

O. Henry's
The Gift of the
Magi

and other stories

Student Learning Materials

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AFTER TWENTY YEARS

PRE-READING ACTIVITY 1: VOCABULARY BUILDING

“After Twenty Years” is a story about two friends, Bob and Jimmy. Bob returns to New York City from the West. When they said goodbye twenty years ago, Bob and Jimmy agreed to meet at Big Joe Brady’s restaurant. Bob is waiting for Jimmy to arrive. Before you read the story, it is important that you learn some keywords and phrases. This activity will help you learn their meaning.

Directions:

1. In the table below, you will find a list of important words and phrases with definitions. Before you read the story, learn the words and phrases listed below. Read the sentences below the table. The sentences are from the story.
2. Complete the sentences by filling in the blank with one word or phrase from the table. The first sentence has been completed for you as an example.

Word/Phrase	Definition
jewel (p. 59)	A precious stone (such as a diamond)
the West (p. 59)	The western part of the United States in the past when it was not as developed and there were many cowboys
hurry (p. 60)	To move, walk, or do things quickly
arm in arm (p. 60)	Two people walking next to each other with their arms linked at their elbows
under arrest (p. 61)	Being taken or held by the police until guilt or innocence is determined
wanted (p. 61)	People who did something bad and the police are trying to catch them

1. The few people walking along that street were hurrying, trying to keep warm.
2. I saw the face of the man _____ by Chicago cops.
3. He had a large _____ in his necktie.
4. The two men started along the street, _____.
5. In _____ you learn how to fight for what you get.
6. You’ve been _____ for ten minutes.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY 2: SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE

In the story “After Twenty Years,” friendship is an important and central theme. Bob has returned to New York City to meet his friend Jimmy Wells. He is waiting where Big Joe Brady’s restaurant used to be. This activity will help you focus on this theme of friendship. It will also help you think about friendship in your own life.

PART 1: THINKING ABOUT FRIENDSHIP

Directions:

1. Before reading the story, read the four questions below.
2. Take a little time to think about each of the questions. Look up any words you do not know in a dictionary.
3. Answer each question by circling the letter next to the answer.

1. Is friendship important in your culture?

Friendship is...

- A. Very important
- B. Somewhat important
- C. Not important

2. What does it mean to be a good friend?
(Circle all that apply.)

Being a good friend means being...

- A. Kind
- B. Caring
- C. Honest
- D. Forgiving

3. Has a friend ever made you angry or sad?

- A. Yes, more than once.
- B. Yes, once.
- C. No, never.

4. If your friend was mean to you, but later apologized, did you forgive them?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know.
- D. My friends are never mean to me.

PART 2: DESCRIBING FRIENDSHIP

Directions:

1. Read the words and the sentences listed in the table below. These words can be used to describe a good friend or a bad friend.
2. Use the sentences in the table to help you understand the meaning of the words.
3. Look up any words that you do not know in a dictionary.
4. Sort the words in the boxes below. Write words that describe a good friend in the box on the left. Write words that describe a bad friend in the box on the right.

Words	Sentences
Reliable	My friend is <u>reliable</u> . She always arrives on time.
A thief	Peter is <u>a thief</u> . He steals money from people.
Honest	The man is <u>honest</u> . He never tells lies.
Forgetful	Roger is <u>forgetful</u> . He never remembers my birthday.
Greedy	The woman is <u>greedy</u> . She does not share with other people.
Loyal	Don is <u>loyal</u> . He always supports me.

A **Good** Friend is...

A **Bad** Friend is....

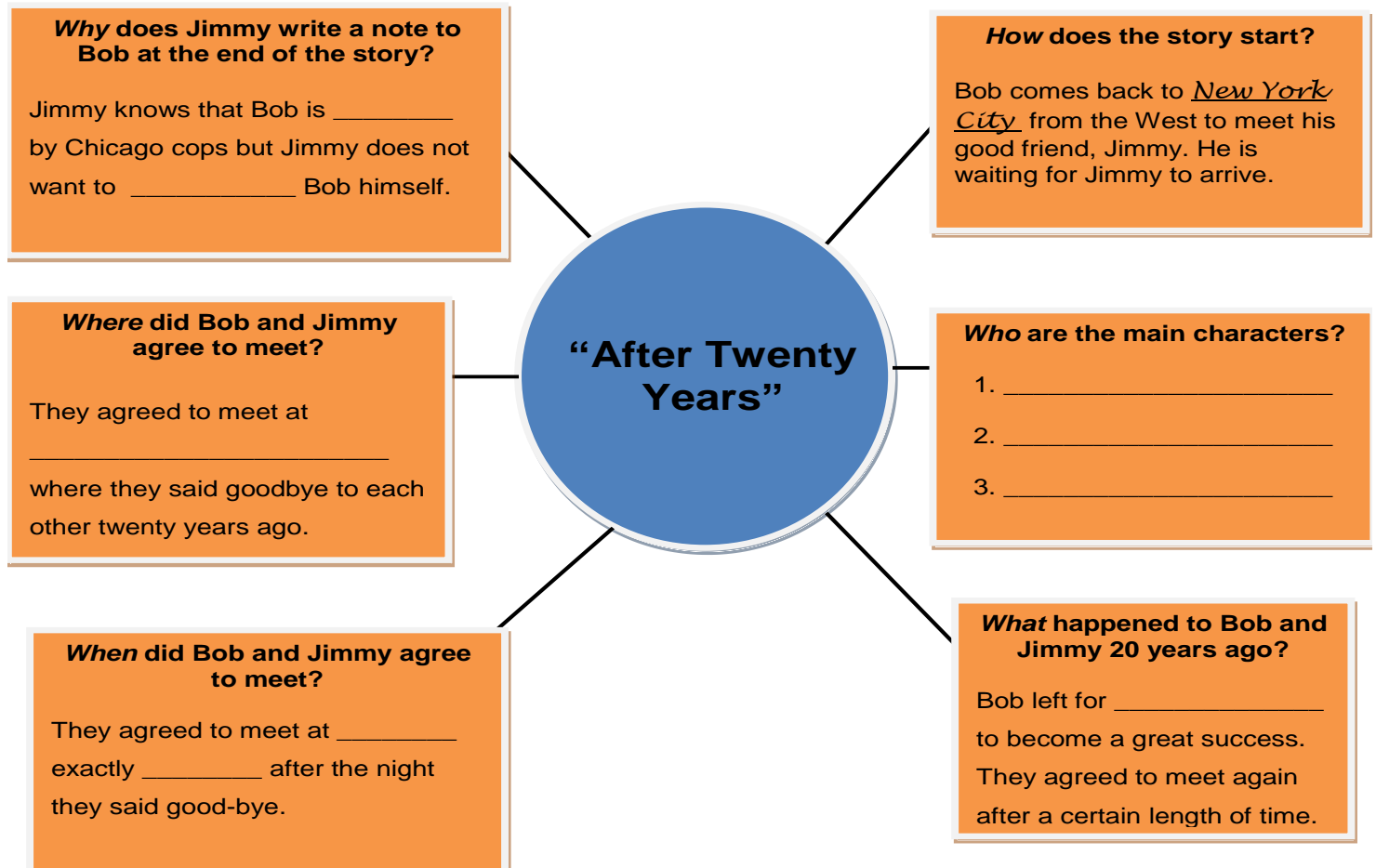
WHILE-READING ACTIVITY 1: SUNSHINE OUTLINE

In the story “After Twenty Years”, Bob returns to New York City to see his best friends, Jimmy, twenty years after he left. Bob is waiting for Jimmy to show up at the exact time and place they agreed on the day Bob left twenty years ago. To understand the story, it is important for you to identify **Who** the main characters are, **What** the story is, **When**, **Where**, and **How** the story happens, and **Why** the story happens the way it does.

Directions:

1. As you read the story, read the questions in the *Sunshine Outline* below.
2. Select the words or phrases from the box below to answer the questions.
3. Write these words or phrases in the blanks to complete the sentences. An example is provided.

Bob Jimmy the West 10 pm wanted twenty years
~~New York City~~ arrest a New York cop Big Joe Brady’s restaurant



WHILE-READING ACTIVITY 2: CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

In the story “After Twenty Years,” the narrator uses many phrases to describe the two main characters. Complete this activity while reading **pages 58 to 61**. This activity will help you visualize the main characters.

Directions:

1. Read the descriptive phrases below. Look up any unknown words in a dictionary.
2. As you read the story, decide if these phrases describe ***The man waiting for his friend*** or ***The first cop***.
3. If the phrase describes the man waiting for his friend, write the phrase in the first column. If the phrase describes the first cop, write the phrase in the second column. One example has been completed for you.

Descriptive phrases

~~A little white mark near his right eye (p. 59)~~

Watchful (p. 58)

Wanted by the Chicago cops (p. 61)

Guarding the peace (p. 58)

Colorless square face (p. 59)

Wearing a fine watch covered with jewels (p. 59)

Strong looking and important (p. 58)

Bright eyes (p. 59)

Wearing a necktie with a large jewel (p. 59)

A fine looking cop (p. 58)

Went West and was successful (p. 60)

The Man Waiting for His Friend	The First Cop
1. <i>A little white mark near his right eye</i>	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	
6.	
7.	

POST-READING ACTIVITY 1: SURVEY

In the story “After Twenty Years,” Bob and Jimmy Wells planned to meet again in twenty years. However, Bob has committed a crime and is wanted by the police. Jimmy is a cop and he should arrest Bob. But Jimmy is not able to arrest his friend. Instead he sends another cop to arrest Bob. This activity will help you think about the meaning of the story by using a survey. A survey is a list of questions used to collect information.

Directions:

1. Read the three survey questions below.
2. Answer the three questions in the first table ***My Answers***. Write the number corresponding to the answer in the table.
3. Ask **four** friends or family members to answer the three survey questions. You can even ask your friends and family to answer the questions online using social media (such as Facebook or Twitter).
4. Write their answers in the second table, ***My Friends’ and Family Members’ Answers***.
5. Write **one** way that your answers are similar and **one** way that your answers are different to the answers from your friends and family members.

Survey Questions

1. If your friend stole money, would you tell the police?

Yes Maybe No

2. If you were a cop and were supposed to arrest your friend for a crime, would you do it?

Yes Maybe No

3. If your friend did something to hurt you, would you forgive your friend if he or she apologized?

Yes Maybe No

Example

My Name	Answer to Question 1	Answer to Question 2	Answer to Question 3
<i>Peggy</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>No</i>

My Answers

My Name	Answer to Question 1	Answer to Question 2	Answer to Question 3

My Friends' and Family Members' Answers

Name	Answer to Question 1	Answer to Question 2	Answer to Question 3

One way my answers are **similar** to my friends' and family members' answers:

One way my answers are **different** from my friends' and family members' answers:

POST-READING ACTIVITY 2: ON MY OWN

“After Twenty Years” is a story about two friends, Bob and Jimmy. They go their separate ways but agree to meet again twenty years later. Bob returns to New York City. He is waiting for Jimmy to arrive where the restaurant used to be where they said good-bye to each other. Think of your own situation: Who is your best friend? What would happen if you and your friend go your separate ways? Imagine you meet again in twenty years. What will you both be like? What will you two be doing? What do you think your conversation might be like?

PART 1: FORM THE QUESTIONS

Directions:

1. Think of questions that you will be asking your best friend when you see him/her again after twenty years.
2. Form questions using the question words **Who**, **What**, **When**, **Where**, **Why**, and **How**. Select the appropriate word from the list provided below to complete the questions. One example has been completed for you.

Who	What	When	Where	Why	How
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1. Where did you go to college?
2. _____ were the most interesting people you have met?
3. _____ did you get married?
4. _____ many cities have you lived in?
5. _____ did you come home?
6. _____ were the most amazing things that happened to you?

PART 2: CREATE THE CONVERSATION

Directions:

1. Select three questions from the list above.
2. Write down one question in one of the dialogue bubbles.
3. Then think about the answer, and write it down in the other dialogue bubble.
4. Repeat Steps two and three for the other two questions to complete the conversation. An example has been provided for you.

