

Literary Element (page 122)

Symbol

The Gift of the Magi O. HENRY

“The Gift of the Magi” has many symbols in it. Items that serve as symbols have more than one meaning: their literal meaning—that is, what they are on the surface—and their symbolic meaning—the larger meaning they have in the story. The two most obvious symbols are Della’s hair and Jim’s watch. They symbolize the one treasure each character has in the world.

ACTIVITY

Directions List and explain other symbols in the story. Start with the symbols below. Add any additional symbols you find during reading. Remember that a symbol can be any person, place, object, or experience that represents something else.

Symbol	Meaning
Jim’s middle name, Dillingham, on the mailbox (p. 123)	1.
a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard (p. 124)	2.
Della selling her hair (p. 125)	3.
the watch chain Della buys Jim (p. 125)	4.

Reading Strategy (page 122)

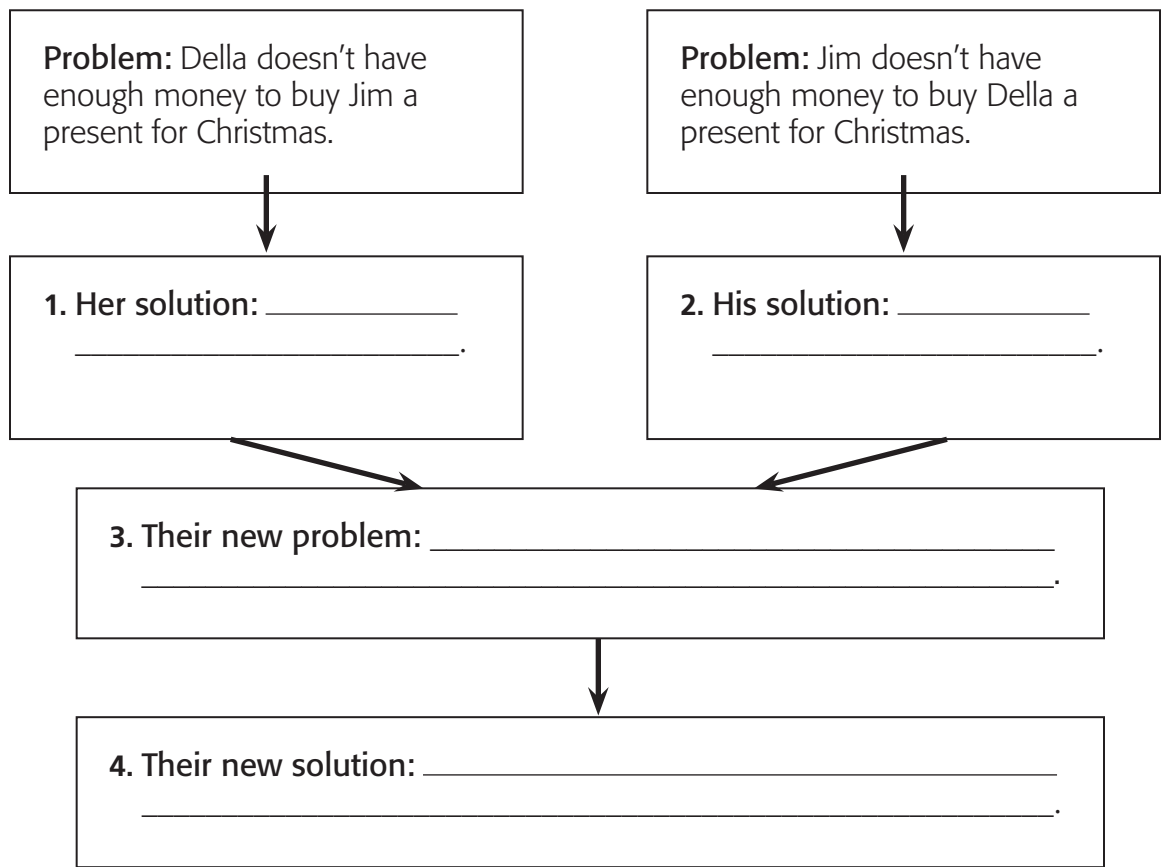
Identifying Problem and Solution

The Gift of the Magi O. HENRY

“The Gift of the Magi” tells the story of two people with a problem. In finding a solution to their problems, they each create a new problem.

ACTIVITY

Directions Map the problems and solutions in “The Gift of the Magi” on the diagram below. Two problems have already been filled in.



Active Reading Graphic Organizer

Remap the events in the order in which they are presented in the story. Ask your teacher for a copy of the Sequence Graphic Organizer for that purpose. What does O. Henry’s presentation of events contribute to the story?

Selection Vocabulary Practice (page 122)

The Gift of the Magi O. HENRY

Vocabulary

imputation *n.* an accusation
parsimony *n.* stinginess
depreciate *v.* to lessen the price or value of
prudence *n.* caution, good judgment

EXERCISE A Practice with Synonyms and Antonyms

On each line, write whether the pairs of words are *synonyms* (words with nearly the same meaning) or *antonyms* (words with nearly opposite meanings).

1. depreciate—appreciate _____
2. prudence—discretion _____
3. imputation—accusation _____
4. parsimony—extravagance _____

EXERCISE B Applying Meanings

Write the vocabulary word that answers each question.

1. I carry an umbrella when rain is predicted.
 What does my action show? _____
2. Ted tries to get out of paying his library fines.
 What does Ted's behavior show? _____
3. Nora claimed that Kate had cheated on the exam.
 What kind of statement did Nora make? _____
4. You buy a house but let it get run down.
 What does that do to the price of the house? _____

EXERCISE C Responding to the Selection

On the back of this sheet, write a letter to Jim and Della telling them what you think about their feelings for each other. Use at least THREE vocabulary words.