

extended reading comprehension the gift of the magi answer key

Extended reading comprehension: The Gift of the Magi answer key is an essential resource for educators and students alike, aimed at deepening understanding of O. Henry's classic short story. This narrative is rich in themes of love, sacrifice, and irony, making it a popular choice for classroom discussions and literary analysis. In this article, we will explore the key elements of "The Gift of the Magi," provide an overview of its plot and characters, and offer a detailed answer key for comprehension questions that can be used to enhance understanding of the text.

Overview of "The Gift of the Magi"

"The Gift of the Magi" was published in 1905 and has since become one of O. Henry's most beloved stories. It tells the tale of a young couple, Jim and Della, who are deeply in love but financially struggling. Each wants to give the other a special Christmas gift, leading to a series of ironic twists that highlight the themes of selflessness and the true spirit of giving.

Plot Summary

The story unfolds as follows:

1. **Setting the Scene:** The narrative begins by describing the humble living conditions of Jim and Della. They are a poor couple living in a modest apartment, facing financial hardships.
2. **Della's Dilemma:** As Christmas approaches, Della is desperate to buy a gift for Jim. She has saved only \$1.87, which is insufficient to purchase the platinum fob chain that would perfectly complement Jim's prized possession, his watch.
3. **The Sacrifice:** In a moment of selfless love, Della decides to sell her long, beautiful hair to a wig maker for \$20. With this money, she buys the fob chain.
4. **Jim's Gift:** Unbeknownst to Della, Jim also makes a sacrifice. He sells his watch to buy a set of combs for Della's hair, which she no longer possesses.
5. **The Irony:** When they exchange gifts on Christmas Eve, the couple realizes the irony of their sacrifices. They both gave up their most treasured possessions to buy gifts for each other, emphasizing the depth of their love.

Key Themes

Understanding the themes in "The Gift of the Magi" is crucial for deeper comprehension:

- Love and Sacrifice: The central theme is the depth of love that drives both characters to sacrifice their most prized possessions for the happiness of the other.
- Materialism vs. Spirituality: The story contrasts material wealth with the spiritual wealth found in love and selflessness.
- Irony: The story is famous for its ironic twist, where both characters' sacrifices render their gifts meaningless yet highlight their love.

Characters

1. Della Young: A young woman with a deep love for her husband, she is characterized by her beauty and her willingness to sacrifice for Jim.
2. Jim Young: Della's husband, who is equally devoted to his wife. He values his watch, a family heirloom, but chooses to sell it for Della's happiness.

Extended Reading Comprehension Questions

To facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the text, here are some comprehension questions that can be used alongside "The Gift of the Magi."

- What does Della decide to sell, and why?
- What is the significance of Jim's watch in the story?
- How does the author use irony to convey the story's message?
- What does the ending reveal about the nature of their love?
- How do the setting and characterization contribute to the overall themes of the story?

Answer Key for Extended Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What does Della decide to sell, and why?

Della decides to sell her long hair to buy a platinum fob chain for Jim's watch. She wants to give him a special gift for Christmas but lacks the money to do so.

2. What is the significance of Jim's watch in the story?

Jim's watch is a family heirloom that symbolizes his past and his connection to his family. It is also a representation of his identity and pride. Selling it signifies his willingness to sacrifice something valuable for Della's happiness.

3. How does the author use irony to convey the story's message?

The story is rife with irony, particularly in the ending. Both Jim and Della sacrifice their most valued possessions to purchase gifts for each other, only to find that their gifts are now useless. This irony underscores the theme that love is more important than material possessions.

4. What does the ending reveal about the nature of their love?

The ending reveals that Jim and Della's love is profound and selfless. Their willingness to give up their most treasured items for one another shows that their love transcends material wealth and is rooted in sacrifice.

5. How do the setting and characterization contribute to the overall themes of the story?

The setting of their modest apartment reflects their financial struggles and enhances the theme of sacrifice. The characterization of Jim and Della illustrates their deep affection for one another, emphasizing that their love is the true gift, regardless of their financial situation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the extended reading comprehension of "The Gift of the Magi" provides a valuable opportunity for students and educators to delve into the rich themes and character dynamics of O. Henry's timeless story. By utilizing comprehension questions and an answer key, learners can engage with the text on a deeper level, fostering critical thinking and a greater appreciation for literature. The story serves as a poignant reminder of the true essence of giving and the sacrifices made in the name of love, making it a lasting classic in American literature.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'The Gift of the Magi'?

The main theme is the idea of selfless love and sacrifice, illustrating how the true value of a gift is in the thought and sacrifice behind it.

Who are the main characters in 'The Gift of the Magi'?

The main characters are Jim and Della, a young couple who are deeply in love and willing to sacrifice their most prized possessions for each other.

What sacrifices do Jim and Della make in the story?

Della sells her long, beautiful hair to buy a platinum chain for Jim's watch, while Jim sells his watch to buy Della a set of combs for her hair.

What is the significance of the title 'The Gift of the Magi'?

The title refers to the wise men (Magi) who brought gifts to Jesus, symbolizing the idea that the greatest gifts come from love and sacrifice.

How does the ending of 'The Gift of the Magi' reflect the story's overall message?

The ending highlights the irony of their sacrifices, yet reinforces the message that their love for each other is the greatest gift of all.

What literary devices are used in 'The Gift of the Magi'?

Key literary devices include irony, symbolism, and foreshadowing, which enhance the emotional depth and themes of the story.

How does the author, O. Henry, develop the characters of Jim and Della?

O. Henry develops Jim and Della as relatable, loving individuals who face financial struggles, showcasing their devotion through their actions and sacrifices.

What lessons can readers learn from 'The Gift of the Magi'?

Readers can learn about the importance of love over material possessions, the value of sacrifice, and the idea that true wealth lies in relationships, not money.

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