________________.

7. Steve is writing down his experiences in the form of a screenplay because he is interested in one day being a ____________________________.

8. Who is Kathy O’Brien?

9. Who is Sandra Petrocelli?

10. Who is Asa Briggs?

11. Who is Alguinaldo Nesbitt?

12. Who is Jerry?

13. Who is the first person point of view narrator?

14. The gun that killed Alguinaldo Nesbitt belonged to ____________________________.

15. The protagonist of Monster is ____________________________.

16. The two sides of a trial are the Prosecution and the ________________.