

Teaching Vocabulary Through Literature

Sonia Sunny

Focus: Story— *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry

Level: Class 10

Estimated time: 60 minutes

Size: 40 students

Objectives:

1. To understand the semantic load of vocabulary items like parsimony, mendicancy, pier glass, and
. To learn synonyms of the words mentioned above.

Materials:

Hard copy of the story, print out of the crossword

Procedure:

1. Elicit the learner's memories about Christmas through questions like
 - The most memorable Christmas in your life
 - The gift that you adore and why
2. Introduce the five components of the short story.
3. Ask learners to guess the story line.
4. Ask them to read the story and find out
 - the difficult words
 - new words
 - dialogue patterns
5. (by the tutor) Explain the meaning of new words through situational and realistic questions.

1. Parsimony:

- Can you think of a person, who is very reluctant to spend money?
- How do you think Della managed to save the amount?

Meaning: extreme unwillingness to spend money or use resources

Synonyms: frugality, miserliness

2. Mendicancy:

- Can you think of a word to describe an extremely poor situation?
- How will you describe the situation of Della and Jim?

Meaning: the condition of being a beggar

Synonyms: penniless, impoverishment

3. Pier glass:

- Do you have a dressing mirror at home?
- Della has very long hair. Imagine how she will have a look at her hair every day?

Meaning: A large mirror, used originally to fill wall space between windows.

Synonyms: Trumeau mirror, dressing mirror

Activity Sheet

Activity 1:

Crossword

Objective: Vocabulary enrichment

(in groups) Do the crossword puzzle below.

			7																
			4																
																		8	
	6																		
2																			
		1																	
		3																	
		5																	

ACROSS:

1. lobby next to the outer door of a building
2. search a place thoroughly
3. sniff repeatedly
4. small steep waterfall

DOWN:

5. sensible and careful attitude that makes you avoid some risk
6. extreme unwillingness to spend money
7. irrelevant
8. able to move quickly

Activity 2:

Speaking

Objective:

- To develop the speaking skill
(in groups) Discuss and speak on the following:
1. Narrate the story as if it is happening now.
 2. Think of an alternate ending to the story.
 3. Build up a conversation between Jim and the shopkeeper.

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