



#8736

GIFT OF THE MAGI

Levels: 6-10

21 minutes

NEW DIMENSION MEDIA 1995

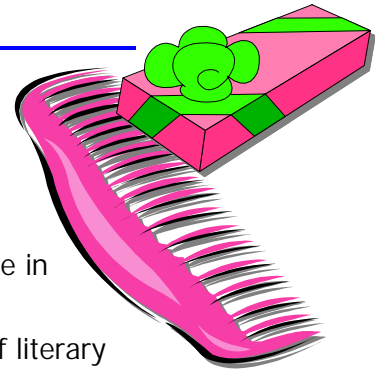
DESCRIPTION

Adaptation of O. Henry's short story of a young couple's devotion to each other. Della and Jim each sell a prized possession in order to have money to buy a Christmas gift for the other. She sells her hair to buy a chain for his watch; he sells his watch to buy combs for her hair.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Language Arts

- ◆ Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
 - Benchmark: Makes connections between the motives of characters or the causes for complex events in texts and those in his or her own life
 - Benchmark: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fantasies, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, tall tales, supernatural tales)



INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To explain the use of coincidence and irony in the story.
2. To study these literary devices in other works of fiction.
3. To outline the plot of the story and compare it to the treatment in this dramatization.



BEFORE SHOWING

1. Define and illustrate the literary devices of coincidence and irony.
2. Discuss some of the differences between how we experience a story when we read it as opposed to seeing it on television, video, or in the theater.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Discuss how the literary devices of coincidence and irony are illustrated in this story.
2. Discuss the significance of the Biblical allusion to the Magi within the context of this story. Recount the story and how it relates to Christmas.

Applications and Activities

1. Have students read the story. Compare how the story and this dramatization make clear:
 - a. the economic circumstances of Jim and Della;
 - b. their relationship;
 - c. the basic character qualities of each; and
 - d. any "larger" thematic significance of the story.
2. There are other dramatizations of this story. Obtain one or more, compare how each achieves each of the points in the previous question and how effective you think each is.
3. Examine other short stories that make use of coincidence and irony, especially those by O. Henry, De Maupassant, and Saki.
4. Find examples of the use of these devices in other forms of literature and in everyday speech.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- After Twenty Years #2548
- The Gift of the Magi (CD-ROM) #9003
- The Last Leaf #3148
- O. Henry's Jimmy Valentine #2576



World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **HENRY, O.**

<http://encarta.msn.com/index/conciseindex/62/06244000.htm>

Read a brief biography of this American writer of short stories from Encarta Encyclopedia.

- **O. HENRY AWARDS**

<http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/ohenry/>

A complete list of winners of the prize stories award from 1919 to 2000, O. Henry FAQ, a link to literary magazines, and other information is provided.

- **O. HENRY MUSEUM**

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/ohenry.htm>

View an images gallery and learn of other Austin, Texas, historic sites significant in O. Henry's life.