

Get to the Literature

What Do You Think?
How did you react to the ending of the story?

- Comprehension Check**
- What are the young couple's possessions?
 - What two gifts do they give each other?
 - How does each gift help the other buy the other a gift?

Think Critically

- Think of three words you might use to describe Jim and Della's relationship.
- O. Henry calls Della and Jim "foolish," but he also says, "These two were of the wisest." What does he mean?

THINK ABOUT

- what the last sentence of the story suggests
- what you think true wisdom consists of

- Look again at the **title** of this story. What "gift" do you think O. Henry had in mind? How might it suggest a **theme** of the story?
- ACTIVE READING PREDICTING** Look at the predictions that you made in your **READER'S NOTEBOOK** as you read the story. How do these predictions relate to the irony of the story?
- What connection do you see between this story and Nikki Giovanni's poem "Luxury"?

...of several kinds...
...this...
...of the...
...to...
...entirely...
...story, for...
...might expect...
...comes...
...to be a rich man...
...but he makes only 20 dollars a...

Activity Explain the irony of the situation in "The Gift of the Magi." Make a chart like the one below. For each character, identify what is expected to happen and what actually happens. There is a double irony here. How are the two ironies related?

Situational Irony	
What Della plans:	What actually happens:
What Jim plans:	What actually happens:

Extend Interpretations

- Comparing Texts** Compare Jim and Della to Madame Loisel and her husband in Guy de Maupassant's "The Necklace." What similarities and differences do you see between the two couples?
- Connect to Life** Do you think the spirit of sacrifice in the holiday season is still alive and well today, or has it disappeared? Have you experienced gift giving in the spirit described in this story?