

O. Henry's
The Gift of the
Magi

and other stories

Student Learning Materials

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WHILE-READING ACTIVITY 2: MAKING A STORY STRUCTURE MAP

Like other stories written by O. Henry, "Hearts and Crosses" has an unexpected storyline surrounding the relationship between Webb and Santa. The Story Structure Map below follows the characters, setting, problem, resolution, and main events. It may help to develop an overview of the story.

Directions:

Complete the Story Structure Map by filling in the blanks with information from the story. Write down the problem in the story and complete events two to five.

Story Structure Map

Title:

Hearts and Crosses

Main Characters:

*Webb Yeager and Santa McAllister
Yeager*

Setting:

*The Nopalito Ranch and the Seco
Ranch in Texas*

Problem (pp. 26-28):

Webb _____.

Events

1. At the restaurant (pp. 26-27)

*Webb drank with Baldy and got
some ideas from him.*



2. At the Nopalito Ranch (p. 30)

Webb disagreed
_____.



3. At the Nopalito Ranch (p. 31)

Webb left
_____.



6. Resolution (p. 33-34):

*Webb saw the heart and cross sign
on the cow and hurried back to the
Nopalito Ranch.*



5. At the Nopalito Ranch (p. 33)

Santa marked
_____.



4. At the Nopalito Ranch (p. 32)

Santa was contacted
_____.

POST-READING ACTIVITY 1: FOLLOW THE HEART AND CROSS SIGN

In this story the sign of a heart with a cross is used as a symbol of love from Santa to Webb. This heart and cross sign is mentioned several times throughout the story. Each time the sign is mentioned, it is associated with a special moment or event. Noticing the situations where the sign is mentioned in the story will help you see the love between Webb and Santa.

Directions:

1. Read the story and underline the words whenever the heart and cross sign is mentioned.
2. In the column **Moment When the Sign Is Mentioned**, complete the sentences with information about that moment in the story.

| Page Number | People Involved | Moment When the Sign Was Mentioned |
|-------------|------------------|---|
| p. 28 | Baldy and Webb | Webb and Baldy talked about the sign when they <u>stopped to say goodbye at Dry Lake.</u> |
| p. 29 | Santa and Webb | Santa sent the sign to Webb when she _____ _____. |
| p. 34 | Quinn and Wilson | Quinn noticed the sign on the white cow after Webb _____. |



POST-READING ACTIVITY 2: CHARACTER TRAIT WEB

Santa and Webb are the two main characters in the story. Each character in this story has qualities or features. We usually describe these qualities with descriptive words called *adjectives*. This activity will help you study some adjectives that can be used to describe and analyze characters.

PART 1: DESCRIPTIVE WORDS

Directions:

1. Study the adjectives and their definitions in the table below.

| Adjective | Definition |
|---------------------|--|
| nice, kind | Wanting and liking to do good things and bring happiness to others |
| serious | Not joking or funny |
| broad-minded | Willing to accept opinions that are different from your own |
| unfriendly | Not friendly, not showing kind or friendly feelings |
| honest | Not hiding the truth about someone or something |
| funny | Causing laughter |
| stupid | Lacking the ability to learn and understand things |
| mean | Not kind to people, cruel |
| friendly | Nice, warm, and helpful to others |
| stubborn | Refusing to change your ideas |
| smart | Intelligent and very good at learning |
| deceptive | Likely to make someone believe something that is not true |

2. Match the **positive** adjectives in the left column with the **negative** adjectives that have the *opposite* meaning in the right column. Draw lines to connect the adjectives in each pair. An example is given.

| Positive + | Negative - |
|---------------|---------------|
| nice, kind | stubborn |
| friendly | unfriendly |
| funny | deceptive |
| smart | stupid |
| broad-minded | mean |
| honest | serious |

PART 2: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Directions:

1. Read the story again. This time focus on the qualities of the main characters.
2. Fill in the **Character's Qualities** boxes with at least one adjective describing the character's actions. The first "Character's Qualities" box describing Webb Yeager's actions has been completed as an example. Use adjectives from **Part 1** of this activity.

| | Character's Actions | Character's Qualities |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Webb Yeager | "Goodbye, Baldy," said Webb. "I'm glad I saw you and had this talk." (p. 29) | <i>kind/friendly</i> |
| | Webb says to Old McAllister: "And now you can start killing me. You have plenty of time. I haven't anything to fight with." (p. 29) | |
| | "I was wrong," said Webb Yeager. "I was a – and he named a small animal with a bad smell, an animal no one likes." (p. 34) | |

3. Do the same analysis for the other main character, Santa. Fill in the **Character's Qualities** boxes with at least one adjective describing her actions.

| | Character's Actions | Character's Qualities |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Santa Yeager | "It's our sign," she said. "Hearts and crosses. To love and to suffer – that's what they mean." (p. 29) | |
| | "Let's say no more about it. What are you waiting for, Bud?" (p. 30) | |
| | "I wish you success," she said, with a sudden coldness. (p. 31) | |

WHILE-READING ACTIVITY 2: MAKING A STORY STRUCTURE MAP

Answers may vary.

Story Structure Map

Title:

Hearts and Crosses

Main Characters:

Webb Yeager and Santa McAllister Yeager

Setting:

The Nopalito Ranch and the Seco Ranch in Texas

Problem (pp. 26-28):

Webb wanted to be the head of the ranch.

Events

1. At the restaurant (pp. 26-27)

Webb drank with Baldy and got some ideas from him.



2. At the Nopalito Ranch (p. 30)

Webb disagreed with Santa on business.



3. At the Nopalito Ranch (p. 31)

Webb left the Nopalito Ranch and went to work as foreman at the Seco Ranch.



6. Resolution (p. 33-34):

Webb saw the heart and cross sign on the cow and hurried back to the Nopalito Ranch.



5. At the Nopalito Ranch (p. 33)

Santa marked the heart and cross sign on a white cow so Webb would know she wanted him to come home.



4. At the Nopalito Ranch (p. 32)

Santa was contacted by Webb about purchasing cattle for the Seco Ranch.

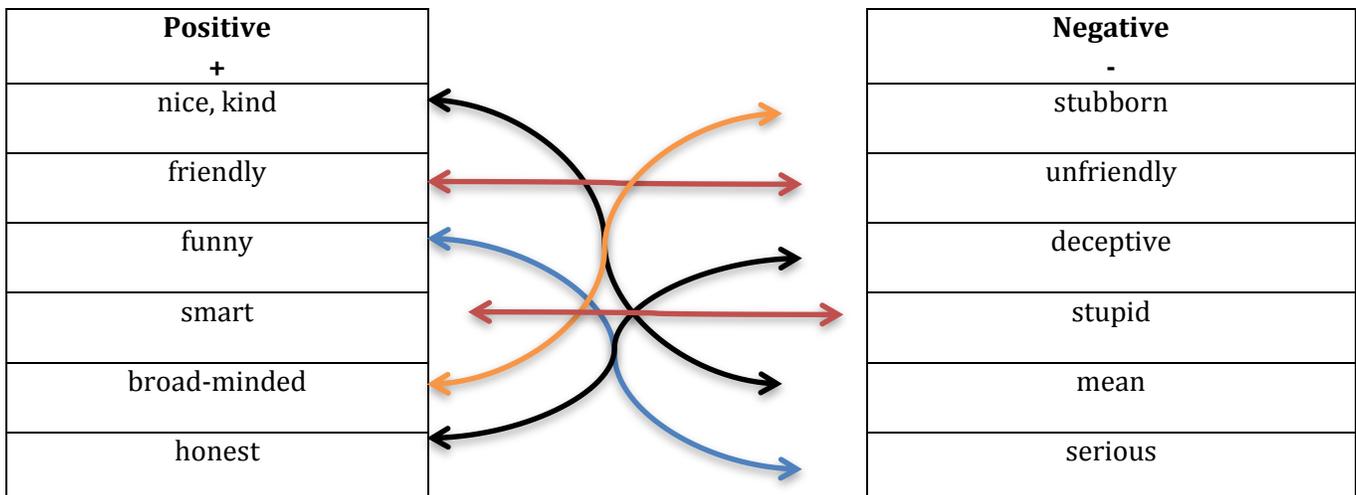
POST-READING ACTIVITY 1: FOLLOW THE HEART AND CROSS SIGN

Answers may vary.

| Page Number | People Involved | Moment When the Sign Was Mentioned |
|-------------|------------------|--|
| p. 28 | Baldy and Webb | Webb and Baldy talked about the sign when they <i>stopped to say goodbye at Dry Lake.</i> |
| p. 29 | Santa and Webb | Santa sent the sign to Webb when she <i>was sick.</i> |
| p. 34 | Quinn and Wilson | Quinn noticed the sign on the white cow after Webb <i>went back to the Nopalito Ranch.</i> |

POST-READING ACTIVITY 2: CHARACTER TRAIT WEB

PART 1: DESCRIPTIVE WORDS



PART 2: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Answers may vary.

| | Character's Actions | Character's Qualities |
|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| Webb Yeager | "Goodbye, Baldy," said Webb. "I'm glad I saw you and had this talk." (p. 29) | <i>kind/friendly</i> |
| | Webb says to Old McAllister: "And now you can start killing me. You have plenty of time. I haven't anything to fight with." (p. 29) | <i>stubborn/honest</i> |
| | "I was wrong," said Webb Yeager. "I was a - and he named a small animal with a bad smell, an animal no one likes." (p. 34) | <i>honest</i> |

| | Character's Actions | Character's Qualities |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Santa Yeager | "It's our sign," she said. "Hearts and crosses. To love and to suffer - that's what they mean." (p. 29) | <i>kind/smart</i> |
| | "Let's say no more about it. What are you waiting for, Bud?" (p. 30) | <i>stubborn/mean</i> |
| | "I wish you success," she said, with a sudden coldness. (p. 31) | <i>serious/unfriendly</i> |