

O. Henry's
The Gift of the
Magi

and other stories

Student Learning Materials

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FROM THE CABBY'S SEAT

PRE-READING ACTIVITY 1: WORD SQUARES

The story "From the Cabby's Seat" is about Jerry and the young woman that he just married. This activity will help you to learn some important words needed to understand the story.

Directions:

1. Before reading the story, study the **Word Squares example** below.

Word Squares (Example)	
<p>Write the word:</p> <p><i>horse</i></p>	<p>Draw a symbol or picture:</p> 
<p>Translate the word into your native language:</p> <p><i>Pferd</i> (example in German)</p>	<p>Use the word in a sentence:</p> <p><i>The horse went fast at first, but after a little time he went more slowly.</i></p>

2. Choose **two** of the **Glossary Words** provided below and make your own Word Squares using the empty tables on the next page.

Glossary Words

Word	Definition
horse	A large animal used for riding and for carrying and pulling things.
cab	A taxi; in this story, it is a horse-driven carriage that carries passengers to a place for an amount of money that is based on the distance traveled.
fare	The money a person pays to travel in a cab; also what the driver may call the passenger who pays the money to travel in a cab.
hole	An opening into or through something.
roll	To move smoothly on wheels.
pull	To move something in a particular direction, often toward you.

Word Squares #1

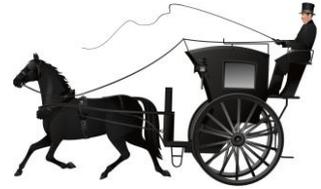
Write the word:	Draw a symbol or picture:
Translate the word into your native language:	Use the word in a sentence:

Word Squares #2

Write the word:	Draw a symbol or picture:
Translate the word into your native language:	Use the word in a sentence:

PRE-READING ACTIVITY 2: ANTICIPATION GUIDE

The story "From the Cabby's Seat" is about Jerry and his new wife. Jerry works as a cabby (the driver of a horse-driven carriage). It is helpful to guess the details of the story before you read it. This activity provides some statements about the life of a cabby in New York City in the 1910's.



Directions:

1. Before reading the story, read the sentences from the **Statement** column below.
2. In the **Before You Read** column, write "T" if you think the statement is going to be true. Write "F" if you think the statement will be false. An example has been provided for you.
3. As you read the story, compare your predictions with the actual events in the story.
4. Fill in the **After You Read** column based on what you read. Write "T" if the statement was true or "F" if the statement was false.

Before You Read	After You Read	Statement
T		The seat for a cabby is relatively high.
		A cabby expects his fare (passenger) will pay him generously.
		A cabby does not wait for his fare while the fare stops for a drink or meal.
		A cabby does not work at night.
		The cab in this story has two horses.
		A cabby usually chats with his fare during a trip.
		The cabby in this story didn't drink before driving his cab.
		A cabby usually tries to please his fare.

WHILE-READING ACTIVITY 1: CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

O. Henry uses many phrases to describe Jerry and Norah, the two main characters in the story. Many of these descriptive phrases are listed below. This activity will help you focus on the features of these two main characters.

Directions:

- As you read pages 41-45, pay attention to the descriptive phrases provided below. Decide which character each phrase describes.
- Write each phrase in the box under the correct character. An example is given.

Descriptive phrases:

High hat (p. 42)	Thick and red nose (p. 42)	Fine green coat (p. 42)
A plain face (p. 44)	Voice sounded like music (p. 43)	Shining eyes (p. 43)
An expression of love of life (p. 44)	Simple dress (p. 44)	Hard voice (p. 45)
Dreaming smile (p. 45)	Reddened hands (p. 45)	A wide smile (p. 45)

Jerry	Norah
1. <i>High hat</i>	1. <i>Voice sounded like music</i>
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

WHILE-READING ACTIVITY 2: SUPPORTING DETAILS AND MAIN IDEAS

As you read “From the Cabby’s Seat”, this activity will help you understand the main ideas of the story.

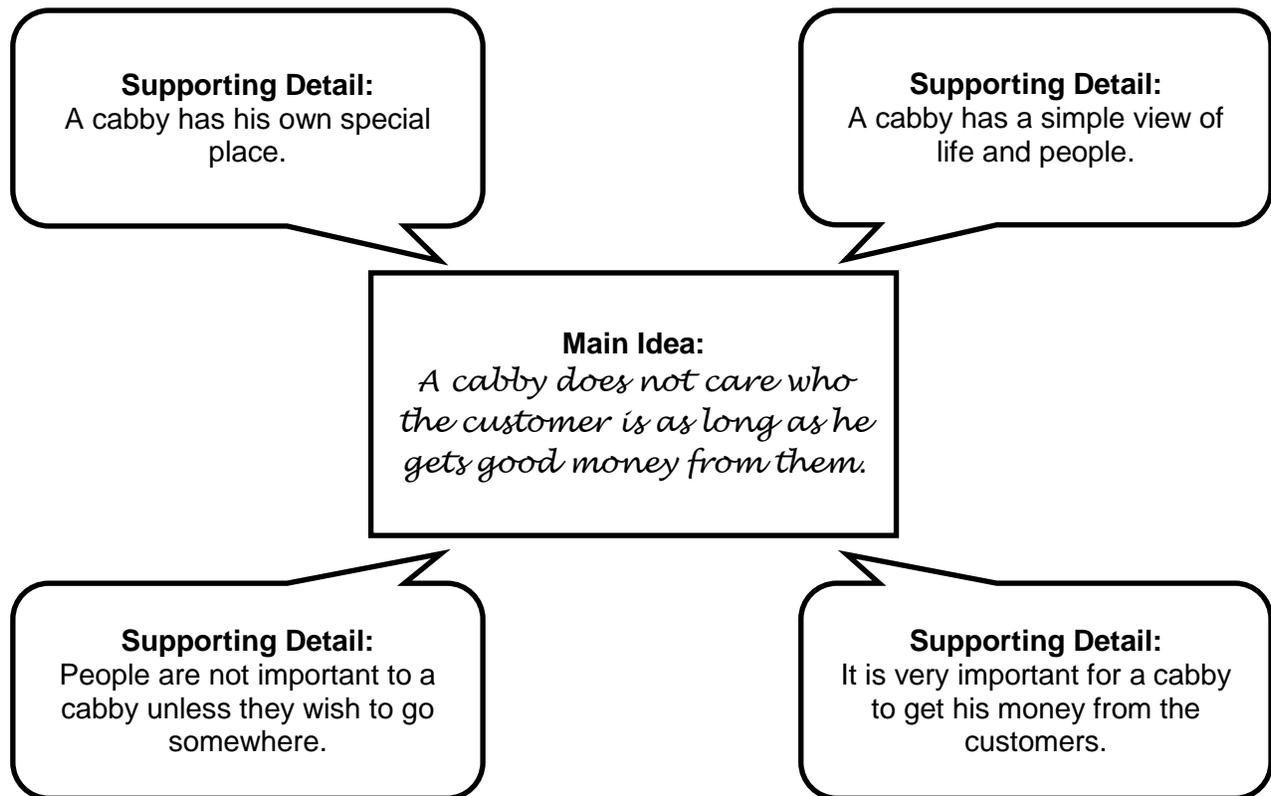
Directions:

1. As you read, follow the instructions for each part below.
2. Read the supporting details in the graphic organizer. In the center box, write the main idea of the part that you have just read.
3. Repeat the same steps for the other parts. The main idea in the graphic organizer below has been provided as an example.

Begin reading “From the Cabby’s Seat”.

Stop after reading the following passage on **page 42**:

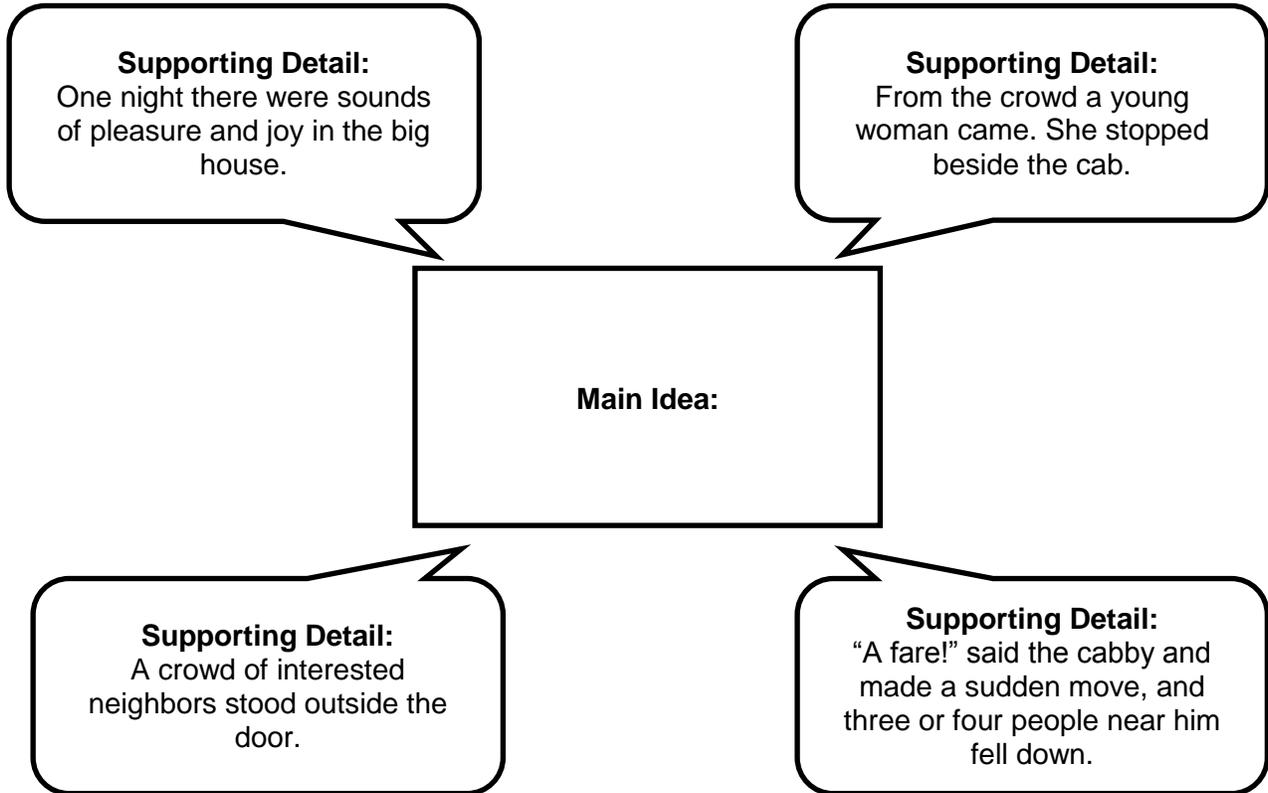
“In a cab you no longer feel like a person. You may be someone very important. But in a cab you are no more than something in a box, being carried from one place to another.”



Continue reading from **page 42**.

Stop after reading the following passage on **page 43**:

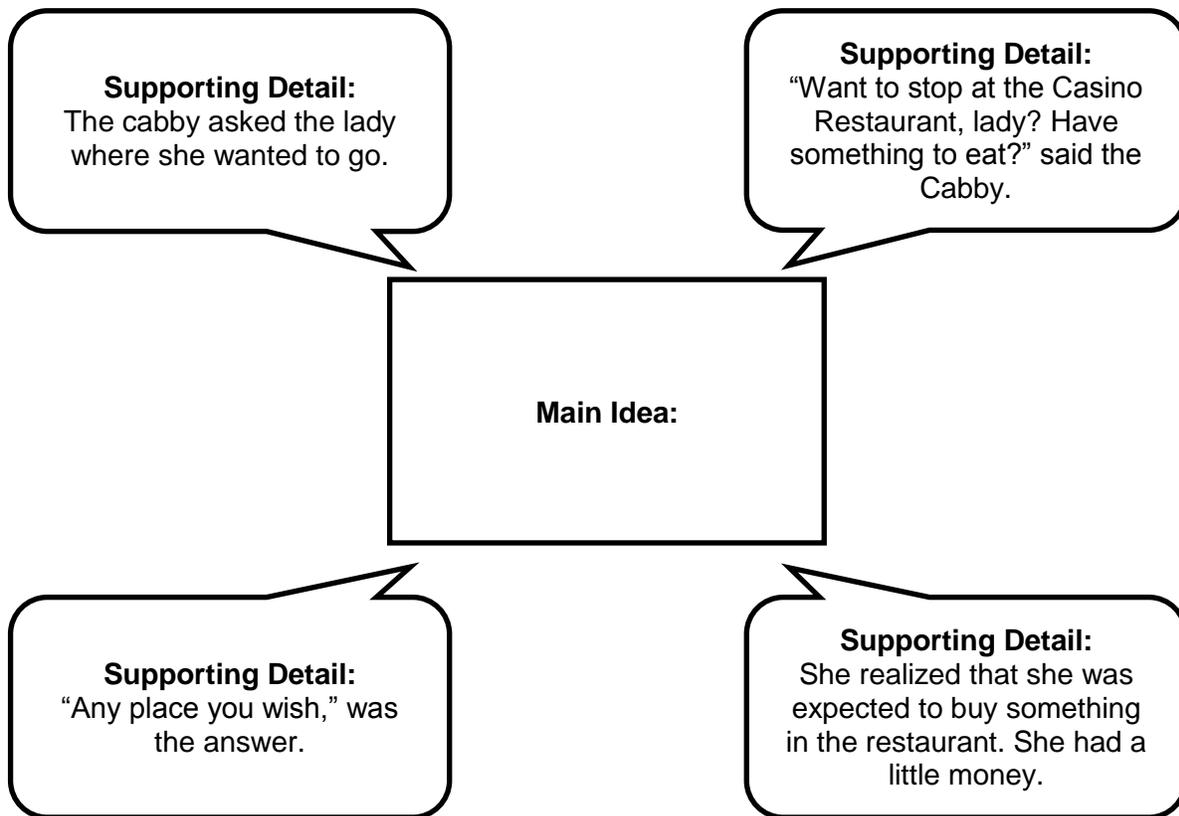
“The young woman stepped into the cab. The door closed. The crowd in the street jumped away. The horse started and the fine cab rolled down the street.”



Continue reading from **page 43**.

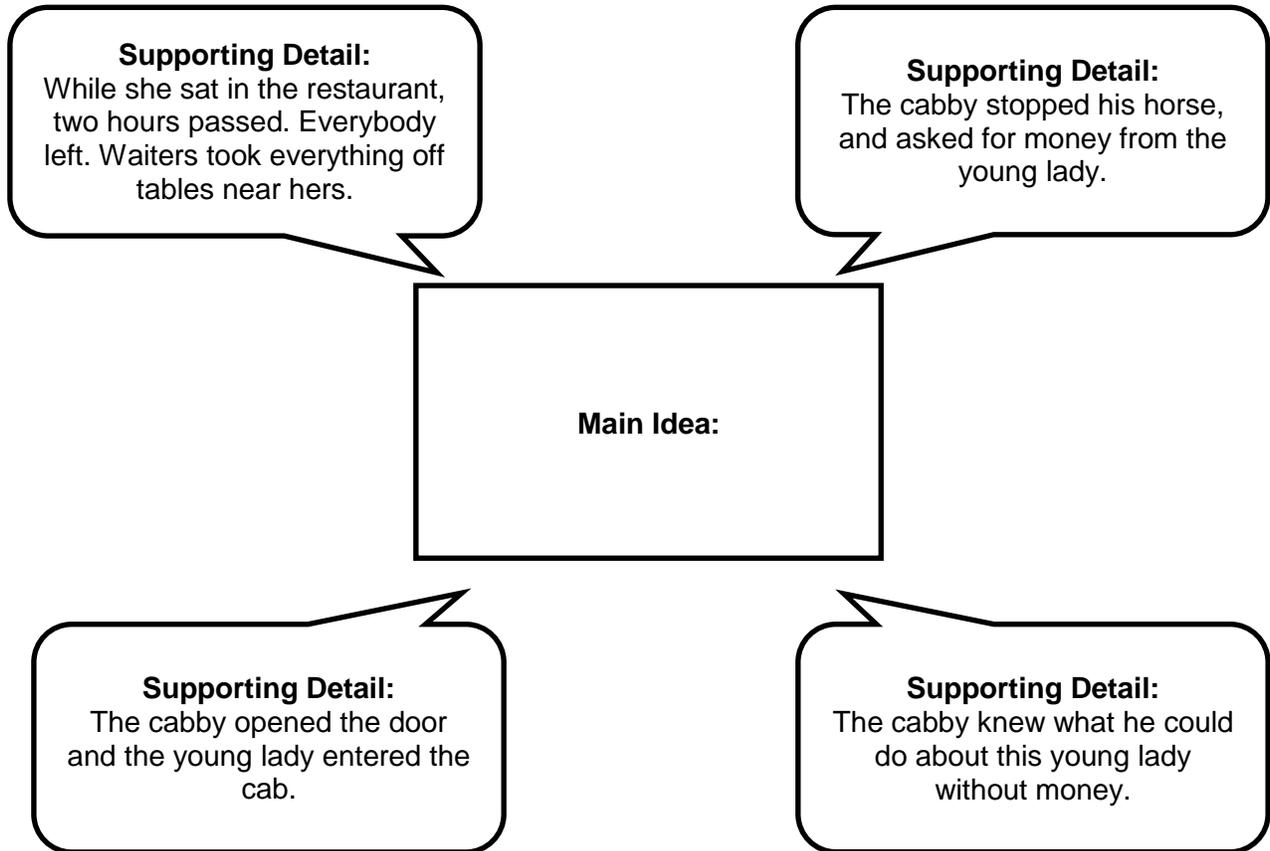
Stop after reading the following passage on **page 44**:

“At fifty tables sat people who looked to her like kings and queens. She thought their clothes and jewels were wonderfully rich. And now and then one of these people would look at her. They saw a small woman in a simple dress. They saw a plain face. But on that face they saw an expression of love of life, and the queens wished that they could look the same.”



Continue reading from **page 44**.

Stop at the end of the story.



POST-READING ACTIVITY 1: THE ROUTE OF THE NIGHT

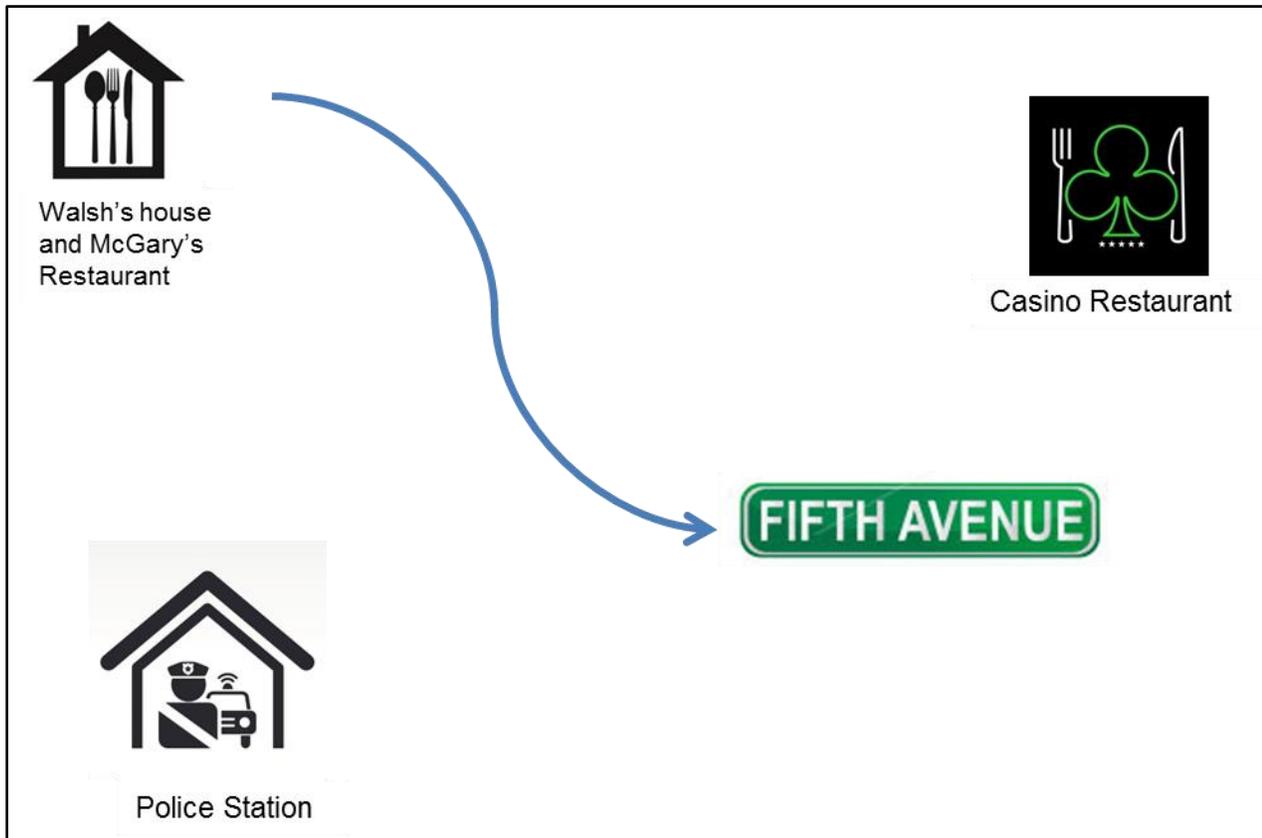
In this story, Jerry gives a cab ride to Norah after their wedding. They start from the Walsh family house beside McGary’s Family Restaurant and travel to different places in the story. Drawing their route will help you follow the sequence of events in the story.

Directions:

1. As you read, underline the names of the places on Jerry and Norah’s route.
2. Reorder the events in the chart on the next page according to the development of the story. The starting point of the route has already been numbered “1”.

Place	Event	Order
Walsh house beside McGary's Family Restaurant	Norah steps into Jerry's cab.	1
Police Station	Jerry finds that Norah is a special fare for him.	
Casino Restaurant	Norah enjoys a cold drink in the restaurant.	
Fifth Avenue	Jerry is half asleep.	

Connect the places on Jerry and Norah's route using an arrow. An example has been provided for you.



POST-READING ACTIVITY 2: UNDERSTANDING THE MAIN CHARACTER

After you read a story, it is important to think about the characters' feelings, thoughts, and decisions, and then express your own opinions. This activity will help you think about the character of the cabby (Jerry) and the decisions he made in the story.

Directions:

1. In the table below, read the series of events in the first column, **Event in the Story**.
2. Read the second column contains information from the story about the cabby's feelings, thoughts, and decisions.
3. Answer the questions in the third column based on the information you read in the story. An example is provided.

Events In the Story	Character's Feelings/Thoughts/Decisions	Questions
1. The cabby's view of life and people.	<i>His view of people is simpler, perhaps, than the view of a man who does any other kind of work. ... People are not important to him unless they wish to go somewhere. Then they are only something to be carried from one place to another. (p. 41)</i>	Question A: Do you think the cabby's view of life and people is appropriate for his job? <i>Maybe. A cabby only cares about his business, not people.</i>
2. Getting the customers into the cab.	<i>A fare! He made a sudden move, and three or four people near him fell down. (p. 42)</i>	Question B: What was the cabby's attitude toward people who did not ride in his cab?
3. The cabby stops at the Casino Restaurant.	<i>They made a sudden stop at the door of the restaurant. The cab door opened. The fare stepped out. At once she seemed caught by the wonderful music. (p. 44)</i>	Question C: Do you think the cabby cared about the young lady's feelings when he drove to the park and stopped at the Casino Restaurant?
4. The cabby's reaction when he learns that the young lady does not have enough money.	<i>He was full of anger. He shouted at the stars in the sky. He shouted at other cabs as they passed. His words were so bad that another driver, hearing them, could not believe his ears. (p. 45)</i>	Question D: What would be your reaction if you didn't get paid for the work you had done?