

The Gift of the Magi
ArtReach Curriculum Guide Activities

The Gift of the Magi is a classic story that has been told time and time again. These activities give your students a chance to delve into the true meaning of the story by focusing on its main ideas and events throughout the tale.

Activity 1 - Short Summaries for Short Stories

Pre/Post-show Lesson: Language Arts
Literary Text, Main Ideas, Summary

Kentucky Standards:

- Develop an Initial Understanding (Reading)
- Writing Process (Writing)
- Writing Structure (Writing)

Ohio Standards:

- Reading Applications: Literary Text (Reading)
- Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies (Reading)
- Writing Process (Writing)
- Writing Applications (Writing)

Objective

Students will be able to briefly summarize a short story focusing on key issues or main ideas from a story.

Suggested Assessment

1. List main ideas or key issues from a short story.
2. Briefly summarize a short story using only main ideas or key issues and leaving out unnecessary details.

Vocabulary

- summary
- Magi

Materials

- Copy of "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry for each student - http://www.auburn.edu/~vestmon/Gift_of_the_Magi.html
 - Here are a few other options for younger students:
 - Good and Perfect Gifts: An Illustrated Retelling of O. Henry's the Gift of the Magi ISBN: 0316585432
 - The Gift Of The Magi (Aladdin Picture Books) by Lisbeth Zwerger ISBN: 0689817010

- Copies of a variety of other stories by O. Henry to share among students - http://www.online-literature.com/o_henry/
- paper
- pencil

Activity

Teacher will:

1. Gather copies of "The Gift of the Magi" and other short stories by O. Henry.
2. Assign students to read "The Gift of the Magi".
3. Lead discussion on what a summary is.
4. Give an example of a summary using twenty words. (ie. Star Wars depicted the classic story of good versus evil with a variety of diverse characters. As usual, good prevails.)
5. Instruct students to summarize "The Gift of the Magi" in twenty words only (no more, no less). (ie. A married couple sells prized possessions in order to buy gifts for one another. The outcome is not as planned.)
 - a. One easy way to do this is to have students prepare their papers by drawing twenty blank lines on their papers. Each line will be filled in with a single word. Any punctuation should be placed before or after lines and does not count as words.
6. Instruct students to read other short stories by O. Henry (or other authors) and create twenty word summaries relating to those stories.

Students will:

1. Understand what is expected when writing a summary of a short story.
2. Read "The Gift of the Magi".
3. Write a twenty-word summary of "The gift of the Magi".
4. Read additional short stories by O. Henry, or other authors.
5. Write twenty-word summaries based on additional short stories that have been read.

Activity 2 - Cause and Effect and Effect and Effect
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Pre/Post-show Lesson: Language Arts

Cause and Effect

Kentucky Standards:

- Demonstrating a Critical Stance (Reading)

Ohio Standards:

- Writing Applications (Writing)

Objective

Students will use literary text to find and write cause and effect relationships.

Suggested Assessment

1. Identify cause and effect relationships in a literary work.

2. Identify how the effect in one cause and effect relationship can be a cause in another cause and effect relationship.
3. State an example that gives the effect first and the cause second.

Vocabulary

- cause
- effect
- Magi

Materials

- copy of "The Gift of the Magi"
- paper
- pencil

Activity

Teacher will:

1. Gather enough copies of "The Gift of the Magi" for class.
2. Assign students to read "The Gift of the Magi".
3. Lead discussion regarding "The Gift of the Magi".
4. Break students down into small groups and assign them a small section of "The Gift of the Magi" to discuss and find cause and effect relationships.
5. State an example that demonstrates that the cause is not always stated first in a cause and effect relationship. (ie. 1) The car ran off the road due to the ice on the streets. 2) From the first paragraph of "the Gift of the Magi": Della saved one dollar and eighty-seven cents because of her dealing with the grocer, the vegetable man and the butcher.
6. Explain to students that there are times when the effect of one cause and effect relationship can become the cause of another cause and effect relationship causing a cause and effect chain. (ie. Because Della had very little money, she sold her hair. Selling her hair allowed Della to have money. Since Della had money, she could buy Jim a present. When Della bought Jim a present she become happy.)

Students will:

1. Read "The Gift of the Magi"
2. Review a teacher assigned section of "The Gift of the Magi" within a small group looking for and discussing cause and effect relationships.
3. Identify as many cause and effect relationships as possible from assigned section.
4. Identify any cause and effect relationships that where the effect is stated first.
5. Using the entire text, work within small group to make a cause and effect chain making sure that the effect from one cause and effect relationship becomes the cause in the next cause and effect relationship throughout the chain.

Teacher Resources:

The Gift of the Magi (text)

http://www.auburn.edu/~vestmon/Gift_of_the_Magi.html

http://www.online-literature.com/o_henry/1014/

Information regarding The Gift of the Magi video

http://www.montereymedia.com/literature/shortstories/gift_magis.php

O. Henry's Biography and short stories

http://www.online-literature.com/o_henry/