**GIFT OF THE MAGI**

**by O. Henry**

**Discussion Questions**

The Gift of the Magi is a story about a young married couple who are very poor. This story tells of how they handle the challenge 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.

1. In your opinion what makes a gift valuable?

It’s definitely the sincerity to well prepare a gift for his/her beloved.

2. Describe the most valuable gift you have ever received.

The most valuable gift that I have ever received is an album which is made by my girlfriend, in which stored our unforgettable memories.

3. What was the most valuable gift you have given someone?

I used to give my grandfather a basket of fish on his 60’s birthday party and the amount of fish is sixty which is the same as my grandfather’s age.

**Questions for Comprehension**

During what holiday does the story take place?

Christmas Day

Identify the characters in the story.

Della, Jim

What are the two valuable possessions belonging to Della and Jim?

Beautiful long hair and gold watch

Why would Jim’s watch have great sentimental value to him?

It was an ancestral watch that had been his father’s and his grandfather’s.

In what ways does Della’s hair have more than monetary value to her? Include details from the text to support your answer.

Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts.

How does the narrator describe Della’s long hair and Jim’s watch? Include some details from the text in your answer.

Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

How much money did Della have at first to buy Jim’s gift?

$1.87

What did Della do to get additional money for his gift? Why did she do this?

He sold his gold watch. Because he wanted to buy Della a present but he did not have enough money,

What gift did Della buy for Jim?

It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design

How did Jim get additional money to buy Della’s gift? Why did he do this?

He sold his gold watch. Because he wanted to buy Della a present but he did not have enough money.

What gift did Jim buy for Della?

The set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jeweled rims.

How are their purchases described? Include some details from the text in your answer.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

How do you think their sacrifices compare with each other?

It was very touching and moving

Did things work out the way Jim and Della planned? Explain why or why not.

I thought the answer is yes. Because the gift is a thing that expresses a person’s love. And in the story, they all felt the love from each other, I thought that was enough.

**Questions for Reflection**

Themes are messages or ideas in a story. What are some of the themes in the story?

The love between two people

Symbolism is the practice using an object, place, person or words to represent an abstract idea in a story. What are some of the symbols in the story?

The gold chain and the hairpin

Imagery is descriptive language that creates a picture in the reader’s mind. Identify some examples of how O. Henry used imagery.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

How does O. Henry use the following literary techniques in his story?

1. Foreshadowing
2. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty- seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

2.Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride.

1. Irony

1. Hyperbole

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her.

1. Similes

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy.

1. Metaphor

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings.

1. Personification

What does the reference to the Magi mean in this story?

It means that a person would sacrifice all the things he owns for his beloved.

**Writing Assignment**

Choose one of the three topics and write at least 3 paragraphs; use correct spelling and punctuation.

1. Look for clues in the story that describe Della’s and Jim’s characters- things that tell you what kind of person they are. Do not use physical descriptions. List at least three different characteristics with quotes from the story that support you opinions.

2. Using the information from the lists above, in paragraph form, write a character synopsis of Della and Jim. Analyze them. Think about their personalities and about the reasons that they did what they did in the story. Do you feel that you would do the same thing in their position? Why or why not.

3. Some of the themes in this story are selfless love, sacrifice, and the frustration of poverty. Choose one of these themes and describe your thoughts about the theme.

I choose Selfless love. No matter Della or Jim would sacrifice the most valuable thing they have to well prepare a tailored gift for their beloveds which deeply touched the bottom of my heart.

4. After their gift exchange, are Della and Jim richer, poorer, or just about where they were at the beginning?