“The Gift of the Magi”
Written by O. Henry

**KEY IDEA** A husband and wife look for ways to buy each other Christmas presents. They both sell their prized possessions and buy each other gifts they can no longer use.

**LITERACY STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS PLAN**

| RL.4.2 | **MAIN FOCUS** Key Ideas & Details  
Sessions 1, 2, 3  
Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text. |
| RL.4.5 | **MAIN FOCUS** Craft & Structure  
Sessions 2, 3  
Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems when writing or speaking about a text. |
| RL.4.7 | **MAIN FOCUS** Integration of Knowledge & Ideas  
Sessions 2, 3  
Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text. |
| RL.4.9* | **MAIN FOCUS** Integration of Knowledge & Ideas  
Session 3  
Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes, topics, characters or plots of two or more stories. |
| RL.4.10 | **Range of Reading & Complexity of Text**  
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. |
| RF.4.3a | **Phonics & Word Recognition**  
Additional Instruction  
Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context. |
| RF.4.4b | **Fluency**  
Session 2  
Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. |
| SL.4.1d | **Comprehension & Collaboration**  
Sessions 1, 2, 3  
Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion. |
| L.4.5 | **Vocabulary Acquisition & Use**  
Additional Instruction  
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. |
| L.4.5a | **Vocabulary Acquisition & Use**  
Sessions 1, 2  
Explain the meaning of simple similes and metaphors (e.g., *as pretty as a picture*) in context. |
| W.4.3 | **Text Types & Purposes**  
Writing Task  
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. |
| W.4.8* | **Research to Build & Present Knowledge**  
Sessions 1, 2, 3  
Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.  
*Standard adapted from another grade |
| W.4.9 | **Research to Build & Present Knowledge**  
Sessions 1, 2, 3  
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. |
| W.4.10 | **Range of Writing**  
Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. |
Session 1  “The Gift of the Magi”

PREVIEWING THE TEXT  5 minutes
Read the title and author credit with students.

- Today’s story is “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry. Think about what might happen on this first page.
  
  I see a girl looking at herself in the mirror. She has long flowing hair. She looks like she is thinking about something.
  
- What would you like to find out by reading this story?
  
  Why is the girl looking in the mirror? What is she thinking about?
  
- Let’s read to find out.

READING THE TEXT CLOSELY  10 minutes
Explain the learning focus. Have students read on page 35. Check on their application of the focus. Provide support if needed.

- Today as we read this story we will pay close attention to important details. We will use these details to determine the theme of the story and to summarize the different parts of the story as we talk. Try to focus on the most important details as you read page 35. . . . Who would like to share an important detail you notice on this page?
  
  It is the day before Christmas, and Della has $1.87.
  
- Can you share more details?
  
  Della is upset because she wants to buy Jim a Christmas present, and she doesn't have much money.
  
- Who would like to use these details to summarize the story so far?
  
  Della is upset because she only has $1.87 to buy Jim a Christmas present.
  
If you are satisfied that students can apply the focus, have them continue this thinking to the end of page 36. If you are not, prompt students to reread the text segment to consider which details in the story are the most important.

- Our work today is to pay close attention to important details as we read so we can use them to determine the theme and summarize what we have read. Now let’s read to the end of the story.

DISCUSSING THE TEXT  10 minutes
Invite students to point out important details from the text they can use in a summary of the story and help them determine the theme.

- Listen carefully to your classmates as we talk about the story so you can think about those ideas and then explain your own ideas based on the discussion. Let’s think and talk about important details from the story. Who would like to share with the group an important detail in this story?
  
  The couple takes pride in Jim’s gold watch and Della’s beautiful hair.
  
- Yes. Now, can anyone share another important detail in the story?
  
  Della sells her hair for twenty dollars and uses the money to buy Jim a chain for his watch.
  
- Would anyone like to share another important detail?
  
  Jim comes home and looks at Della with a strange expression.

COMPREHENSION SHARE
The theme of a story is the author’s message. Think about what the characters in a story say or do. Make a list of details. Summarize the selection using your list.

“The theme of a story is the author’s message. Think about what the characters in a story say or do. Make a list of details. Summarize the selection using your list.”
Can someone please share another important detail?

Jim sold his watch to buy combs for Della to use in her hair.

Who would like to use these details to summarize the story?

Della and Jim have two prized possessions—Jim’s watch and Della’s hair. They want to buy each other Christmas presents. Della sells her hair and buys Jim a chain for his watch. Jim sells his watch and buys Della combs for her hair.

We can also use the important details we discussed to figure out the theme of the story. Would someone like to share what they think the theme of the story is?

I think the theme is that people give up things they value for those they love.

I like the way you analyzed details in the story and used them to summarize and figure out the theme. We should do that often as we think about details in stories we read.

Draw attention to the first sentence on page 36.

Who can tell us what a simile is?

Similes are comparisons that use the word like or as. Authors use similes to help readers picture things in their minds.

Yes. Who can find the simile in the first sentence on page 36?

“Della’s beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown water.”

Who would like to share something about the simile?

It compares Della’s hair and a cascade of brown waters.

Would someone like to share what this simile adds to the text?

The simile helps us picture Della’s hair as a brown waterfall. It helps us understand the beauty of Della’s hair.

Confirm students’ good use of the focus and encourage them to keep it in mind whenever they read about characters in a story.

Today we analyzed important details and used them to summarize the story and determine the theme. Keep the work we’ve done in mind as you read other stories.

Formative Assessment: Comprehension

Using the Quick Start Planner, note this session’s learning focus. Observe each student’s articulation and use of text evidence to evaluate individuals’ effective use of the learning focus.

Formative Assessment: Identify Theme

Have students use the blackline master on page 10 to explain the scientific concepts in the text. Review students’ answers as you evaluate their mastery of the learning focus.

Formative/Summative Assessment

Have students use the blackline master on page 11 to collect evidence that helps them answer the questions: How did Della sacrifice for her love of Jim? How did Jim sacrifice for his love of Della?
LEARNING FOCUSES
RL.4.2, RL.4.5, RL.4.7
Students return to text to read closely and analyze details in text to summarize and determine the theme. They also explain the difference between a story and a drama. Additionally, they make connections between the text of the story and the illustrations.

RETURNING TO THE TEXT 5 minutes
Ask students to reflect on the text read previously. Guide them to recall how they applied the learning focus to their reading.

Let's quickly review our discussion from the last session.
We talked about analyzing details as we read. We used our analysis to summarize the story. We said Della and Jim have two prized possessions—Jim's watch and Della's hair. They want to buy each other Christmas presents. Della sells her hair and buys Jim a chain for his watch. Jim sells his watch and buys Della combs for her hair. We also used our analysis to determine the theme. We said people give up things they value for those they love.

READING THE TEXT CLOSELY 10 minutes
Explain the learning focuses. Invite students to reread page 36. Check in to see how well they have understood the focuses. If you are satisfied that students can apply them, have them read the balance of the selection. If not, provide corrective feedback as suggested on page 2 of this plan.

Today as we read, we will continue to pay close attention to important details. We'll make connections between the details in the text and the illustration and think about the differences between a story and a play. Let's read page 36 silently and think about the important details. . . . Who will share a detail?

Della takes down her hair and looks in the mirror.

Does anyone have another detail to share?
She goes to a hair goods shop and sells her hair for twenty dollars.

Would someone like to summarize this part of the story using the details we found?
Della looks at her hair in the mirror and then decides to sell it for twenty dollars.

Can anyone connect these details to the theme we found?
These details show how Della gives up something she values for her husband.

COMPREHENSION SHARE
Think about the differences between stories, plays, and poems. Make a chart that lists the features of each. For example, poems can have verses, stanzas, and rhythm. Plays usually have casts of characters, settings, lines of dialogue, and stage directions. Listing these features will help you use the right terms when speaking about a selection.

Focus on the differences between prose and drama.

Think of the plays we have read. Can someone share how plays are different from stories?
Plays have stage directions; characters show how they feel by what they say and do; there are acts and scenes instead of paragraphs.
Who would like to share how the story would be different if it was written as a play?

*We would not know Della's thoughts. There would be scenes instead of paragraphs.*

Keep reading closely to the end of the story. Think about how the story would be different if it was written as a play.

Formative Assessment: Fluency Listen to each student read a portion of the text. Pay close attention to accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. If students need additional practice with fluency, provide the necessary support at the end of the session.

**DISCUSSING THE TEXT 10 minutes**

Guide a discussion in which students pay close attention to important details, make connections between the details and the illustrations, and think about the differences between a story and a play.

Who can share some important details from pages 37 and 38?

*Jim comes home and looks at Della's short hair with a strange expression. Della explains that she sold her hair. Jim gets a package out of his pocket. It is combs for her hair. She gives Jim his chain and finds out he sold his watch.*

Can someone summarize this part of the story?

*Della explains that she sold her hair to buy Jim a present. Della opens her present and sees that it is combs for her hair. Della gives Jim her present and finds out Jim sold his watch.*

Would someone share how these details relate to the theme?

*These details show how Della and Jim are willing to give up things they value because they want to show their love through the gifts they buy.*

Could someone share how this part of the story might be different if it was written as a play?

*This might be scene 2 of the play. The details about the characters’ actions would be written as stage directions. The audience would not know that Della had yearned for the combs.*

Continue the discussion, focusing on connecting the text and illustrations.

Look closely at the illustration on page 36. Would someone like to share a detail in the illustration that isn’t found in the text?

*The illustration showed that the shop makes wigs.*

Would anyone like to explain what this detail in the illustration helps us understand about the story?

*Since the shop makes wigs, it shows what Della’s hair will be used for.*

Can someone share some details from the text that are shown in the illustration on page 37?

*Della is sitting on the corner of the table. Jim is coming inside and seeing Della’s short hair. The illustration shows Jim’s expression that Della doesn’t understand.*

So making connections between details in the illustrations and the text help us understand the story more fully.

Focus on the simile on page 37.

Let’s look at the simile “Jim stopped at the door, as still as an Irish setter at the scent of a quail” on page 37. What two things are being compared?

*Jim’s stillness and a dog that is hunting and smells a quail.*
**THE GIFT OF THE MAGI**

Why does the author choose to compare these two things?

* A dog looking at a bird is standing without moving a muscle, and that is how Jim must be frozen in surprise when he sees Della’s hair.

Help students understand the benefits of reviewing what has been discussed and explaining their own ideas and understandings.

- We’ve discussed important details from the story. When you discuss stories, it can be helpful to review what has been said. Why do you think it’s helpful to review what has been said?

  * It helps you draw conclusions and form your own ideas about what you have read.

Formative Assessment: Comprehension Using the Quick Start Planner, note this lesson’s learning focus. Observe each student’s articulation and use of text evidence to evaluate effective use of the learning focus.

**FLUENCY FOLLOW-UP**

Fluency Practice

Guide students to read grade-level prose orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. Provide a timer that students can use to assess their own reading pace or that of a partner during repeated readings of “The Gift of the Magi” or portion of the story. Have students analyze how their pace changes with each subsequent reread.

**CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE: COLLECT TEXT EVIDENCE**

Formative/Summative Assessment

Have students continue to use the blackline master on page 11 to collect evidence that helps them answer one of the following questions: *How did Della sacrifice for her love of Jim? How did Jim sacrifice for his love of Della? or What can someone do to show his or her love for others?* Students may need multiple copies of the organizer. Review students’ collected evidence as you evaluate their mastery of the learning focuses.

**CROSS-TEXT READING: INDEPENDENT OR GUIDED**

In preparation for Session 3 (teacher’s choice), have students read the short text selection “The Happy Prince” on page 39 of the Themed Text Collection. Remind students to think about the learning focuses from prior sessions as they read.

- Before our next session together, I would like you to read “The Happy Prince” on your own. As you’ve done before, pay close attention to details in the text and illustrations to summarize the story and determine the theme.
Session 3  “The Gift of the Magi” and “The Happy Prince”

**Key Idea** A husband and wife look for ways to buy each other Christmas presents. They both sell their prized possessions and buy each other gifts they can no longer use. A statue of the Happy Prince gives up things of value to care for others.

**REFLECTING ON THE TEXTS**  5 minutes

Ask students to reflect on what they learned over the past sessions. Invite them to review and reflect on both stories.

- We have learned to summarize and determine a theme using important details. Why do you think it’s important to summarize a story and determine a theme?
  
  **Summarizing helps you remember the most important points of the story.** Finding a theme helps you understand the author’s message.

- We spoke a lot about important details in our first story. Who would like to share important details from “The Happy Prince”?

  **The statue of the Happy Prince watches over the city. He cries because he sees the sadness in the city. A sparrow helps him give away his valuable jewels to the people.**

**CROSS-TEXT ANALYSIS**  10 minutes

Guide students to compare and contrast the two stories.

- Let’s think about the important details in both of our stories and talk together about how they are alike and different.

  In both stories, characters give up something they value to make someone else happy. In “The Happy Prince,” the prince is giving up his things to help others, but the others are receiving these gifts and not giving up anything to make the prince happy.

- It’s helpful to think about how details are alike and different in stories. This helps you understand how specific details in the stories give you information about the author’s message.

Guide students to synthesize character and plot elements across both stories. The analysis should lead to connections and new understandings based on both stories.

- Let’s think about how discussing the two stories together help you understand both more deeply. Turn and talk with a partner about that. Try to come up with a possible theme for the two. Who’d like to share?

  **We think the theme for both stories is that giving up something you value can make another person happy.**

- I also noticed a theme across both stories. The characters cared enough about someone else to give up something they treasured.
INTEGRATING THE LEARNING  10 minutes

Invite students to integrate the information from both stories and clearly state the big ideas across both texts.

When we read, we try to say what a text was mostly about—the big idea—in one sentence. Now we’re going to think through key parts of these two stories to find a common theme for both of them in one or two sentences. Turn and talk with a partner. Think about how we can state a theme that would go with both stories . . . Who would like to start?

The characters in both stories could have held on to the things that were valuable to them, but they were willing to give up something they valued to make each other happy or to show how much they care for one another.

Have students reflect on the strategies they learned for comparing two stories with a similar theme.

Let’s recap what strategies we used to deepen our understanding of both stories.

We thought about specific details in the story that helped us summarize and find the theme. We said paying close attention like this helps us understand the author’s message.

CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE: WRITE TO SOURCE

Formative/Summative Assessment Have students continue to use the blackline master on page 11 as they finish reading the texts. Then invite them to write a response to one of the questions: How did Della sacrifice for her love of Jim? How did Jim sacrifice for his love of Della? or What can someone do to show their love for others? Remind students to make good use of text evidence they’ve collected to support their main points.

Writing Task: Narrative

Summative Assessment Review with students what makes a strong narrative piece. Students will work independently to write a narrative paragraph about giving up something of value to show love or care for someone else. Guide them to use the planner on page 12 as they draft their writing task. Students may wish to share their paragraphs.

Now that you’ve collected lots of evidence about sacrificing for someone you love, let’s write a narrative about someone who gives up something of value to help someone. This narrative will answer the question: What can someone give up to help another person? Let’s quickly review what makes a strong narrative piece before we get started.

We need characters, a setting, and events. Then we need to develop these story elements with details. Finally, we need to provide a clear beginning, middle, and end.
OPTIONAL GUIDED READING: “THE HAPPY PRINCE”
Prior to Session 3, for students needing additional guidance, you may want to conduct a guided reading lesson with the short text, “The Happy Prince.” Use the learning focuses from Sessions 1 and 2 to reinforce both practice with the standards and the learning.

Today we’ll spend some time practicing the reading skills we worked on with our first story. We will pay close attention to important details to summarize the story, find the theme, and make connections with the illustrations. We will also think about how the story is different from poems and plays.

CLOSE READING OPTION: “THE HOLE IN THE DIKE”
E-RESOURCE  Summative Assessment Print the online blackline master for independent close reading. Ask students to read the selection indicated on the page and respond to the prompts before returning for a small-group discussion.

VOCABULARY
Figurative Language  Discuss with students the following example of figurative language: a large ruby glowed on his sword. Guide students to understand the meaning of the phrase.

In this story, the narrator says a large ruby glowed on his sword. Let’s talk about what this means.
The phrase is figurative language. This means that it is language that helps readers create a picture in their mind and expresses an idea in an imaginative way.

Can someone share what they pictured in their mind when they read this phrase?
a red ruby glowing like it was a light
Who would like to share why the author used this phrase?
to understand how valuable the ruby is

WORD RECOGNITION
Unfamiliar Multisyllabic Words  Help students understand how to use their knowledge of roots and affixes to read unfamiliar multisyllabic words.

Can someone tell me what a suffix is?
It is letters added to the end of a word that affects its meaning.

Let’s look at the word remarked on page 39. What is the suffix?
ed
What is the root word?
remark
Who can tell me the meaning of both the root word and the word with the suffix added?
Remark means “to say something,” but remarked means “something that was said.”
Comprehension: Identify the Theme

Think about the important details you noticed as we read “The Gift of the Magi.” Record details from the beginning, middle, and end of the story that you can use to help you determine a theme and summarize the story.

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Using the graphic organizer, write a short summary of the story that illustrates the theme.

Score: __________
# Constructed Response: Collect Text Evidence

Check which question you are citing evidence for. Think about the question as you read. Write details from the text and illustrations that help you answer the question. Be sure to include page references. You may need more than one copy of this sheet.

- How did Della sacrifice for her love of Jim? How did Jim sacrifice for his love of Della?
- What can someone do to show his or her love for others?

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Score: ____________
Writing Task: Your First Draft

Write a narrative about someone who gives up something of value to help someone else.

REMEMBER: A well-written narrative paragraph includes:
• characters, setting, and events
• a problem and solution
• a clear beginning, middle, and end

Score: _______