

# The Gift Of The Magi Worksheet

## THE Gift OF THE Magi

by O. Henry (United States, 1906)

This is a traditional retelling of the endearing story of a husband and wife who pawn their most precious things in order to buy gifts for each other, only to discover the gifts are no longer needed. The original story was written by William Sydney Porter, who wrote under the pen name O. Henry. He was famous for plot twists and surprise endings. Students will likely be familiar with the plot because it's been so readily adapted everywhere, from *Scrooge* to *The Simpsons*, and even by *Wish Disney*.



### CART OF CHARACTERS

Wise Man 1  
Wise Man 2  
Wise Man 3

Della A young woman  
Jim Della's husband  
Sydney The jeweler

Mrs. Parsons Della and Jim's neighbor  
Madame Sotheby The wig maker  
Shopskeeper

### Vocabulary

possession

sophisticated

distinguished

hospitable

cascade

quibbling

misplaced

precious

platinum

transit

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The gift of the magi worksheet is an educational tool designed to enhance the understanding of O. Henry's classic short story, "The Gift of the Magi." This profound tale explores themes of love, sacrifice, and the true meaning of giving, making it a popular choice for literature classes. A worksheet focused on this story can facilitate comprehension, spark discussion, and encourage critical thinking among students. In this article, we will delve into the components of a typical "Gift of the Magi" worksheet, the significance of the story, and how educators can effectively use this resource in their classrooms.

## Understanding "The Gift of the Magi"

Published in 1905, "The Gift of the Magi" tells the story of a young couple, Jim and Della, who are deeply in love but financially constrained. As Christmas approaches, both wish to give the other a special gift. Della sells her long, beautiful hair to buy a platinum chain for Jim's prized possession, his watch. Unbeknownst to her, Jim sells his watch to buy a set of combs for Della's hair. The irony of their sacrifices highlights the themes of love and selflessness.

## Key Themes in "The Gift of the Magi"

Understanding the main themes in the story can greatly enhance students' comprehension. Here are some key themes to consider:

- **Love and Sacrifice:** The central theme revolves around the extent to

which Jim and Della are willing to go for each other.

- **Irony:** The story's ending illustrates situational irony, where the outcome is starkly different from what is expected.
- **Materialism vs. Selflessness:** It contrasts material possessions with the value of love and personal sacrifice.
- **The True Spirit of Giving:** The act of giving is depicted as more meaningful than the gifts themselves.

By incorporating these themes into the worksheet, educators can encourage students to think critically about the text and its broader implications.

## Components of a "Gift of the Magi Worksheet"

A well-structured worksheet should include several components that guide students through the analysis of the story. Below is a breakdown of essential sections commonly found in a "Gift of the Magi" worksheet.

### 1. Reading Comprehension Questions

These questions assess students' understanding of the plot and character motivations. Here are some examples:

1. What sacrifices do Jim and Della make for each other?
2. How does the author use irony in the story?
3. What does the ending of the story reveal about the nature of love?

These questions can be used in group discussions or as individual assignments to reinforce comprehension.

### 2. Vocabulary Section

Introducing key vocabulary from the text can enhance students' language skills. A vocabulary section might include words like "platinum," "comb," "sacrifice," and "irony." Students can be asked to:

- Define each word.
- Use the word in a sentence.
- Identify synonyms or antonyms.

This section not only builds vocabulary but also deepens students' engagement with the text.

### **3. Character Analysis**

A character analysis section allows students to explore the personalities and motivations of Jim and Della. Questions for this section could include:

1. How do Jim and Della demonstrate their love for one another?
2. What are the key traits of each character? Provide examples from the text.
3. How do the characters change throughout the story?

This analysis can help students understand character development and thematic elements in literature.

### **4. Thematic Exploration**

A section dedicated to themes encourages students to think critically about the underlying messages of the story. Possible prompts could include:

- Discuss the significance of sacrifice in the story. What does it say about love?
- How does O. Henry portray the concept of wealth and poverty?
- What lessons can we learn about giving and receiving?

This encourages students to connect the themes with their own lives and broader societal issues.

### **5. Creative Extension Activities**

To further engage students, the worksheet can include creative activities. These may consist of:

1. Writing a letter from Della to Jim explaining her feelings.
2. Creating a visual representation of the story's main themes using drawings or digital tools.
3. Writing an alternative ending to the story that explores a different outcome for Jim and Della.

These activities not only enhance comprehension but also foster creativity and personal expression.

## **Using the "Gift of the Magi Worksheet" in the Classroom**

Implementing the "Gift of the Magi" worksheet in the classroom can be done in several effective ways:

### **1. Group Discussions**

Engaging students in group discussions about their responses to the worksheet can facilitate deeper understanding. Teachers can guide conversations around themes, character decisions, and personal reflections on the story.

### **2. Pair Work**

Pairing students to complete sections of the worksheet can encourage collaboration. Students can share insights and debate interpretations, fostering critical thinking.

### **3. Homework Assignments**

Parts of the worksheet can be assigned as homework, allowing students to reflect on the text independently. This can include vocabulary exercises or thematic essays.

### **4. Assessment**

The worksheet can serve as a formative assessment tool, providing teachers with insight into students' understanding and areas that may require further exploration.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the gift of the magi worksheet is a versatile educational resource that aids in the exploration of O. Henry's timeless story. By fostering comprehension through reading questions, vocabulary exercises, character analysis, thematic exploration, and creative activities, educators can enhance students' literary appreciation and critical thinking skills. As students engage with the themes of love, sacrifice, and the true spirit of giving, they can draw connections to their own lives, making "The Gift of the Magi" a relevant and impactful text for generations to come.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the main theme of 'The Gift of the Magi' as discussed in the worksheet?

The main theme revolves around selfless love and sacrifice, highlighting how true giving comes from the heart, as both characters sacrifice their most prized possessions for each other.

### How does the worksheet suggest analyzing the characters' motivations in 'The Gift of the Magi'?

The worksheet suggests examining the characters' backgrounds, their financial struggles, and the depth of their love to understand their motivations, showcasing how these factors drive their decisions.

### What are some key literary devices identified in the worksheet that O. Henry uses in the story?

Key literary devices include irony, symbolism, and foreshadowing, with irony being particularly significant in the ending where the sacrifices lead to an unexpected outcome.

### What questions does the worksheet pose to encourage critical thinking about the ending of 'The Gift of the Magi'?

The worksheet poses questions such as 'What does the ending reveal about the nature of love?' and 'How do the characters' choices reflect the idea of wealth versus love?'

### How can the worksheet be used to enhance comprehension of 'The Gift of the Magi'?

The worksheet can enhance comprehension by providing guided questions, summarization tasks, and analysis exercises that encourage deeper engagement with the text and its themes.

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