

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 ENGLISH/HOMEWORK 2

NAME (FIRST AND LAST): _____ GRADE: _____

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the first half of O. Henry's short story, "The Gift of the Magi." Answer the questions in the right column. Your responses may be in point form, but ensure that your instructor understands them and that they are legible.

<p><i>"The Gift of the Magi" is a short story, written by O. Henry (a pen name for William Sydney Porter), about a young married couple and how they deal with the challenge of buying secret Christmas gifts for each other with very little money. (Wikipedia)</i></p> <p>One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty- seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.</p> <p>There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.</p> <p>While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.</p> <p>In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."</p> <p>The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, though, they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim"</p>	<p>Why does Della's cheeks "burn" during the process of saving sixty cents in pennies?</p> <p>The next day would be Christmas. How do you think she will spend \$1.87?</p> <p>Why does she cry? Any guesses?</p> <p>How are Della and Mr. James Dillingham Young related?</p> <p>Are Della and Jim poor or rich? Briefly explain.</p>
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<p>and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.</p> <p>Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling--something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.</p> <p>There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pierglass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.</p> <p>Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.</p> <p>Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. 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.</p> <p>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. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.</p>	<p>What is Della going to use her savings for?</p> <p>Does Della love her husband? Explain.</p> <p>What two possessions are Jim and Della extremely proud of?</p> <p>← Find a hyperbole in this paragraph?</p> <p>← Find a simile in this paragraph?</p> <p>Why does Della falter for a minute? What is going through her mind?</p>
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On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mne. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

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

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation--as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value--the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends--a mammoth task.

(Read the next few paragraphs to find out.)

← Where is the "hashed metaphor" in this paragraph?

How much does the gift cost? How do you know?

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Find the paragraph in bold print. Why does the author make reference to the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon? To better answer this question, read the notes below.



Queen of Sheba, Arabic Bilqīs, Ethiopian Makeda (flourished 10th century BCE), according to Jewish and Islamic traditions, ruler of the kingdom of Saba' (or Sheba) in southwestern Arabia. In the biblical account of the reign of King Solomon, she visited his court at the head of a camel caravan bearing gold, jewels, and spices. The story provides evidence for the existence of important commercial relations between ancient Israel and Arabia. According to the Bible, the purpose of her visit was to test Solomon's wisdom by asking him to solve a number of riddles.

(<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Queen-of-Sheba>)



Nearly all evidence for Solomon's life and reign comes from the Bible (especially the first 11 chapters of the First Book of Kings and the first nine chapters of the Second Book of Chronicles). According to those sources, his father was David (flourished c. 1000 bce), the poet and king who, against great odds, founded the Judaeen dynasty and united all the tribes of Israel under one monarch. Solomon's mother was Bathsheba, formerly the wife of David's Hittite general, Uriah. She proved to be adept at court intrigue, and through her efforts, in concert with the prophet Nathan, Solomon was anointed king while David was still alive, despite the fact that he was younger than his brothers.

Why does the author make reference to the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon? Use the rubric on the following page to guide your writing.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
The misreading is severe.	The claim made is rather simple. There may be some misreading.	A claim is made about the author's purpose.	An interesting claim is made about the author's purpose.
The discussion seems off-topic.	There is a discussion about Della's hair and Jim's watch, but it may be too short.	There is a discussion about Della's hair and Jim's watch.	There is a discussion about Della's hair and Jim's watch, which are hyperbolically represented. The hyperbole's effect on the reader is also discussed.
Grammatical errors are severe.	Grammatical errors may block comprehension.	Grammatical errors are minor.	There are essentially no grammatical errors.

VOCABULARY

Find ten words that you are not familiar with and right them down in the left-most column. In the middle column, write down what you think the word means. In the right-most column, copy down its definition from a dictionary.

Word	Guess its meaning	Definition according to a dictionary
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

IDENTIFYING TYPES OF SENTENCES

Sentences can be identified by type.

- A **declarative sentence** makes a statement. It is followed by a period.
EXAMPLE: Lucy is our first dog.
- An **interrogative sentence** asks a question. It is followed by a question mark.
EXAMPLE: Do you plan on finishing your work?
- An **imperative sentence** expresses a command or a request. It is followed by a period.
EXAMPLE: Bring it to me.
- An **exclamatory sentence** expresses strong emotion. It can also express a command or request that is made with great excitement. It is followed by an exclamation mark.
EXAMPLE: How dare you accuse me of stealing!

Write **D** for declarative, **IN** for interrogative, **IM** for imperative, or **E** for exclamatory before each sentence. Put the correct punctuation at the end of each sentence.

- ____ 1. I plan to leave by midnight _____
- ____ 2. Let your conscience be your guide _____
- ____ 3. How do you plan on getting to the party without a car _____
- ____ 4. Arrive with your assignment completed _____
- ____ 5. There was nothing he couldn't do, nothing _____
- ____ 6. Who do we have to thank for the beautiful flowers _____
- ____ 7. We were the first ones there _____
- ____ 8. I'll have a second helping, if you don't mind _____
- ____ 9. Go away _____
- ____ 10. What a nice day it is _____

THE END