


## Gift of the magi discussion questions

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Level: Intermediate -Advanced language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. It includes lexicon activities. Time: about 2 hours. Materials: A copy of the story of the Gift of the Magi, a biography of O. Henry, examples of components for literary analysis, and access to video. Goals: Students will read and discuss the story of the Gift of the Magi by O. Henry. Students will gain a better understanding of history by studying literary devices and terms (e.g. images, symbolism, settings) used to analyze stories. They will also learn to analyze the relationship between characters and events in history using these literary devices. I. Pre-Reading Exercise Stimulation Of Background Knowledge Analysis Headlines and Photo Directions: Ask students to read the title story. Then, let them carefully examine the photo. Based on these sources, ask students to create a list of words and ideas they think may be related to this article. Preview Discussion Issues Directions: Have Students Discuss the following issues. The gift of the Magi is the story of a young married couple who are very poor. This story tells how they cope with the problem of secretly buying Christmas gifts for each other with very little money to spend. The questions below ask you to think about gifts and their value. Discuss your ideas with class members. 1. In your opinion, what makes a gift valuable? 2. Describe the most valuable gift you have ever received. 3. What is the most valuable gift you have given someone? II. When reading vocabulary tasks: The direction of the word withdrawal: Place students in groups and their output of the meaning of words in bold is taken from history. They can use this great Vocabulary Chart Learnnc.org as a guide. Vocabulary Cluster Learnnc.org is a story about the meaning of true love and selflessness. Della sat down on a shabby sofa and howled. They lived in a furnished apartment for \$8 a week. There was a mailbox in the lobby below. The costs were more than she had calculated. Suddenly she was circling out of the window and standing in front of the glass there were two possessions by James Dillingham Youngs, in which they both took mighty pride. One day she faltered for a minute. She's robbing stores for Jim's gift. He just looked at her fixed with this peculiar expression on his face. Prediction and Character Organizer Charts Directions: Students can use these predictions and character profile charts at Pace High School as a reading tool while reading to help in their understanding of events and characters in the story. The questions for understanding the Directions: Once the students have reviewed the components for literary analysis they answer the following questions from history. They can use the character profile chart as a guide. What holiday does history take place? Identify the characters in the story. What are the two valuable owned by Della and Jim? How much money did Della first have to buy Jim's gift? What did Della do to get the extra money for the gift? What gift did Della give Jim? How did Jim get the extra money to buy Della's gift? What gift did Jim buy for Della? Did it work out the way Jim and Della planned? Explain why or why not. Directions: In groups, students discuss the following issues. What are some of the themes in history? What are some of the characters in the story? Images are descriptive language that creates a picture in the mind of the reader. Identify a few examples of how O. Henry used the images. What does the reference to magicians in this story mean? Writing assignments: Have students choose a topic from below and write an essay to share with the class. 1. Some of the themes in this story are selfless love, sacrifice, and the disappointment of poverty. Choose one of these topics and write an essay describing your thoughts on the subject. 3. Write a description for each character that appears in the story. 4. O. Henry is known for unexpected endings in his stories. In The Gift of the Magi, it is surprising that both Jim and Della sacrificed their most cherished possession for the sake of another. See if you can write another surprise ending story. Share your ending with the class. Visit ESL Voices Essay Writing Modes. IV. Listening to Activity Video Clip: O. Henry Dar of the Magi (Free audiobook with English subtitles / Closed subtitles) Issues to discuss (listening) - After listening to the story, do you feel that you understand it better? If so, describe how. If not, explain why not. Give reasons for your choice. ANSWER KEY: The Gift of the Magi Henry, Oh. Genre Brief Review of the Story of O. Henry was known both for his sense of humor and for the surprise twist he often gave his stories. In this tale that has become a Christmas classic, a struggling, poor young couple faces Christmas without gifts until everyone decides to sacrifice their most valuable possession to give their spouse a wonderful gift. The twist at the end of the story seems to make their sacrifice useless - or is it? This funny and touching tale raises questions about the wisdom of giving: should the gift be valued because of its usefulness or because of the sacrifice of the giver? What is the relationship between return and need? The full text vestmon/Gift\_of\_the\_Magi.html cannot guarantee the accuracy or continued availability of this online text. Please let us know if you have encountered any problems. Source The Perfect Gift, by Amy Cass (Indiana University Press, 2002). Type Reading Topics Giving and GettingLoved and CompassionThe Nature and EnvironmentPoperia and need big questions What good giving require? What makes a good gift? How do we define love? How do we show love? Which one Best gift, comb or pocket watch? O. Henry's story The Gift of the Magi (1905) offers an unforgettable ironic twist. We hope that our teaching guide is especially useful for teachers and students to study the irony and appreciate the clever literary devices of O. Henry. Read the story: Gift of the Magi, Character Analysis and Summary, Genre and Literary Devices, Ymology of Magicians, Citations, Discussion Issues, Doubles Readings, Useful References, and Notes/Teacher CommentsDella Dillingham - A young woman married to Jim whose valuable possessions were her long, beautiful hair. Jim Dillingham - a young man married to Della, whose price of ownership was an old pocket watch with a leather strap. Plot Summary: Jim and Della Dillingham are poor, young married couples who don't have enough money to buy Christmas presents. Both sell their most valuable items in order to pay for a gift for others at Christmas. Della combs her hair While the gift of the Magi certainly falls into the fictional story genre, he uses what might be called a subgenre of dramatic irony. Dramatic irony where the reader learns the secret that the main character (s) don't know about yet. Without other knowledge, both exchanged their most valuable possessions (priceless) for a gift that could no longer be used by others because that person had given up his own possession. We would stop Della from selling her hair, or Jim from selling her watch, but we can't. That's what makes for the engaging storyline that keeps us hooked. We want to know how they'll react when they find out. Literary DevicesIntimacy - O. Henry effectively uses the literary technique of creating intimacy with his reader, addressing us directly to make us feel like we are in the same room with the main characters. Examples:... already introduced to you as Della Perhaps you saw the pier glass in the \$8 Bat. Self-deprecating - O. Henry makes fun of himself and his letter O, and the next two hours stumbled on pink wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was looting stores for Jim now. Similes - Comparing Della's hair, ripples and radiance like a cascade of brown waters and describing myself after a haircut: I look like a Coe Island choir girl. Describing Jim standing still, as immobile as a setter on the smell of quail. Biblical referencesSMagic King Solomon's ShebaPrimary TopicsSooting themes Preparation for what you can't have against getting what you can't use Material Happiness against spiritual or emotional happinessIn the three KingsMagi is Latin, that is, skilled magicians, astrologers. Singular is a magician who is the Persian root of the Indo-Iranian magician, which means powerful and rich, expressing ability. Latins called them sages, the Persians called them magi. Also from the Greek Magos (5th century BC), which belongs to the Persian priest and learned as shown in the Bible in the Gospel of MatthewAcresis lusolf Saxony (died (died The three pagan kings were called Magi not because they were magicians, but because of the great science of astrology that was theirs. Those whom the Jews called scribes and Greeks, philosophers and Latins, sages, Persians called the Magi. And the reason they were called kings is because at that time philosophers and sages were rulers. Pocketwatch, 1859 Outline what the following quotes mean and how they relate to history: One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That's it. And sixty cents was in pennies. Whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his apartment above, he was called Jim and very much hugged Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. If King Solomon had been a janitor, with all his treasures folded in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch the day before as he passed by, just to see him tearing his beard with envy. So now Della's beautiful hair has fallen about her, rippling and shiny like a cascade of brown waters. She reached below the knee and made herself almost clothes for her. I buy hair, Madame said. 'Taker yer hat and let's look at the look of it.' It was like him. Silence and value is a description applied to both. Anyway, you don't like me? I'm me without hair, isn't it? Mathematician or wit will give you the wrong answer. The dull precious metal seemed to erupt with a reflection of its bright and fervent spirit. Let's take comfort in our Christmas presents and keep them the day before. They are too good to use just now. Magi invented the art of giving Christmas gifts. Being wise, their gifts were undoubtedly wise, perhaps having the privilege of sharing in the event of duplication. But in the last word to the wise these days let it be said that of all those who give gifts these two were wise. Turtle-shell comb1. Opening row, One Dollar and Eight to Seven Cents (in 1905) is equivalent to how much in today's dollars? Here's the inflation calculator Why is this amount both important and unimportant in history?2. Identify the irony and how O. Henry uses it in history3. Discuss the themes of sacrifice and love in history4. Did Della and Jim's reactions to their predicament give up their most valuable possess for gifts that are now useless to surprise you? Instead of getting angry at each other or sad, Jim invites them to put the gifts away for a while and says: And now suppose you put the chops on. How does material property relate to their true love for each other?5. Della craved a comb with little hope of possession, and now that they were hers, she couldn't use it. Think of a situation in your own life that can be defined as irony6. Why did O. Henry choose this by analogy? Jim inside the door as immovable as a setter on the smell of smell Describe the use of O. Henry's biblical references (mages, King Solomon, queen Sheba) and his use of the symbolism that Ella and Jim are magicians. Reference to the Holy Bible, Book of Matthew8. Compare the events of the Magi's adoration with the story of O. Henry. Recommended reading: Henry Wadsworth's poem Longfellow's The Three Kings, in particular, in his lines: They (the people) considered the sages crazy and after the kings presented their precious gifts: And the mother wondered and bowed her head, and sat like a statue of stone; her heart was troubled, but comforted... 9. Describe the value of the wise in history. What does the word wise (still widely used idiom) mean?10. What is the definition of a meaningful gift? Why do you think this story is particularly touching at Christmas?11. Compare the elements of irony in the Falcon of Federigo with the Gift of the Magi. Identify the literary devices used by each author to put your reader in the plight of the main characters.12 Read O. Henry's The Last Leaf, compare his themes of sacrifice and irony with The Gift of the Magi.Essay #1: Describe your own philosophy of giving gifts (and receiving) and what makes for the most meaningful gifts. Match your experience with history. The essay prompts #2: Think of an incident that you find ironic in your own life (or refer to a film or story where irony is central to the plot). Why is the irony so attractive to readers/viewers? Discuss the importance of approaching an agreement or resolving a riddle. FalconCompare Federigo Dar magi to other stories subgenre dramatic irony: When comparing the use of dramatic irony, discuss the plot, themes, the role of irony in attracting the reader, and the contrasts that make each story unique. Teachers: Calling students to identify other stories they read that contain dramatic ironies might assign them to compose their own to better appreciate the richness and appeal of irony in the narrative. It's both fun for viewers and writer!O. Henry Teacher's work is never done We need to hear from you! Please share your lesson plans, discussion questions or pitfalls to avoid while teaching this work, pursuing our common interests, helping a larger student enjoy reading classical literature! Contact us via Facebook or TwitterVisit our Teachers Resources for Recommended Works, Supporting Literacy Training at All Levels of American Literature Training GuidesIntnt American Literature Home - Pinterest Pinterest the gift of the magi discussion questions and answers

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