

Name: _____ Date: _____

Making Inferences

Making an inference means using clues from the text to figure out something the author doesn't tell you directly.

Directions: Answer the questions or follow the directions that appear in italics to fill in the chart. We completed the first row for you.

Clues	Inference
<p>1. In Scene 3, Della heads out to sell her hair:</p> <p>SD3: Della goes to the mirror. She runs a hand over her hair and sighs.</p> <p>SD1: Then she squares her shoulders, puts on an old brown hat and coat, and marches out of the apartment.</p>	<p><i>What do these lines reveal about how Della feels about the decision to cut her hair?</i></p> <p>These lines reveal that though Della feels sad about cutting her hair, she also feels confident that it is the right thing to do and she is determined to do it.</p>
<p>2. <i>Find two lines that support the inference on the right.</i></p>	<p>Jim and Della care about each other very much.</p>
<p>3. In Scene 6, Hattie comes over to do Della's hair:</p> <p>SD1: Della sits in a chair in her living room.</p> <p>SD2: Hattie stands behind her, using a curling iron to create dozens of tiny curls in Della's short hair.</p> <p>Hattie: I can't believe you really sold it. Your hair was your pride and joy.</p> <p>Della: Yes, it was. But nothing is more important to me than Jim. It doesn't look too bad, does it?</p> <p>Hattie: No, not at all. I think you look rather charming. See for yourself—I'm all done.</p>	<p><i>What do these lines reveal about Della and Hattie's relationship?</i></p>

Clues	Inference
<p>4. In Scene 6, Della and Jim exchange gifts:</p> <p>Della: It's a beauty, isn't it? I hunted all over town to find it. Give me your watch—I want to see how the chain looks on it.</p> <p>SD3: Ignoring Della's request, Jim goes to the couch and sits down. He grins.</p> <p>Jim: Della, let's put our gifts away for a while. They're too nice to use at present.</p> <p>Della: But—</p> <p>Jim: Della, the fact is, I sold my watch to buy your combs.</p> <p>Della: You—?</p> <p>Jim: That's right.</p> <p>SD1: Della sits down next to Jim. A smile tugs at the corners of her mouth.</p> <p>Jim: Now then, shall we get started on our Christmas Eve supper?</p>	<p><i>How are Jim and Della feeling in this moment? How do you know?</i></p>

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exploring Mood

Mood is the feeling you get from reading a piece of writing. Another way to describe mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a story, it too has an atmosphere that creates a feeling. Writers create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot.

In this activity, you will consider the mood of an excerpt from Scene 1 of
The Gift of the Magi.

New York City, 1900

SD1: The lights come up on a living room in a tiny apartment. The furnishings are simple and worn: a threadbare rug, a scuffed coffee table, a couch with cushions deflated by time.

SD2: A small, scraggly Christmas tree sits on a table in one corner, sparsely decorated with a few colorful glass ornaments and strings of popcorn.

SD3: Della kneels beside the coffee table. Her brow is furrowed as she dumps coins out of a tin can and counts them.

Della: One eighty-five, one eighty-six . . . one eighty-seven.

SD1: She flops onto the couch and bursts into tears.

SD2: Her sobs are soon interrupted by knocking. Swiping at her tears, she answers the door.

Charlie and Hattie (singing): Jingle bells! Jingle bells! Jingle all the way! Oh, what fun it is to—

SD3: They stop, noticing Della’s expression.

Charlie: My dear cousin, what is wrong?

Della: Oh, Charlie!

SD1: Della walks back to the couch and slumps into the cushions.

Hattie: Please—tell us what happened. Is Jim all right?

Della (sniffing): Oh, yes, Jim is fine. It’s just that . . .

SD2: Della gestures to the coins on the table.

Della: It’s two days before Christmas, and one dollar and eighty-seven cents is all I’ve got for Jim’s present.

Hattie: Oh, now Della, I’m sure he won’t mind.

Charlie: Jim loves you so much. He won’t care about a present.

Della: I saved everything I could. I really did. No doubt the butcher and the grocer dread seeing me coming, the way I haggle over every penny. But we’ve simply nothing to spare.

Charlie: I’m sure better times are ahead.

Hattie: Of course they are. Now dry your tears, brush your beautiful hair, and let’s—

Della (sitting up): That’s it! My hair!

Hattie: What?

Della: I can sell my hair!

Hattie: But Della, your hair is your most prized possession. It’s so lovely!

Della: Then let’s hope I can get a lovely price for it, so I can buy Jim the kind of present he deserves.

Charlie: I suppose it would grow back eventually. Now, Cousin, would you like to join us for a walk in the snow?

Della: Yes, I think fresh air is just what I need.

SD3: The lights fade.

1. In the box below, write one or two words that describe the mood of Scene 1:

Now let’s look at what creates this mood.

2. Plot

Briefly explain how what is happening helps create the mood you identified.

3. Setting

Think about where and when the action takes place. How does this contribute to the mood?

4. Dialogue

What the characters say and how they say it help create the mood.

UNDERLINE at least three lines of dialogue in the scene that help create the mood you identified.

5. Word Choice

Look at all the vivid verbs the playwright uses! These verbs help create the mood.

CIRCLE at least five verbs in the scene that help create the mood you identified.

6. Imagery

The imagery the playwright uses also helps create the mood. (Imagery is description that appeals to the reader's sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch—also known as sensory details.)

PLACE A STAR NEXT TO at least three sensory details in the scene that help create the mood you identified.

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Exploring Mood

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You'll find out what the marks are for when you read the next page.

In this activity, you will consider the mood of an excerpt from Scene 1 of *The Gift of the Magi*.

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Della: Oh, Charlie!

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Hattie: Please—tell us what happened. Is Jim all right?

Della (sniffing): Oh, yes, Jim is fine. It's just that . . .

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Della: It's two days before Christmas, and one dollar and eighty-seven cents is all I've got for Jim's present.

Hattie: Oh, now Della, I'm sure he won't mind.

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Charlie: I'm sure better times are ahead.

Hattie: Of course they are. Now dry your tears, brush your beautiful hair, and let's—

Della (sitting up): That's it! My hair!

Hattie: What?

Della: I can sell my hair!

Hattie: But Della, your hair is your most prized possession. It's so lovely!

Della: Then let's hope I can get a lovely price for it, so I can buy Jim the kind of present he deserves.

Charlie: I suppose it would grow back eventually. Now, Cousin, would you like to join us for a walk in the snow?

Della: Yes, I think fresh air is just what I need.

SD3: The lights fade.

Here are two words that could be used to describe the mood of the scene:

distraught, distressed

Distraught means “upset, worried, or agitated.”
Distressed means “feeling unhappiness brought about by difficulty or misfortune.”

Now let's look at what creates this mood.

1. Plot

Complete the sentences below to explain how what is happening in the scene helps create the distraught and distressed mood.

In this scene, Della is _____. This is a _____ situation.

2. Setting

Complete the sentences below to explain where the action is happening and how this setting helps create the mood.

This action takes place _____.
_____. This setting adds to the distraught and distressed mood because _____.

3. Dialogue

What the characters say and how they say it help create the mood.

We underlined one line of dialogue that helps create the distraught and distressed mood. **UNDERLINE two more lines of dialogue that do this.**

4. Word Choice

Look at all of the vivid verbs the playwright uses! These verbs help create the mood.

We circled one verb that helps create the distraught and distressed mood. **CIRCLE at least three more vivid verbs.**

5. Imagery

The imagery the playwright uses also helps create the mood. (Imagery is description that appeals to the reader's sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch—also known as sensory details.)

We placed a star by one sensory detail that helps create the distraught and distressed mood. **Place a STAR by at least two more sensory details.**



The Gift of the Magi

Respond to each statement by checking “Agree” or “Disagree.” Be prepared to justify your responses.

	Agree	Disagree
1. Something's value is defined by how much money it is worth.		
2. It is better to give than to receive.		
3. All you need to be happy in life is love.		
4. The most important things in life aren't material objects.		
5. Material objects can bring a person happiness.		
6. You don't have to be rich to be generous.		
7. There are ways to be wealthy other than having a lot of money.		
8. The value of a gift is the thought that went into it.		

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Close-Reading Questions

The Gift of the Magi

1. What do you learn about Jim and Della in Scene 1?(character)
2. How does the setting of Scene 1 help you understand Della's problem? (setting)
3. In Scene 4, what emotions does Della experience when selling her hair? How can you tell?
(inference)
4. In Scene 5, Della says that neither gloves nor a coat seem "precious enough" to be her gift for Jim. What does she mean? Why might a watch chain be more precious?(interpreting text)
5. How do Jim and Della feel at the end of the play? What character traits do they have that cause them to feel this way? (inference, character)

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Critical-Thinking Questions

The Gift of the Magi

1. Do you think the play has a happy ending? Why or why not?
2. Irony is when the outcome of an action is the opposite of what was intended or expected. Explain the irony in the play.
3. In the biblical story of Christmas, the Magi bring special gifts to the baby Jesus. The Magi are referred to as wise men. Why do you think O. Henry named his story after them?

Close-Reading Questions

"What Do You Get From Giving?"

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Critical-Thinking Question

"What Do You Get From Giving?"

1. If Lewis could walk into Scenes 1 and 2 of the play, what advice might she give Della and Jim?

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Integrating Ideas: Giving Gifts

Directions: Read the play *The Gift of the Magi* and the informational text “What Do You Get From Giving?” Then complete the activity below to help you prepare to respond to the prompt on page 15: Explain what makes the gifts Jim and Della give each other valuable.

First, let’s take a look at what *valuable* means. According to the dictionary, something that is valuable has great worth or value. This could mean that it is worth a lot of money, but anything that we want, need, respect, or believe to be important for any reason can be described as valuable.

Now let’s consider what makes the gifts that Jim and Della give each other valuable.

1. Are the gifts that Jim and Della give each other worth a lot of money? Explain.
2. Are the gifts that Jim and Della give each other valuable in terms of being useful? Explain.
3. Are the gifts that Jim and Della give each other valuable in some other way? Explain.

Now consider what “What Do You Get From Giving?” says about what makes a gift valuable to both givers and receivers. Answer the following questions. Use details from the article to support your answers.

4. According to the article, what is the value of a gift to the person giving the gift?

5. According to the article, what makes a gift valuable to the person receiving it?

6. Based on what the pairing says about the value of a gift for the giver and for the receiver, are the gifts that Jim and Della give each other valuable? Explain.

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The Gift of the Magi

Character Thinking Tool

The questions in this activity are about the characters of
Della and Jim

1. Consider the details about the setting in Scene 1. What do they reveal about Della and Jim?

2. How does the couple's financial situation affect them? How do you know?

3. A. How does Della feel about cutting her hair? What does her decision reveal about her?

B. Do you think most people would do something like this for someone else?

4. What advice would you give to Della and Jim about gift giving if they were your friends?

5. Why did Della choose the watch chain for Jim over a coat or gloves? Do you think she made the right choice?

6. How do Jim and Della feel at the end of the play? What do their responses to the gift exchange reveal about them as people?

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The Gift of the Magi Quiz

Directions: Read *The Gift of the Magi* and “What Do You Get From Giving?,” then answer the questions below.

1. The details the playwright includes about Jim and Della’s Christmas tree at the beginning of Scene 1 help establish that _____. (Choose **TWO** correct answers.)
 - (A) Jim and Della are poor
 - (B) Jim and Della love popcorn
 - (C) Della’s hair is her most-prized possession
 - (D) it is Christmastime
2. What is the most important way that Scene 2 contributes to the plot?
 - (A) It shows that the office where Jim works is cramped.
 - (B) It shows that Fred finds it hard to concentrate on his work.
 - (C) It establishes that Jim feels bad about not being able to buy Della a gift just as Della feels bad about not being able to buy Jim a gift.
 - (D) It reveals why Della decides to sell her hair.
3. In Scene 3, Jim “carefully polishes” his watch with his napkin before putting it back in his pocket. The playwright most likely included this detail to help the audience understand that
 - (A) Jim spilled coffee on his watch.
 - (B) Jim treasures his watch.
 - (C) Jim is a very tidy person.
 - (D) Jim has to work on the day before Christmas.
4. How do Jim and Della react when they realize that they’ve bought each other gifts that neither of them can use?
 - (A) They are full of regret for having given up their most prized possessions.
 - (B) They see the humor in the situation.
 - (C) They refuse to accept the truth.
 - (D) They are angry at each other for having wasted so much money.
5. Which **TWO** lines best support your answer to question 4?
 - (A) SD2: Jim unwraps the box. He lifts the lid and stares inside.
 - (B) SD3: Ignoring Della’s request, Jim goes to the couch and sits down. He grins.
 - (C) Jim: Della, the fact is, I sold my watch to buy your combs.
 - (D) SD1: Della sits down next to Jim. A smile tugs at the corners of her mouth.
6. Which is Kristin Lewis’s main purpose for writing “What Do You Get From Giving?”
 - (A) to show why Della and Jim should not have bought such expensive gifts for each other
 - (B) to persuade readers to give more gifts to others
 - (C) to explain how gift-giving can affect the giver
 - (D) to encourage readers to donate money to an animal shelter instead of buying gifts

Constructed-Response Questions



Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. How does Della feel right after she sells her hair to Madame Sofronie? What does this reveal about Della? Support your answers with text evidence.
8. Lewis writes that if a gift “shows even a small amount of consideration, the receiver will feel special.” If this is true, would the gifts Della and Jim received from each other have made them feel special? Explain.

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The Gift of the Magi Quiz

Directions: Read *The Gift of the Magi* and “What Do You Get From Giving?,” then answer the questions below.

1. In Scene 1, SD2 says that Jim and Della’s Christmas tree is small, scraggly, and sparsely decorated. These details help show that _____. (Choose TWO correct answers.)
 (A) Jim and Della are poor
 (B) Jim and Della love popcorn
 (C) Della’s hair is her most-prized possession
 (D) It is Christmastime
2. What is the MAIN purpose of Scene 2?
 (A) to show that the office where Jim works is cramped
 (B) to show that Fred finds it hard to concentrate at work
 (C) to show that Jim feels bad about not being able to buy Della a gift
 (D) to show why Della decides to sell her hair
3. In Scene 3, Jim “carefully polishes” his watch with his napkin. The playwright most likely included this detail to show that
 (A) Jim spilled coffee on his watch.
 (B) Jim treasures his watch.
 (C) Jim is a very tidy person.
 (D) Jim has to work on the day before Christmas.
4. When Jim and Della realize that they’ve bought each other gifts that neither of them can use, they
 (A) are full of regret for having given up their most prized possessions.
 (B) see the humor in the situation.
 (C) refuse to accept the truth.
 (D) get angry at each other.
5. Which TWO lines best support your answer to question 4?
 (A) SD2: Jim unwraps the box. He lifts the lid and stares inside.
 (B) SD3: Ignoring Della’s request, Jim goes to the couch and sits down. He grins.
 (C) Jim: Della, the fact is, I sold my watch to buy your combs.
 (D) SD1: Della sits down next to Jim. A smile tugs at the corners of her mouth.
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 (B) to persuade readers to give more gifts to others
 (C) to explain how gift-giving can affect the giver
 (D) to encourage readers to donate money to an animal shelter instead of buying gifts

Constructed-Response Questions



Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. What details in Scene 4 show that after Della sells her hair, she feels excited that she now has enough money to buy Jim’s gift?
8. Lewis writes that if a gift “shows even a small amount of consideration, the receiver will feel special.” Do the gifts that Della and Jim give each other show consideration? Explain.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Go to Scope
Online to listen
to the words
and definitions
read aloud!

Vocabulary:

The Gift of the Magi

- afloat (uh-FLOHT)** *adjective*; *Afloat* simply means “floating on the surface of water.” You might set a rubber duck afloat in your bathtub or tread water to stay afloat in a pool.

The phrase “stay afloat” is often used figuratively to mean “have just enough money to pay what you owe.” If a bakery has hardly any money left after paying its bills each month and is struggling to stay in business, you could say the bakery is struggling to stay afloat.

- befit (bih-FIT)** *verb*; *Befit* means “to be suitable or appropriate for someone or something.” A statue honoring Dr. Seuss would need to be amusing and a bit bizarre to befit Dr. Seuss’s style.

- haggle (HAG-uhl)** *verb*; To haggle is to argue about the details of something—particularly the price of something—before reaching an agreement.

- sparse (SPAHRs)** *adjective*; Something that is sparse is present only in small amounts or is very spread out over an area. In the desert, plants and trees are sparse.

- threadbare (THRED-bair)** *adjective*; *Threadbare* is used to describe something made of fabric that it is old, shabby, and worn thin from use.

- tonic (TON-ik)** *noun*; A tonic is a liquid mixture that makes you feel better or restores you to health. Before we had the medicines we have today, people often used tonics to treat their ailments. Some tonics worked while others were useless or even dangerous.

The tonic mentioned in the play is a hair tonic: a liquid applied to the hair to make it shiny, fragrant, and healthy-looking. Hair tonics often claimed to make hair grow faster and thicker—though it’s unlikely that they did.

- unceremoniously (uhn-ser-uh-MOH-nee-uhs-lee)** *adverb*; A ceremony is a formal event held for a special occasion. At ceremonies, people’s behavior is ceremonious (ser-uh-MOH-nee-uhs)—people behave in a polite and formal way that shows their respect for the occasion.

Something that is done ceremoniously is done in a ceremonious manner. Something that is done *unceremoniously* is done roughly and without any formality or courtesy. If you leave a birthday party unceremoniously, you leave suddenly without saying your goodbyes and thank yous.

“What Do You Get From Giving?”

8. agonize (AG-uh-nahyz) *verb*; Agony (AG-uh-nee) is intense physical or mental pain. To agonize is to spend a long time thinking or worrying about something. Your older sister might agonize over which college she should attend next fall.

9. incandescent (in-kehn-DES-uhnt) *adjective*; If something is incandescent, it glows with intense heat. Molten lava, lightbulbs, and red-hot burners on a stove are incandescent.

Incandescent can also mean “brilliant or passionate.” If Rob has an incandescent smile, it’s like he shines or glows from within. If the drama department put on an incandescent performance, the performance was impressive and moving.

10. neurochemical (noor-oh-KEM-i-kuhl) *noun*; A neurochemical carries information or messages between your brain and body. For example, let’s say you’re about to bite into an apple. A neurochemical will tell your jaw to chomp down.

11. reap (reep) *verb*; *Reap* means “to harvest a crop.” Farmers reap corn from their fields at the end of a growing season. *Reap* can also have the similar meaning of “to gain something as a result of one’s actions or the actions of others,” as in, “Sam worked on his note-taking skills this semester and reaped the benefits at exam time.”

Directions: Below and on the back of this page, list any other words from the play or article whose definitions you are not sure about. For each word, use context clues to try to figure out the meaning. Then look up the word in a few different dictionaries. Discuss the meaning of the word with your teacher or another adult. Then write a definition for the word and one example sentence.

Vocabulary Practice

The Gift of the Magi

Directions: Rewrite each sentence using a form of one of the words in the box. There is one word you will not use.

unceremoniously incandescent haggle sparse reap

1. My dad negotiated with the car dealership for days to get a better deal on his new car.

2. The pop star was dropped from his record label suddenly and with no explanation.

3. Edward enjoyed the rewards of the efforts he'd made to improve his jumpshot.

4. There was little traffic on the highway this morning.

Directions: Underline the boldfaced word in each pair that best completes the sentence.

5. A life jacket will keep you **afloat/incandescent** in the water.

6. In the movie "Cinderella," Cinderella's animal friends help her make a dress that **benefits/reaps** a royal ball.

7. After exercising, the brain releases a **neurochemical/tonic** that makes you feel happier.

8. Mia sewed patches on the knees of her **threadbare/afloat** jeans.

9. Dave spent all month **agonizing/reaping** over what his Halloween costume should be.

10. As they heated up, the coals in the campfire grew more **threadbare/incandescent**.

11. My grandma made a **tonic/neurochemical** of lemon juice, honey, and vinegar to soothe my sore throat.

Note: *Scope* does not accept Google Docs. If you are e-mailing your entry, please send a .pdf or .doc file.

Giving Contest

Explain what makes the gifts Jim and Della give each other valuable. Answer this question in a short essay. Draw on the play and the informational text in your answer. Five winners will each get a copy of *Very Rich* by Polly Horvath.

Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ a clearly stated central idea
- ⇒ use of supporting text evidence
- ⇒ good organization and transitions
- ⇒ grammar, spelling, and punctuation

My name: _____

My home phone number: _____ My grade: _____

My teacher's name: _____ My teacher's e-mail: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

School phone number: _____

My parent or legal guardian consents
to my participation in this contest.

Parent's or legal guardian's signature: _____

Include this form with your written entry and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com
or mail them to: Giving Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY February 15, 2019!