

**The Gift of the Magi (page 151)** **Active Reading SkillBuilder****Predicting**

If a story is well written it will keep readers wondering what happens next. Readers may ask themselves questions and find themselves **predicting** possible answers. As you read "The Gift of the Magi," write three predictions about how the story will come out. After reading, note whether you were right or whether O. Henry surprised you.

<b>Prediction</b>	<b>Right or Surprised</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

**The Gift of the Magi (page 151)****Literary Analysis SkillBuilder****Irony**

The difference between what is expected to happen and what exists or actually happens is called **irony**. The most common kind of irony is **situational irony**, which occurs when a character—or the reader—expects one thing to happen but something entirely different occurs. Use the chart below to explain situational irony in “The Gift of the Magi.” For each character, identify what is expected to happen and what actually happens.

<b>Situational Irony</b>	
<b>What Della plans:</b>	<b>What actually happens:</b>
<b>What Jim plans:</b>	<b>What actually happens:</b>



**The Gift of the Magi (page 151)****Words to Know SkillBuilder****Words to Know**

agile

cascade

coveted

instigate

prudence

assertion

chronicle

inconsequential

predominating

subside

**A.** Fill in each set of blanks with the correct word from the word list. The boxed letters will spell out something that Della receives.

1. Stand under this, and you'll get wet.

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

2. You wished greedily for something.

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

3. This describes something important.

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

4. You hope a loud siren will do this.

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

5. Troublemakers do this!

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

Della receives: \_\_\_\_\_

**B.** Fill in each blank with the correct word from the word list.

1. I had one \_\_\_\_\_ goal: to make a special gift for my grandmother.

2. She \_\_\_\_\_ a shawl I wove for my sister.

3. I made the \_\_\_\_\_ that I would weave a shawl for her.

4. My \_\_\_\_\_ fingers skillfully wove the yarns.

5. I was so excited, I thought my enthusiasm would never \_\_\_\_\_.

6. However, my lack of \_\_\_\_\_ almost resulted in a disaster.

7. I dismissed a rip in the wool as \_\_\_\_\_, not significant.

8. In minutes, however, a \_\_\_\_\_ of yarn tumbled from the loom.

9. This served to \_\_\_\_\_ chaos in the studio.

10. Grandmother enjoyed hearing my \_\_\_\_\_ of shawl-making.

**C.** Write a diary entry that Della might write about events in the story. Use at least **three** Words to Know.

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**Selection Quiz**

Recall the events in the story. Then answer the questions in phrases.

1. Why is Della unhappy as the story opens?

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2. What decision does she make that causes her to feel happy?

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3. Why is Jim so stunned when he comes home and sees Della?

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4. What does he give to her and why?

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5. How does Della's reaction to Jim's gift differ from his reaction to her gift?

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### Selection Test

**A.** Think about the ironies in this story. In the box next to each event below, write notes explaining why that event was ironic. (8 points each)

Event	Why It Was Ironic
1. Della bought Jim a watch fob.	
2. Della yearned for a particular set of tortoise-shell hair combs.	
3. Jim had to comfort his sobbing wife.	

**B.** Write the letter of the best answer. This exercise continues on the next page. (5 points each)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The narrator implies that Jim's full name was ironic because
- he used only a short nickname.
  - it gave the impression of wealth.
  - he had no middle name.
  - it made him seem old.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When the narrator says that after Della sold her hair, two hours "tripped by on rosy wings," he means that she
- felt very happy.
  - was very worried.
  - was not thinking clearly.
  - had ups and downs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The watch fob that Della bought was
- beautifully decorated.
  - secondhand.
  - the latest fashion.
  - made of precious metal.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Della is best described as
- a miserly penny pincher.
  - unconcerned about appearances.
  - generous and loving.
  - reckless and wild.

**C. Words to Know.** Write the letter of the best answer. (4 points each)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A person who instigates an event is one who
- prevents it.
  - provokes it.
  - controls it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. A person with prudence is known for
- good judgment.
  - greed.
  - generosity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A coveted object is something
- deeply resented.
  - depended on.
  - wanted badly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. If something is inconsequential, it is not
- desirable.
  - polite.
  - important.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. An agile dancer is
- clumsy.
  - graceful.
  - tireless.

**D. Answer one** of the following questions based on your understanding of the selection. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (20 points)

1. Would you agree that Jim and Della had sacrificed for each other "the greatest treasures of their house"? Why or why not?
2. O. Henry contrasts Jim and Della with people who give "wise" gifts, such as those "bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication." Why does he declare Jim and Della to be the wisest? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?

**E. Linking Literature to Life.** Answer the following question based on your own experience and knowledge. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (16 points)

What is the greatest gift you have ever received or given? What made the gift so special?