O. Henry’s
The Gift of the Magi
and other stories
Student Learning Materials
“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.

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

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.

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

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**
**New York City**

**Jimmy**

**the West**

**10 pm**

**wanted**

**twenty years**

**arrest**

**a New York cop**

**Big Joe Brady’s restaurant**

---

**Why does Jimmy write a note to Bob at the end of the story?**

Jimmy knows that Bob is _______ by Chicago cops but Jimmy does not want to _______ Bob himself.

**How does the story start?**

Bob comes back to New York City from the West to meet his good friend, Jimmy. He is waiting for Jimmy to arrive.

**Where did Bob and Jimmy agree to meet?**

They agreed to meet at _______ where they said goodbye to each other twenty years ago.

**When did Bob and Jimmy agree to meet?**

They agreed to meet at _______ exactly _______ after the night they said good-bye.

**Who are the main characters?**

1. 
2. 
3. 

**What happened to Bob and Jimmy 20 years ago?**

Bob left for _______ to become a great success. They agreed to meet again after a certain length of time.
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Man Waiting for His Friend</th>
<th>The First Cop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>A little white mark near his right eye</em></td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. Answers 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Name</th>
<th>Answer to Question 1</th>
<th>Answer to Question 2</th>
<th>Answer to Question 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peggy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Name</th>
<th>Answer to Question 1</th>
<th>Answer to Question 2</th>
<th>Answer to Question 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### My Friends’ and Family Members’ Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Answer to Question 1</th>
<th>Answer to Question 2</th>
<th>Answer to Question 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. __________ 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.
Where did you go to college?

I went to Iowa State University. It is in Ames, Iowa.