

The Gift of the Magi

O. Henry

How does the opening turn a small amount of money into the story's first major conflict?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Opening - Della counts her savings on Christmas Eve

TEACHER SETUP

Open the work in the Enhanced Reader and cue the span using the START and END anchors below.

START	One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all.
END	Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.
PASSAGE ID	sec-magi-01

THE MOVE

Trace how repetition and timing convert a fact into a problem

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The amount is not important by itself. The repeated counting shows that Della cannot change it, and the final sentence adds a deadline. The passage therefore transforms a number into a conflict between limited means and an urgent desire to give.

MARK

Underline each repetition of the amount. Circle details showing how the money was saved. Box the sentence that introduces the deadline. Draw an arrow from the amount to the problem created by Christmas being tomorrow.

NOTICE

- Why does the narrator state the amount more than once?
- What do the pennies reveal about the effort behind the total?

- Why does the final sentence change the meaning of the number?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does the opening turn a small amount of money into the story's first major conflict? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response. Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.

STRONG ANSWER

The opening makes \$1.87 into a conflict by showing both scarcity and urgency. Della has worked to save the money, but repeated counting confirms that the total will not grow, while Christmas tomorrow turns that fixed amount into an immediate obstacle.

EVIDENCE

Use the repeated dollar amount and the final sentence establishing the Christmas deadline.

WATCH FOR

Do not reduce the passage to “Della is poor.” Explain how repetition and timing create the specific problem that launches the story.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 9 · LESSON 291

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WORK

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PASSAGE ID	sec-magi-01

Your teacher will open or cue the work in the Enhanced Reader. Use the location and verbatim anchors below to confirm the assigned span.

START

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all.

END

Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

READ / LISTEN TO THE ASSIGNED PASSAGE SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration and highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the assigned passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK Underline each repetition of the amount. Circle details showing how the money was saved. Box the sentence that introduces the deadline. Draw an arrow from the amount to the problem created by Christmas being tomorrow.
2. NOTICE Why does the narrator state the amount more than once? What do the pennies reveal about the effort behind the total? Why does the final sentence change the meaning of the number?
3. THINK Answer provisionally: How does the opening turn a small amount of money into the story's first major conflict?
4. WRITE Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.
5. CLOSE Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.