WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Definitions Bank

the act of ascribing or attributing	prevailing; having the strongest influence
brings about or initiates	~~searching thoroughly~~
careful; cautious	seeming attractive but really false or of little value
decoration; adornment	sinking to a lower or normal level
to diminish in value	unwillingness to spend money
enthusiastic; passionate	very happy or excited
careful examination	wisdom; caution
a little area just inside the main door of a building, but before a second door	

1. until one's cheeks burned with the silent **imputation** of parsimony that such close dealing implied. (¶1)

_____

2. until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of **parsimony** that such close dealing implied. (¶1)

_____

3. Which **instigates** the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating. (¶2)

brings about, or initiates

4. life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles **predominating**. (¶2)

prevailing; having the strongest influence

5. While the mistress of the home is gradually **subsiding** from the first stage to the second (¶3)

_____

6. In the **vestibule** below was a letter-box into which no letter would go (¶4)

sinking to lower, or normal level

7. Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to **depreciate** Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. (¶8)

_____

8. She was **ransacking** the stores for Jim's present. (¶10)

careful examination

9. properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by **meretricious** ornamentation (¶10)

seeming attractive but really false, or of little value

10. properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious **ornamentation** (¶10)

unwillingness to spend money

11. her intoxication gave way a little to **prudence** and reason (¶11)

careful, cautious

12. For ten seconds let us regard with **discreet** scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. (¶16)

wisdom, cautious

13. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet **scrutiny** some inconsequential object in the other direction. (¶16)

very happy or excited

14. And then an **ecstatic** scream of joy (¶18)

enthusiastic, passionate

15. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and **ardent** spirit. (¶20)

Read "The Gift of the Magi," marking the text in key places.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you characterize the narrator's **tone**?
   a. comical and fun
   b. disturbed and angry
   c. somewhat informal, but caring and didactic
   d. sorrowful, full of regret

2. How much money had Della saved?

$1.87

3. Was it easy for her to save the money? Quote a sentence (or part of a sentence) from the story in your answer.

No. "... A former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week."

4. Describe the relationship between Jim and Della. How do they feel about each other? Include a short quote in your answer.

They love eachother very much, even without their most prized possesions "Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. HER Jim."

5. *"Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride."* (¶8) Identify each possession and give one characteristic of each.

Dellas hair. Beutiful, Jims watch. Gold

6. At the end of the story, when Jim and Della give each other their Christmas gifts, what happens? How is this an example of **situational irony**?

Jim gets Della beautiful combs for her hair by selling his watch, and della got him something for his watch by selling her hair.

LOGIC | Dialectic

Reason with the facts, elements, and features of the story; sort, arrange, compare, and connect ideas—and begin to uncover and determine the Central One Idea.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *"Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating."* (¶2)

What is the moral reflection? Express in your own words what the narrator has concluded about life.

That love is ultimately more important than gifts, and its the thought/sacrifices that count.

"She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard." (¶6)

What is the purpose of the **repetition** of gray? Does this **forebode** something?

It represents loss of hope, sadness, negative emotions in general. A gloomy setting because she feels horrible. It forbodes happiness + hope

3. *"But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above, he was called 'Jim' and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good."* (¶5)

When the narrator says, *"Which is all very good"*—at what might this be hinting?

a. that Della likes Jim
b. that there must be a humorous ending coming
c. that marriage has its ups and downs—and a surprise ending is sure to follow
d. that there must be something more in a marriage—which this story will reveal

4. How was the fob chain like Jim? Quote the key lines from the story that express this. Why is this comparison important for setting up the Central One Idea?

because it was a chain of " quietness and value."
Because ultimately in the end his gift is the true value.

5. *"Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on."* (¶17)

When the narrator says, *"eight dollars a week or a million—what is the difference?"* what point is he trying to make?

the difference is the amount. The point is you have to wait either way.

6. After the narrator **alludes** to the magi, he says, *"this dark assertion will be illuminated later on"* (¶17).
   a. Does he illuminate the assertion later on? If so, in which paragraph? Quote a sentence or two that demonstrates this.
   b. Is this illumination the Central One Idea?

Yes, in paragraph 18. "And then an ecstatic scream of joy and then alas!..." This illumination is one of the central main ideas.

7. How are the magi an important **symbol** for the story? How does the **title** embody the **Central One Idea**?

they represent love, and sacrifice to bring joy to another. It embodies it because she gives Jim a gift

8. How do Jim and Della, with their gift giving, signify and reveal the Central One Idea?

Through Love for one another, and joy and them caring about eachother.

Express in your own words the Central One Idea with supporting points.

CENTRAL ONE IDEA

1. In a few sentences, briefly **summarize** the story.

The womans too poor to buy her husband a gift, and shes sad. She cuts her hair and sells it to get money for his gift. He comes home with clips for her hair which is cut off, & she gives him the watch chain but he sold it to get her gift.

2. Write the **Central One Idea** in a complete sentence.

love is more valuable than any gift.

3. List two or three features of the poem that **support** your determination of the Central One Idea.

• Sacrifice • Joy • Love

4. Choose a line(s) from the story that you think best embodies the Central One Idea – and with good penmanship, write it in the Central Quote section at the beginning of this lesson.

CENTRAL ONE IDEA (as expressed by the teacher)

ESSAY OPTION

Explain O. Henry's use of symbol and situational irony to convey a salient Central One Idea.