

**LESSON:** Keepsake Assignment: Short and Sweet Exercise

**TIME:** Estimated 1 class period to complete project (50-minute period)

**CLASS LEVEL:** 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts

**TEKS LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL:** In this lesson, students read a short story, discuss the writer's use of irony, and compose a short expository response.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** How do the ordinary objects we collect in our daily lives reflect who we are as people?

**STUDENTS:**

- \*Read ["The Gift of the Magi"](#) by O. Henry.
- \*Discuss the plot development, characters, and irony of O. Henry's story.
- \*Brainstorm about a personal keepsake that has important meaning.
- \*Compose a short expository response about their special keepsake.

**TEKS:**

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts: Reading/Fluency, Reading/Vocabulary Development, and Writing/Expository Texts

Reading: (1) (2) (3) (6A) (6B) (6C) Writing: (14A) (14B) (14C) (14D) (14E) (17A)

**Vocabulary:**

Irony: when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect

Artifact: an object produced or shaped by human workmanship

Keepsake: something given or kept as a reminder; memento

**Step 1**

Students read aloud "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry. Discuss with students the writer's use of irony in the story.

**Step 2**

Discuss with students the characters' motivations for choosing the specific objects they wish to give to each other. Discuss how these simple objects have special meaning in the characters' lives.

### **Step 3**

Have students brainstorm about the ordinary objects from their own lives that they consider a valuable keepsake. Have students choose one special keepsake to write about.

### **Step 4**

Have students write a one-page expository response explaining their keepsake. Use questions like the following to prompt their response:

\*Describe your object.

\*Explain the object's history.

\*Tell how you obtained the object.

\*Explain any special memories or stories that you associate with the object.

\*Explain how this object has special meaning for you.

### **EXTENSION:**

Schedule a field trip to the O. Henry and Susanna Dickinson Museums at Brush Square to discover and learn more about the unique artifacts that each museum holds. For more information or to make a tour reservation, please contact [Bao.Nguyen](#).