

◆◆◆ THE SHORT STORY COURSE ◆◆◆

COURSE PLAN METHODOLOGY: Each weekly assignment is summarized in the first line of the week's daily course plan. The specific daily assignments are outlined in the following lines indicated by the **MON, TUES, WED, THUR** and **FRI** abbreviations.

The Study Questions are located in the Junior High Literature Study Question booklets available for purchase from Kolbe Academy. A supplemental worksheet for the Short Story course is included on pages 8-9 of the short story course plan. Students should study literary devices and elements of the short story **using the worksheets included with the short story course plan**. We suggest reading the weekly written assignment to the student at the beginning of the week. The student should write the assignment down on a note card (to be used as a bookmark) so that he can think about the assignment as he reads. We suggest that students complete assignments by the following Monday with the bulk of the work being done on the Friday prior. As the teacher, be sure to review the final exam **now** to ensure all concepts are covered with your student as he reads the book.

The student should keep a notebook for writing each of the following aspects of the problem in a short story: problem, type of problem, complication, climax, and solution. In other words, the student should make a note of the problem(s), what type of problem it is, what the complication is, what the climax of the story is, and how the problem is resolved.

The stories read in this course, in order of appearance:

The Ransom of Red Chief, O. Henry

The Last Leaf, O. Henry

The Gift of the Magi, O. Henry

The Story of the Other Wise Man, Henry Van Dyke

The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Washington Irving

The Red Headed League, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Devil and Daniel Webster, Stephen Vincent Benet

A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens

WEEK 1	
<i>How to Read and Appreciate a Short Story. The Ransom of Red Chief.</i>	
MON	Read <i>How to Read and Appreciate a Short Story</i> , SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL, pages 8-9 of the short story course plan.
TUES	Do the Study Questions for <i>How to Read and Appreciate a Short Story</i> .
WED	Read <i>The Ransom of Red Chief</i> and have the student write the aspects of the problem in a notebook. See the Course Plan Methodology for details and the Assignment Answer Key for answers.
THUR	Do the Study Questions for <i>The Ransom of Red Chief</i> . Characters: Ebenezer Dorset —the wealthy father of the young, spoiled ten-year-old boy. Red Chief —the self-appointed name of a ten-year-old boy who is ransomed by "Two Desperate Men." Bill Driscoll —one of the kidnapers who receives the more severe punishments from Red Chief. Sam —the narrator of the story, and one of the kidnapers, who is named "Snake Eye the Spy" by Red Chief.

	<p>Story Summary: <i>The Ransom of Red Chief</i> is one of O’Henry’s less serious short stories. It is a comedy about two con men who decide to kidnap a rich man’s ten-year-old son. They are able to steal the child and set up a ransom, however, the boy is such a problem maker that he not only enjoys the kidnapping but even makes the lives of the two men hellish for several days. The ironic twist at the end is that the men end up having to pay the father to give the boy back to him.</p>
	<p>Notes</p>
<p>WEEK 2</p>	
<p>The Last Leaf. The Gift of the Magi.</p>	
<p>Written assignment: In <i>The Gift of the Magi</i>, why does the writer call them the wisest of people?</p>	
<p>MON</p>	<p>Read <i>The Last Leaf</i> and have the student write the aspects of the problem in a notebook. O. Henry does a marvelous job establishing the setting of the story. It takes place in Greenwich Village, what would have been at the time a small area of New York city, populated by young artists from all over the country vying for fame in the big city. The dilemma in the story is that Johnsy is dying of pneumonia, and more importantly, she is losing the will to fight for her life. Her friend Sue takes care of her but can only do so much to keep her comfortable. The other character in the story is an old artist, a foreigner, named Behrman. He is a failure and still cherishes the hope of one day painting a masterpiece. In her sickness, Johnsy imagines that she must die when the last leaf from an old vine, which she can see through her window, has fallen. Even after successive stormy nights, one leaf seems to endure, and Johnsy amazed by its tenacity finds the will to live and recuperates. Ironically, Behrman has painted a leaf by the ivy so as to keep Johnsy alive. However, he had to do his work on a stormy winter night, and it cost him his life.</p>
<p>TUES</p>	<p>Do the Study Questions for <i>The Last Leaf</i>. In <i>The Last Leaf</i>, O. Henry shows the inextricable union of love and sacrifice. The older artist, Behrman, gives up his life for the young girl, Johnsy. For O. Henry, love is the most valuable thing in the world and it always comes at a high price.</p>
<p>WED</p>	<p>Read <i>The Gift of the Magi</i> and have the student write the aspects of the problem in a notebook. Like many of O. Henry’s short stories, the dilemmas in <i>The Gift of the Magi</i> are very simple and mundane. The story is about Della Young and her struggle to buy her husband Jim a Christmas present with the few pennies that she has saved. Jim is in a similar predicament; he too wants to buy Della something expressive of his love for her, but he does not have enough money. It is clear that the two are deeply in love with and devoted unto each other, and that any gift will fall infinitely short of expressing this commitment. Nevertheless, they both give up their most precious possessions in order to buy something worth a week’s wages. The ironic twist at the end is that their sacrifice renders the other’s gift useless (Jim sold his watch to buy a set of combs; Della sold her hair to buy Jim a watch band).</p>
<p>THUR</p>	<p>Do the Study Questions for <i>The Gift of the Magi</i>. At the end of the story, Jim and Della realize that their possessions and gifts will never even remotely translate into love. This is the secret of the “Magi,” the wise men, who brought gifts for the baby Jesus. Their true gift is the sacrifice of self for the beloved.</p>
<p>FRI</p>	<p>Do Written Assignment. This assignment can be completed over the weekend.</p>