

“The Gift of Magi” by O. Henry - VOCABULARY LIST

1. Magi- kings, the three kings who brought gifts to Bethlehem (also known as the Three Wise Men)
2. Bulldozing- pushing very hard
3. The silent imputation of parsimony-the silent accusation of being cheap
4. Shabby-old, worn out, deteriorated
5. Howl- cry and scream
6. Instigate- make happen
7. Predominate- dominating, being most common
8. Mendicancy squad- beggar, poor person
9. Vestibule- hallway or entryway of a building
10. appertaining thereunto-belonging to
11. unassuming-humble
12. a flat- an apartment
13. a pier glass- a type of mirror
14. depreciate- to reduce the value of
15. faltered- hesitated
16. ransacking- searching thoroughly, turning everything over
17. a fob chain- a short piece of leather attached to a pocket watch
18. meretricious- falsely attractive
19. on the sly – secretly, furtively
20. prudence- good judgment
21. ravages- damages
22. truant- a person who is absent from school without permission
23. enfolded- embraced, hugged
24. ecstatic- extremely happy



25. wails- loud screams and sobs
26. tresses- long sections of hair
27. singed- lightly burned
28. a dandy- an excellent quality item



Write five (5) new words from the story. Find their meanings and part of speech as used in the story. Write the sentence from the story for each word.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Discussion Questions

1. What does description of apartment or statements about it at least tell us about the economic situation of the couple? What seems to be the cause of this situation?
2. What kind of narrative point of view do we have in this story?
3. What are their prized possessions? How is the value that each sets by them emphasized?

4. What does she do? What did she buy with the money?

5. What virtues did she see in the chain / in her husband?

6. How does her haircut affect her appearance?

7. What is Jim's reaction when he first sees her?

8. How does Della react when she first opens Jim's present?

9. How is this an example of irony and what kind of irony is it?

10. What comment does the author make about what they did? Why are they the wisest?