O. Henry's The Gift of the Magi

and other stories

Student Learning Materials

Published by

The Office of English Language Programs

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20037

americanenglish.state.gov

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THE LAST LEAF

PRE-READING ACTIVITY 1: VOCABULARY MATCHING

Some vocabulary words from the story "The Last Leaf" are listed below. Each word also has a picture that shows its meaning. In this activity, practice these words before you read.

PART 1: MATCH AND REWRITE

Directions*:*

Use the pictures below to guess the meanings of the words. Use a dictionary to look them up, when needed, then match each word and picture to the definition provided.

Words	Definitions
painter	A type of disease or illness
painting materials	A flat, (usually green) part of a tree or plant growing from a stem or twig
masterpiece	An artist who paints pictures
sickness	A part of a tree that grows out from the trunk
to get well	Things for painting, such as paint and brushes
leaf	A person's best work, a great piece of art
branch	To feel better, not be sick anymore

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Now practice these new words and phrases. The following sentences are from "The Last Leaf." Each sentence is missing one word or phrase. Clues are given below each blank.

Directions*:*

1. Read the sentence and the clue below each line.
2. Choose one word or phrase from the box to complete the sentence.
3. Write the word on the line. The first sentence has been completed as an example.

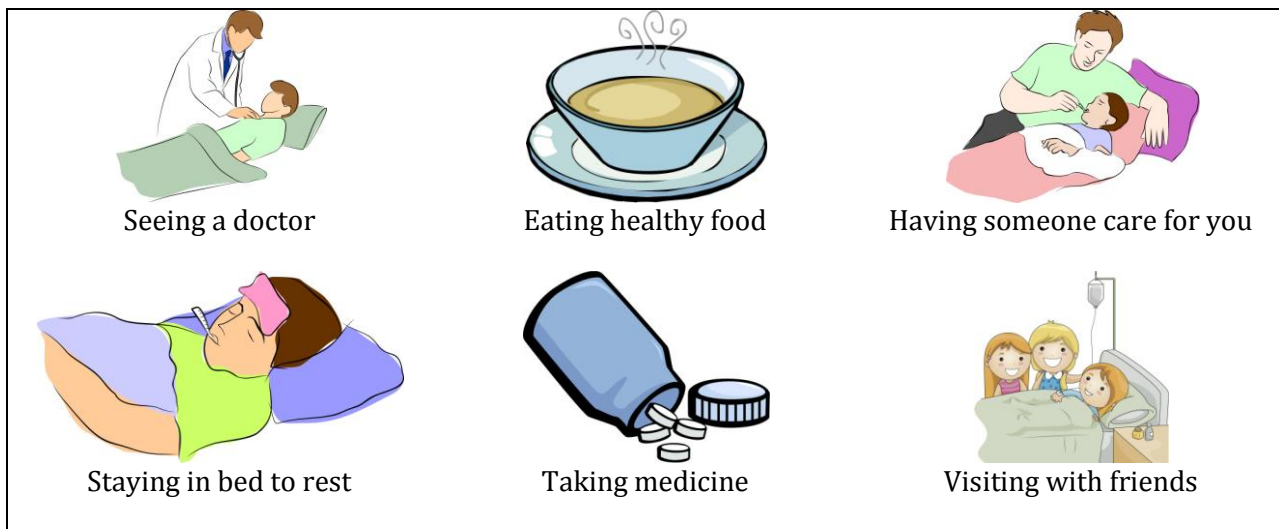| **leaf**	**sickness**	**painter**	**masterpiece**	**branch**	**painting materials**	~~**getting well**~~

1. The doctor told me what your chances are for ___*getting well*___ .
   (feeling better)

2. She could still see the last _____ of the tree from the window.
   (small green part of a tree)

3. There it was hanging from a _____ , nearly twenty feet above the ground.
   (part of tree that grows out of the trunk)

4. Suppose a _____ had some _____ for which he had not paid.
   (artist who paints)   (things to paint with)

5. He had always talked of painting a great picture, a _____ , but he had never yet started it.
   (his best work)

6. The _____ has put these strange ideas into her mind.
   (disease, feeling ill)

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"The Last Leaf" is about a woman named Johnsy. She is sick with an illness called pneumonia.

Her friends try to help her get well. These pictures show some ways that might make her feel better.

Directions:

1. What makes you feel better when you are sick?
2. Circle the two things that help you the most.

Seeing a doctor	Eating healthy food	Having someone care for you
Staying in bed to rest	Taking medicine	Visiting with friends

3. As you read "The Last Leaf," notice what happens in the story. Put an X next to the things that helped Johnsy get better.

___ A doctor visits Johnsy.
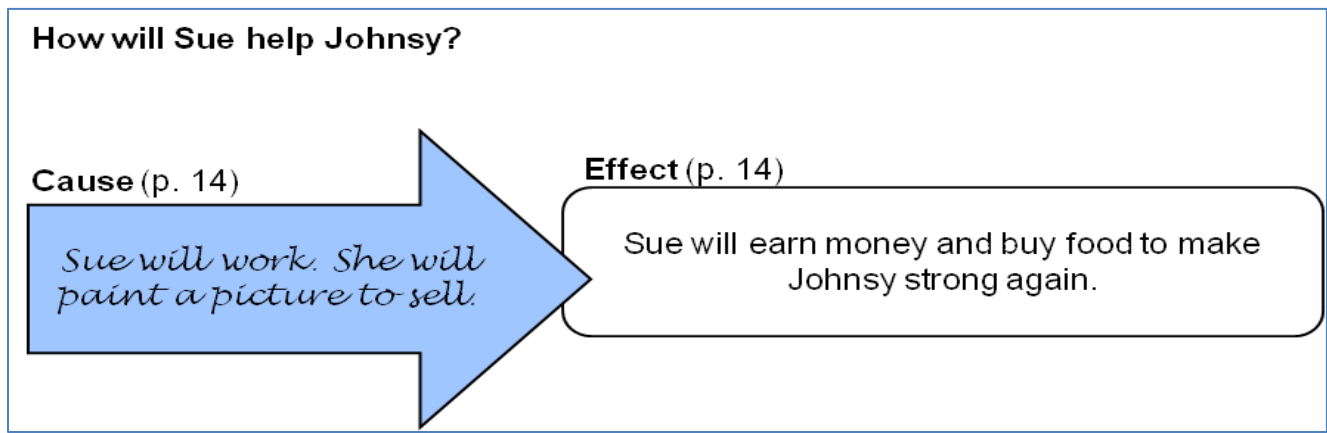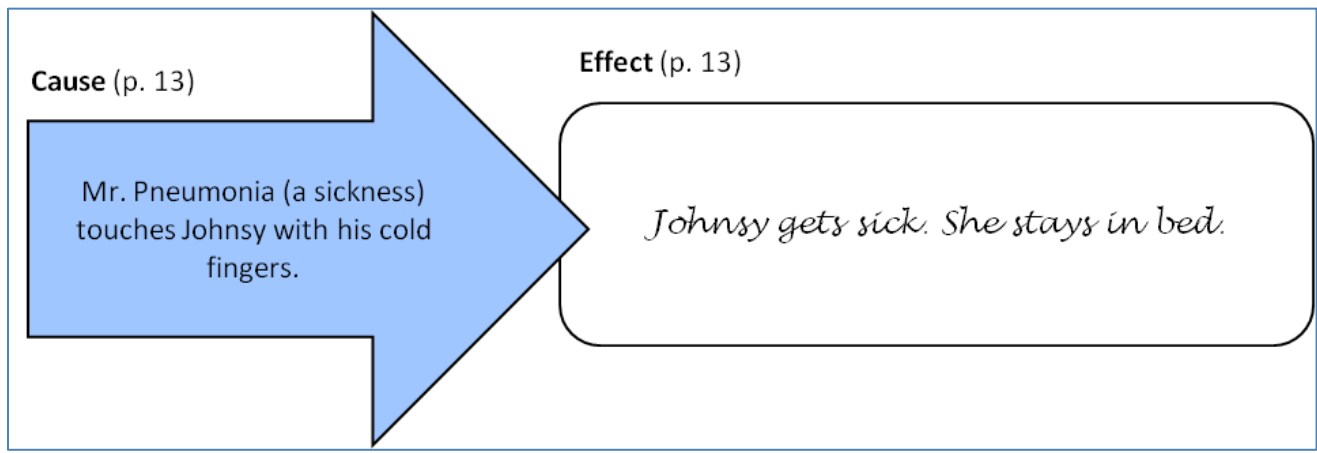
___ Sue gives Johnsy food.

___ Sue takes care of Johnsy.

___ Johnsy stays in bed and sleeps.

___ Johnsy takes medicine.

___ Old Behrman (Johnsy's friend) takes care of her.

In a story, one event can lead to a second event. The first event is the **cause.** The second event is the **effect**. In "The Last Leaf," Mr. Pneumonia (a sickness) touches Johnsy with his cold fingers. This makes Johnsy sick.
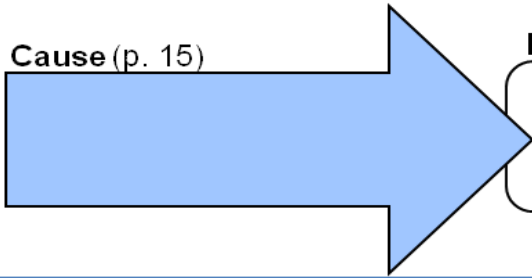
Directions:

1. Some events from the story are given below. Some events are **causes** and some are **effects**.
2. As you read the story, write down the missing events. You can use words from the story, or write in your own words. Two examples are given.

Cause (p. 13)

Mr. Pneumonia (a sickness) touches Johnsy with his cold fingers.

Effect (p. 13)

Johnsy gets sick. She stays in bed.

How will Sue help Johnsy?

Cause (p. 14)

Sue will work. She will paint a picture to sell.

Effect (p. 14)

Sue will earn money and buy food to make Johnsy strong again.

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Why is Old Behrman not a success?

Cause (p. 15)

Effect (p. 15)

He had no success as a painter.

What will happen when the last leaf falls?

Cause (p. 16)

Johnsy thinks the leaf will fall.

Effect (p. 16)
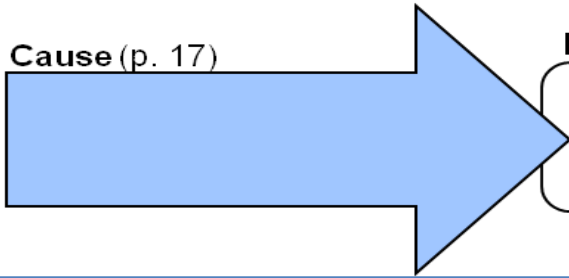
What does Old Behrman do after talking to Sue?

Cause (p. 15)

Sue tells Old Behrman about Johnsy and the leaves on the tree.

Effect (p. 16)

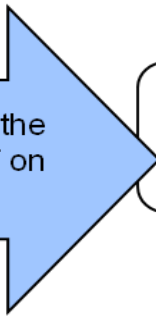**What made Johnsy want to get better?**

Cause (p. 17)

Effect (p. 17)

Johnsy decides to eat. She decides to get better.

In the end, Old Behrman helped Johnsy. What happens to Old Behrman?

Cause (pp. 17-18)

Old Behrman goes out in the cold rain. He paints a leaf on the wall.

Effect (pp. 17-18)

To understand a story it is important to be able to summarize what you have just read. It is also helpful to think about what will happen next in the story. This activity checks your reading comprehension, your understanding of this story, and helps you make predictions.

Directions:

1. As you read the story, follow the directions provided.
2. When you see the stop sign, stop reading. Then, mark the correct summary.
3. Next, mark the sentence that is the best prediction of what will happen next in the story.

GO   ***Begin*** *reading the story "The Last Leaf."*

STOP   ***Stop*** *reading on* **page 14** *when you see:*

> *Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting—counting back. "Twelve," she said; and a little later, "Eleven"; and then, "Ten," and, "Nine"; and then "Eight," and "Seven," almost together.*

Summary #1: You have read the first two pages of "The Last Leaf." Stop and recap what has happened. Which statement is the best summary?

____ Johnsy has pneumonia, a bad sickness. Her friend Sue talks to the doctor.

____ Sue and Johnsy are going to Paris. They will paint pictures there.

Prediction #1: Johnsy lies in bed. Sue sees Johnsy looking out the window and counting. What is Johnsy counting?

____ windows

____ birds

____ leaves

GO   *Continue reading.*

STOP *Stop reading at the end of page 14.*

Prediction Check #1: Was your prediction correct?

___ Yes, my prediction was correct.

___ No, my prediction was not correct.

Prediction #2: Now make two more predictions. Johnsy says that she will die when the last leaf falls off the tree.

What will happen to the last leaf?   What will happen to Johnsy?

___ The leaf will fall off the tree.   ___ Johnsy will die from pneumonia.
___ The leaf will stay on the tree.   ___ Johnsy will get well.

GO *Continue reading to the end of the story*

Prediction Check #2: Were your predictions correct?

About the last leaf   About Johnsy

___ Yes, my prediction was correct.   ___ Yes, my prediction was correct.
___ No, my prediction was not correct.   ___ No, my prediction was not correct.

Summary #2: After you finish reading the story, complete the sentence below.

Mr. Behrman got sick and died because

___ he visited Johnsy. He caught pneumonia from her.

___ he went outside in the cold. He painted a leaf on the wall for Johnsy. It helped Johnsy realize she really wanted to get better.

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The changing number of leaves on the tree is important in this story. In the beginning, there were many leaves. In the end, there was only one leaf. The sentences below describe Johnsy's thoughts and actions in the story, but they are not in the correct order. Match the number of leaves, which are in the correct order from the story, with the descriptions of Johnsy's thoughts and actions. You may need to look at the story again.

Directions:

1. Read each description below.
2. The pictures show the numbers of leaves from many down to only one.
3. Look at the story again. Match Johnsy's thoughts and actions with the correct number of leaves. An example is given.

Number of leaves on the tree	Description of Johnsy's thoughts and actions
hundreds of leaves (p. 14)	Johnsy tells Sue she is counting leaves. She tells Sue that she will die when the last leaf falls.
five leaves (p. 14)	Johnsy thinks the last leaf will fall overnight and then she will die, too.
four leaves (pp. 14-15)	Counting the leaves made Johnsy's head hurt.
one leaf (p. 16)	Johnsy changes her mind. She wants to get better. She wants to eat.
one leaf is still there (p. 17)	Johnsy doesn't want anything to eat. She doesn't want Sue to buy any food for her.

Old Behrman, Sue, and Johnsy are very good friends. Sue and Old Behrman want to help Johnsy get better. Old Behrman does something for Sue. He also does something for Johnsy. Sue does several things for Johnsy. In this activity, draw pictures to show Sue's and Old Behrman's helpful actions.

Directions:

1. Read the questions and partial sentences below. Complete each sentence to answer each question. The first example has been completed for you.
2. Draw a picture of that part of the story in each of the boxes. You may want to read parts of the story again.

Sue's and Old Behrman's helpful actions	Your drawing of the scene in the story
What does Old Behrman do for Sue? (pp. 15-16) Old Behrman lets Sue *paint a picture of him.* Sue can sell the picture to get money to buy food.	
What does Sue do for Johnsy? (p. 17) Sue _____ _____ Sue hopes the food will make Johnsy stronger.	
What does Old Behrman do for Johnsy? (p. 17) Old Behrman _____ _____ She sees the leaf and decides to get better.	

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