

COMMON CORE ACTIVITIES FOR AFTER TWENTY YEARS

O. HENRY



FUN READERS' THEATER
ACTIVITY INCLUDED! PLUS,
TEXT BASED ANALYSIS AND
MUCH MORE!



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***Common-Core-Based Activities For
“After Twenty Years”***

O. Henry

By Tammy D. Sutherland and Shannon B. Temple

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“After Twenty Years” Lesson Plan

- Begin with an essential question such as “What makes a person a true friend?” Hold a class discussion allowing students to question each other’s comments.
- If time, complete the fun prereading activity and the vocabulary page. The vocabulary page can be done later if not before reading.
- Give out the story and have students read the first paragraph and then stop. Explain that you are going to require them to do a “close read”. In order to do a close read, the reader must read slowly, stopping to think about what he/she is reading and picture things that are happening. A close read requires questioning inside the reader’s head. Next, give them the close read hand out to accompany the first paragraph. Require students to **reread** the paragraph and answer these questions and then stop. Once everyone is finished, go over the questions, modeling your own thought processes as you go. Tell students that these questions are the ones that should be going on in their heads along with other questions. Explain that they won’t always have a set of questions to help them. Instead, as good readers, they must learn to question what they are reading themselves.
- Instruct students to read the rest of the story on their own silently. Tell them that they should complete a close read, just like they did of the first paragraph. Tell them to underline words or sentences they do not understand, and take notes in the margins of what they do understand.
- Once students are done, have them write one or two sentences explaining what happened in the end of the story. Take these up. This will give you an indication of which students “got it” and which ones did not.
- Put students in small groups and allow them to assign parts and read the story readers’ theater style. This should help them to understand it better.
- Next, you will want to hold a discussion of what really happened. You could tell students that there is a surprise ending, something to figure out, and put them in groups to discuss it. Or, hold a class discussion. Be sure to return to the text as you explain how everything unfolds.
- Complete the activities on foreshadowing, imagery, and situational irony, theme as needed, or assign these pages as homework or as classwork for partners.
- Once everyone understands what happened in the end, that Jimmy was actually the cop in the beginning, return to the essential question, what makes someone a true friend? Hold a discussion allowing students to guide it as they discuss whether they think Jimmy was or was not a true friend.
- After this discussion, introduce one of the performance tasks. The first task is to be completed in groups. Working together, students will rewrite a script of the story putting it in their own words and/or modernizing it. The second performance task option is an individual assignment. Students will write a text dependent analysis essay. Students may need guidance in how to support their opinion with evidence from the text. Also, in our class, we allow students to write a four paragraph essay instead of a five paragraph essay for this prompt. Prewriting pages are provided in this packet as well as a sample prewriting page and sample essays.

After Twenty Years **Fun Prereading Activity**

Have students write a letter to themselves that they will receive “after twenty years.” Tell them that this should be a letter that they sign *Love, Your thirteen-year-old self* (or whatever age they are). In the letter, students could include the following:

Who they are now – tell about their likes and dislikes, where they live, what hobbies and activities they enjoy, who their friends are, etc.

Who they think they will be in twenty years

What they hope they still own or qualities they hope they still have in twenty years

Any advice they would like to give themselves

Have students use today’s date. There is a website www.futureme.org where students can type in a letter to themselves along with an e-mail address so that the letter can be delivered in the future. You may wish to use this option, or you could just have them write the letters on paper and seal them in envelopes. On the outside of the envelope, students should write today’s month and day but the year it will be twenty years from now. Tell the students to keep it sealed and someplace where they won’t lose it. Then tell them to open it on today’s date in exactly twenty years.

Another option would be to allow students to write a letter to a friend which would not be delivered until after twenty years. In this case, the futureme.org website could still be used or students could seal the letters, give them to their friends with instructions of not to open the letter until the twenty year date written on the outside of the envelope. 😊

After Twenty Years
Do you know these words?

Before we read the story, see if you know some of the vocabulary words that we will encounter. Match the words in the box to the correct definitions below. Use the sentences to help you.

beat The policeman on the beat walked up and down the sidewalk looking for anything suspicious.

habitual It would be one thing if he had only lied once, but his habitual lies are upsetting his friends.

vicinity After the robbery, the police sealed off all roads in the vicinity.

destiny We all have a destiny; we just aren't sure of the details of it.

simultaneously The two girls simultaneously raised their hands, so the teacher didn't know which one to call on for the answer.

proposition The neighbors considered my proposition to mow their lawn for a reasonable fee.

staunchest Buster may be a dog, but he is the staunchest fellow I know.

plodder He is such a plodder; he never gets in a hurry!

The area near a particular place _____

Loyal _____

Area regularly patrolled by a policeman _____

Done over and over again _____

Done at the same time _____

One's fate or future events in one's life _____

One who works slowly and monotonously _____

An offer _____

After Twenty Years by O. Henry

The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely 10 o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh de-peopled the streets.

Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye down the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. The vicinity was one that kept early hours. Now and then you might see the lights of a cigar store or of an all-night lunch counter, but the majority of the doors belonged to business places that had long since been closed.

When about midway of a certain block the policeman suddenly slowed his walk. In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned, with an unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him the man spoke up quickly.

"It's all right, officer," he said, reassuringly. "I'm just waiting for a friend. It's an appointment made twenty years ago. Sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain if you'd like to make certain it's all straight. About that long ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands—'Big Joe' Brady's restaurant."

"Until five years ago," said the policeman. "It was torn down then."

The man in the doorway struck a match and lit his cigar. The light showed a pale, square-jawed face with keen eyes, and a little white scar near his right eyebrow. His scarfpin was a large diamond, oddly set.

"Twenty years ago tonight," said the man, "I dined here at 'Big Joe' Brady's with Jimmy Wells, my best chum, and the finest chap in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just like two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. The next morning I was to start for the West to make my fortune. You couldn't have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what

distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be."

"It sounds pretty interesting," said the policeman. "Rather a long time between meets, though, it seems to me. Haven't you heard from your friend since you left?"

"Well, yes, for a time we corresponded," said the other. "But after a year or two we lost track of each other. You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he's alive, for he always was the truest, staunchest old chap in the world. He'll never forget. I came a thousand miles to stand in this door tonight, and it's worth it if my old partner turns up."

The waiting man pulled out a handsome watch, the lids of it set with small diamonds.

"Three minutes to ten," he announced. "It was exactly ten o'clock when we parted here at the restaurant door."

"Did pretty well out West, didn't you?" asked the policeman.

"You bet! I hope Jimmy has done half as well. He was a kind of plodder, though, good fellow as he was. I've had to compete with some of the sharpest wits going to get my pile. A man gets in a groove in New York. It takes the West to put a razor-edge on him."

The policeman twirled his club and took a step or two.

"I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right. Going to call time on him sharp?"

"I should say not!" said the other. "I'll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth he'll be here by that time. So long, officer."

"Good-night, sir," said the policeman, passing on along his beat, trying doors as he went.

There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands. And in the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment, uncertain almost to absurdity, with the friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across from the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man.

"Is that you, Bob?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Is that you, Jimmy Wells?" cried the man in the door.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the new arrival, grasping both the other's hands with his own. "It's Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I'd find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well!—twenty years is a long time. The old restaurant's gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so we could have had another dinner there. How has the West treated you, old man?"

"Bully; it has given me everything I asked it for. You've changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches."

"Oh, I grew a bit after I was twenty."

"Doing well in New York, Jimmy?"

"Moderately. I have a position in one of the city departments. Come on, Bob; we'll go around to a place I know of, and have a good long talk about old times."

The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his egotism enlarged by success, was beginning to outline the history of his career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

At the corner stood a drug store, brilliant with electric lights. When they came into this glare each of them turned simultaneously to gaze upon the other's face.

The man from the West stopped suddenly and released his arm.

"You're not Jimmy Wells," he snapped. "Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug."

"It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one," said the tall man. "You've been under arrest for ten minutes, 'Silky' Bob. Chicago thinks you may have dropped over our way and wires us she wants to have a chat with you. Going quietly, are you? That's sensible. Now, before we go on to the station here's a note I was asked to hand you. You may read it here at the window. It's from Patrolman Wells."

The man from the West unfolded the little piece of paper handed him. His hand was steady when he began to read, but it trembled a little by the time he had finished. The note was rather short.

Bob: I was at the appointed place on time. When you struck the match to light your cigar I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago. Somehow I couldn't do it myself, so I went around and got a plain clothes man to do the job.

JIMMY.

Close Reading of the First Paragraph ~ After Twenty Years by O. Henry

The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely ten o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the streets.

In police terminology, a **beat** is the territory and time that a police officer patrols. Beat policing is based on traditional policing (late 19th century) and utilizes the close relationship with the community members within the assigned beat(area) to strengthen police effectiveness and encourage cooperative efforts to make a safer community.

What does *moved up the avenue **impressively*** mean? To answer this, think of times when you have heard someone say, "That's impressive!"

If the impressiveness was habitual, this means

The way the policeman moved was not for show because _____.

...depeopled the streets means _____ (Think of what the prefix *-de* means to help you.)

The reason the streets were depeopled was because _____

Paraphrase the first paragraph in the box below. Remember, paraphrase means to put something in your own words.

After Twenty Years Readers' Theater

Students build fluency through reading out loud, and at the middle school level, what better way to allow this than with readers' theater! The short story "After Twenty Years" is perfect for this activity!

If you want to get your students' attention, read the beginning of this story with a monotone voice until they stop you and ask you why you are doing this. Tell them that when reading aloud, you should always read with expression. Next, read the section with expression, with inflection and expression.

There are a couple of ways to do readers' theater. I will outline these options below.

- Option one is to have a whole class reading. This way, particular parts are not assigned. Whoever is in desk one reads the first line, the student in desk two reads the second line, and so on until all parts are read. There are thirty-one lines to be read, so you may have to have some students read more than one part. Before starting, allow the students to find the part that they will read and read it to themselves silently. Tell them that there are a few hard words and that they should raise their hands if they need help pronouncing one before you begin. That way, you can discreetly go to a child's desk to help him/her with the word. Also, this makes all students feel comfortable with reading out loud.
- Option two is to divide your class into groups. There are five speaking parts, so groups of five or six would be ideal. If you have to put four in a group, just have one student read two parts. After assigning parts in each group, allow some quiet time before beginning so that students can read over their parts and ask for help with words they may not know how to pronounce. Encourage them to read with expression! Have the groups read through the script. If a group finishes early, have them read it again. Once each group has read through the script once, stop the class. If you want, you could randomly pick one group to perform for the class.

Most students greatly enjoy readers' theater. The key is making sure they feel comfortable with the part that they will be reading. If you have struggling readers, you may want to give them the script the day before the reading and let them practice reading it at home. Have fun!

Readers' Theater for "After Twenty Years"

Narrator 1: The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely ten o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the streets.

Narrator 2: Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye down the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. The vicinity was one that kept early hours. Now and then you might see the lights of a cigar store or of an all-night lunch counter, but the majority of the doors belonged to business places that had long since been closed.

Narrator 1: When about midway of a certain block, the policeman suddenly slowed his walk. In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned with an unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him, the man spoke up quickly.

Man from the West: It's all right, officer," I'm just waiting for a friend. It's an appointment made twenty years ago. Sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain if you'd like to make certain it's all straight. About that long ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands – "Big Joe Brady's restaurant"

Policeman: Until five years ago. It was torn down then.

Narrator 2: Bob struck a match and lit his cigar. The light showed a pale, square-jawed face with keen eyes and a little white scar near his right eyebrow. His scarf pin was a large diamond oddly set.

Man from the West: Twenty years ago tonight, I dined here at "Big Joe' Brady's" with Jimmy Wells, my best chum and the finest chap in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just the two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. The next morning, I was to start for the West to make my fortune. You couldn't have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be.

Policeman: It sounds pretty interesting. Rather a long time between meets, though, it seems to me. Haven't you heard from your friend since you left?

Man from the West: Well, yes, for a time we corresponded. But after a year or two we lost track of each other. You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he's alive, for he always was the truest, staunchest old chap in the world. He'll never forget. I came a thousand miles to stand in this door tonight, and it's worth it if my old partner turns up.

Narrator 1: The waiting man pulled out a handsome watch, the lids of it set with small diamonds.

Man from the West: Three minutes to ten. It was exactly ten o'clock when we parted here at the restaurant door.

Policeman: Did pretty well out West, didn't you?

Man from the West: You bet! I hope Jimmy has done half as well. He was a kind of plodder, though, good fellow as he was. I've had to compete with some of the sharpest wits going to get my pile. A man gets in a groove in New York. It takes the West to put a razor edge on him.

Policeman: (twirls his club and takes a step or two) I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right. Going to call time on him sharp?

Man from the West: I should say not! I'll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth, he'll be here by that time. So long, officer.

Policeman: Good night, sir.

Narrator 1: The policeman passed along on his beat, trying doors as he went. There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands. And in the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment, uncertain almost to absurdity, with the friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

Narrator 2: About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across from the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man.

Tall man: (doubtfully) Is that you Bob?

Man from the West: (With excitement) Is that you, Jimmy Wells?

Tall man: (Grasping the other's hands with his own) Bless my heart! It's Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I'd find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well! – twenty years is a long time. The old restaurant's gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so we could have had another dinner there. How has the West treated you, old man?

Man from the West: Bully, it has given me everything I asked it for. You've changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches.

Tall man: Oh, I grew a bit after I was twenty.

Man from the West: Doing well in New York, Jimmy?

Tall man: Moderately. I have a position in one of the city departments. Come on, Bob; we'll go around to a place I know of and have a good long talk about old times.

Narrator 1: The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his egotism enlarged by success, was beginning to outline the history of his career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

Narrator 2: At the corner stood a drugstore, brilliant with electric lights. When they came into this glare, each of them turned simultaneously to gaze upon the other's face. The man from the West stopped suddenly and released his arm.

Man from the West: You're not Jimmy Wells! Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug.

Tall man: It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one. You've been under arrest for ten minutes, "Silky Bob". Chicago thinks you may have dropped over our way and wires us she wants to have a chat with you. Going quietly, are you? That's sensible. Now, before we go to the station, here's a note I was asked to hand to you. You may read it here at the window. It's from Patrolman Wells.

Narrator 1: The man from the West unfolded the little piece of paper handed to him. His hand was steady when he began to read, but it trembled a little by the time he had finished. The note was rather short.

Narrator 2: (Reading note) Bob, I was at the appointed place on time. When you struck the match to light your cigar, I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago. Somehow I couldn't do it myself, so I went around and got a plainclothes man to do the job.

Jimmy

After Twenty Years

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is the act of presenting hints to events that will occur later in a story. Sometimes, a reader is able to pick up on foreshadowing, and sometimes the reader does not realize a line or passage from a story was foreshadowing until he/she finishes the story and thinks back.

In "After Twenty Years", O. Henry provides some clues that hint to the ending. Go back through the story looking for any hints that the tall man was not Jimmy or hints that policeman actually was Jimmy. Record this foreshadowing in the following chart.

Clues that the tall man was not Jimmy	Clues that the policeman was Jimmy	Clues that Bob may have been a criminal

Foreshadowing is used to create suspense and make the reader wonder what is going to happen. It is also used to make the story more believable by preparing the reader for a particular outcome. In this story, did O. Henry most likely use the foreshadowing to create suspense or to make the ending more believable? Explain your answer.

After Twenty Years

Situational irony occurs when what happens is very different from what is expected to happen. Or, sometimes situational irony comes from the oddness or unfairness of a situation.

The ending of After Twenty Years is ironic. Explain why the ending could be considered situational irony.

Discussion

1. Why does the officer need to know if the man would wait for his friend or “call time on him sharp”?

2. Do you think Jimmy did the right thing? Why or why not?

3. Create a new title for this story, one that hints at what will happen at the end.

After Twenty Years Imagery

Imagery is language that creates a sensory impression within the reader’s mind. It allows the reader to see, hear, feel, smell, or even taste what is happening in the story – all in the mind of course. Imagery makes the reader feel like he/she is there, in the story, experiencing the same things that the character is experiencing. This story is full of visual imagery – imagery that allows you to picture something. Let’s examine how the author creates it.

Three ways to create visual imagery efficient

- **Create imagery through descriptions and sensory language.**

- Authors pay attention to detail when they write. They use words that pertain to all of our senses, not just our sense of sight. Read the following passage from the story. Underline the details and sensory language that help you imagine the scene.

The time was barely ten o’clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with the taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the street.

- **Create imagery with strong verbs!**

- Authors use action verbs when they want to create imagery. These words help you to imagine something happening. With a specific, strong verb, you can pinpoint exactly what is going on. Read the following passage from the story. Underline or highlight the action verbs that help you picture the action.

Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye down the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace.

- **Create imagery with figurative language and adjectives.**

- Authors use literary devices such as similes, metaphors, and personification to help them create imagery. Figurative language allows you to picture something in your mind and then relate it to something else. Adjectives describe nouns so that you can “see” them. Read the following passage. Underline the figurative language and the adjectives that helps you picture the scene.

There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady

Find another passage in this story that contains visual imagery.

Complete the following chart.

Page #	Passage	How imagery is created...sensory language, strong verbs, figurative language, adjectives

After Twenty Years

Grammar

Name: _____

Date: _____

Review the following capitalization rule.

Remember, words such as east, west, north, south are **not** capitalized when the words are used as directions. Only capitalize these words when they are referring to sections of the country.

Go **south** on Highway 72.

The weather in the **South** is usually warm.

Now, reread this passage from the story.

Twenty years ago tonight, I dined here at “Big Joe’ Brady’s” with Jimmy Wells, my best chum and the finest chap in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just the two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. ***The next morning, I was to start for the West to make my fortune.*** You couldn’t have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be.

Based on the rule above, explain why the word *west* is capitalized in the passage.

After Twenty Years

Theme

Name: _____ Date: _____

Theme: the story's central message; a life lesson

Some things to remember about theme are:

- Theme is what the author wants you to remember most.
- Occasionally the theme is stated directly in the story, novel/passage.
- Most often, the theme is unstated and is revealed to the reader gradually throughout the story.
- Theme is written as a statement, not just a word.
- Different readers can have completely different theme statements. This is fine as long as each reader can support his/her idea with evidence from the story.

Plan for understanding theme in "After Twenty Years"

Step 1: List words from the story that express the big ideas or topics from the story. – For example, for some stories, you may list words like *love* or *jealousy*. These two words do not work for this story, but write some that do.

Step 2: Think about what the characters in the story do and say that relate to the topics you listed above.

Step 3: Come up with a statement of the author's point or message based on one or more of your big ideas.

Step 4: Find passages and/or quotes from the story that support your theme statement.

Performance Task 1

Readers' Theater Rewrite!

- Put students in groups of four or five.
- Give students the readers' theater rewrite scrips.
- Instruct students that they will rewrite the script, putting it in their own words.
- **One fun option is to allow students to modernize the story as they rewrite it.** If you allow them to do this, students can add in modern technology such as cell phones and social media as well as modern day phrases and sayings. This is a great way to demonstrate how the setting can affect the plot.
- On the rewrite handouts, each line from the story is provided. Underneath each line is space for students to rewrite their own version.

Example:

Narrator 1: The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely ten o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the streets.

Narrator 1: The policeman patrolled his area impressively. He wasn't trying to show off; in fact, there were only a few people on the street. It was 10:00, and it was windy and drizzling outside causing people to leave the streets and go home.

- Once the scripts are complete, allow each group to read or act out their new version!
- You may want to encourage students to bring in props and/or costumes for their skits.
- As a class, discuss how changes in the time (setting) affects the plot and characters.

*If you have four in a group, one person can read both narrator parts.

Readers' Theater Rewrite for "After Twenty Years"

Narrator 1: The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely ten o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the streets.

Narrator 1:

Narrator 2: Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye down the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. The vicinity was one that kept early hours. Now and then you might see the lights of a cigar store or of an all-night lunch counter, but the majority of the doors belonged to business places that had long since been closed.

Narrator 2:

Narrator 1: When about midway of a certain block, the policeman suddenly slowed his walk. In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned with an unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him, the man spoke up quickly.

Narrator 1:

Man from the West: It's all right, officer," I'm just waiting for a friend. It's an appointment made twenty years ago. Sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain if you'd like to make certain it's all straight. About that long ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands – "Big Joe Brady's restaurant"

Man from the West:

Policeman: Until five years ago. It was torn down then.

Policeman:

Narrator 2: Bob struck a match and lit his cigar. The light showed a pale, square-jawed face with keen eyes and a little white scar near his right eyebrow. His scarf pin was a large diamond oddly set.

Narrator 2:

Man from the West: Twenty years ago tonight, I dined here at “Big Joe’ Brady’s” with Jimmy Wells, my best chum and the finest chap in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just the two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. The next morning, I was to start for the West to make my fortune. You couldn’t have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be.

Man from the West:

Policeman: It sounds pretty interesting. Rather a long time between meets, though, it seems to me. Haven’t you heard from your friend since you left?

Policeman:

Man from the West: Well, yes, for a time we corresponded. But after a year or two we lost track of each other. You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he’s alive, for he always was the truest, staunchest old chap in the world. He’ll never forget. I came a thousand miles to stand in this door tonight, and it’s worth it if my old partner turns up.

Man from the West:

Narrator 1: The waiting man pulled out a handsome watch, the lids of it set with small diamonds.

Narrator 1:

Man from the West: Three minutes to ten. It was exactly ten o’clock when we parted here at the restaurant door.

Man from the West:

Policeman: Did pretty well out West, didn’t you?

Policeman:

Man from the West: You bet! I hope Jimmy has done half as well. He was a kind of plodder, though, good fellow as he was. I’ve had to compete with some of the sharpest wits going to get my pile. A man gets in a groove in New York. It takes the West to put a razor edge on him.

Man from the West:

Policeman: (twirls his club and takes a step or two) I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right. Going to call time on him sharp?

Policeman:

Man from the West: I should say not! I'll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth, he'll be here by that time. So long, officer.

Man from the West:

Policeman: Good night, sir.

Policeman:

Narrator 1: The policeman passed along on his beat, trying doors as he went. There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands. And in the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment, uncertain almost to absurdity, with the friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

Narrator 1:

Narrator 2: About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across from the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man.

Narrator 2:

Tall man: (doubtfully) Is that you Bob?

Tall man:

Man from the West: (With excitement) Is that you, Jimmy Wells?

Man from the West:

Tall Man: (Grasping the other's hands with his own) Bless my heart! It's Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I'd find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well! – twenty years is a long time. The old restaurant's gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so we could have had another dinner there. How has the West treated you, old man?

Tall Man:

Man from the West: Bully, it has given me everything I asked it for. You've changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches.

Man from the West:

Tall man: Oh, I grew a bit after I was twenty.

Tall man:

Man from the West: Doing well in New York, Jimmy?

Man from the West:

Tall man: Moderately. I have a position in one of the city departments. Come on, Bob; we'll go around to a place I know of and have a good long talk about old times.

Tall man:

Narrator 1: The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his egotism enlarged by success, was beginning to outline the history of his career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

Narrator 1:

Narrator 2: At the corner stood a drugstore, brilliant with electric lights. When they came into this glare, each of them turned simultaneously to gaze upon the other's face. The man from the West stopped suddenly and released his arm.

Narrator 2:

Man from the West: You're not Jimmy Wells! Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug.

Man from the West:

Tall man: It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one. You've been under arrest for ten minutes, "Silky Bob". Chicago thinks you may have dropped over our way and wires us she wants to have a chat with you. Going quietly, are you? That's sensible. Now, before we go to the station, here's a note I was asked to hand to you. You may read it here at the window. It's from Patrolman Wells.

Tall man:

Narrator 1: The man from the West unfolded the little piece of paper handed to him. His hand was steady when he began to read, but it trembled a little by the time he had finished. The note was rather short.

Narrator 1:

Narrator 2: (Reading note) Bob, I was at the appointed place on time. When you struck the match to light your cigar, I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago. Somehow I couldn't do it myself, so I went around and got a plainclothes man to do the job.

Jimmy

Narrator 2:

Performance Task 2

Text dependent analysis essay

Students will write an essay in which they support their opinions with text.

Students will most likely need help in learning how to find lines to support what they are saying.

Included in this packet are the following:

- Prewriting brainstorm page
- Prewriting organizer
- Sample completed organizers
- Two student sample essays
- Mini lesson on a common problem

Use these resources however you see fit to help your students. 😊

Plan Your Essay ~ Brainstorm

Prompt: In O. Henry’s short story “After Twenty Years”, the main character, Jimmy, decides to turn his old friend, Bob, into the authorities. Do you think Jimmy made the right decision?

In your essay, take a position on Jimmy’s decision. Use evidence from the story, including direct quotations, in support of your position.

Brainstorm. Think about the prompt. What is this prompt asking you to do?

To help you brainstorm, complete the following chart. On the left side, make a list of reasons why turning Bob in was the right thing to do. Then, on the right, write down reasons why turning Bob in was the wrong thing for Jimmy to do.


Jimmy turning Bob in was the right thing to do.	Jimmy turning Bob in was the wrong thing to do.

Next, decide which side you want to claim. Will you write about why Jimmy made the right decision or why he made the wrong decision? In the box below, write a topic sentence for your introduction. Remember to reread the prompt. It is a good idea to use some words from the prompt in your topic sentence. Make sure all of your ideas will fit under this topic sentence.


Topic Sentence (Thesis Statement)

Introduction: Grabber & Topic Sentence


Paragraph 2 Transition & Topic Sentence

 Reason/Point – What can I say to explain this topic sentence?

Evidence from Text


 Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

Evidence from Text


 Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

Evidence from Text


Paragraph 3 Transition & Topic Sentence

 Reason/Point – What can I say to explain this topic sentence?

Evidence from Text


 Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?


Evidence from Text


 Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

Evidence from Text

Paragraph 4 Transition & Topic Sentence

 Reason/Point – What can I say to explain this topic sentence?

 Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

 Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

Evidence from Text

Evidence from Text

Evidence from Text

Paragraph 5 – Conclusion ~ Topic sentence restated and closing sentence(s)

Plan Your Essay ~ Brainstorm **Sample**

Prompt: In O. Henry’s short story “After Twenty Years”, the main character, Jimmy, decides to turn his old friend, Bob, into the authorities. Do you think Jimmy made the right decision?

In your essay, take a position on Jimmy’s decision. Use evidence from the story, including direct quotations, in support of your position.

Brainstorm. Think about the prompt. What is this prompt asking you to do?

To help you brainstorm, complete the following chart. On the left side, make a list of reasons why turning Bob in was the right thing to do. Then, on the right, write down reasons why turning Bob in was the wrong thing for Jimmy to do.

Jimmy turning Bob in was the right thing to do.

Sample

He was a true friend for doing so – sometimes you have to show tough love and help someone out by turning them in

Jimmy is a cop and cops take oaths to protect the community. He was right in putting his job first.

If he had not turned Bob in, Bob could end up worse off- in prison for longer or dead.

Friends change in 20 years. Jimmy did the right thing because Bob was a danger to society and could have hurt others.

Jimmy turning Bob in was the wrong thing to do.

Sample

True friends do not tell on each other. Jimmy should have warned him and let him go.

If he was going to do it, Jimmy should have done it himself instead of getting someone else to arrest Bob.

Jimmy could have helped Bob more by giving him advice and helping him change his life. Instead, he simply has someone else have him arrested. As his friend, Bob may have listened to Jimmy’s advice and perhaps changed his ways.

Next, decide which side you want to claim. Will you write about why Jimmy made the right decision or why he made the wrong decision? In the box below, write a topic sentence for your introduction. Remember to reread the prompt. It is a good idea to use some words from the prompt in your topic sentence. Make sure all of your ideas will fit under this topic sentence.

Topic Sentence (Thesis Statement)

I think Jimmy made the right decision by turning in his friend Bob.

Introduction: Grabber & Topic Sentence **SAMPLE**

Imagine meeting up with an old friend after twenty years. The two of you would not look the same, but you would most likely recognize each other. With today's technology, it seems impossible to lose touch with a best friend, but before the Internet or cell phones, it was very possible not to see or talk to an old friend for years and years. In the short story "After Twenty Years" by O. Henry, two friends make a plan to meet each other in a designated spot after twenty long years. Things do not turn out as planned, and one of the friends, who is a cop, ends up turning in the other, who is a known criminal. In my opinion, I think Jimmy made the right decision to have Bob arrested.

Paragraph 2 transition word & topic sentence

First of all, I think Jimmy made the right decision because he was honorable and true to his duty as a police officer.

Reason/Point – What can I say to explain this topic sentence?

Jimmy is a good cop. He took an oath to protect his community.

Evidence from Text

The story describes Jimmy as "impressive". It also describes him as a "guardian of the peace".

Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

It is clear that Jimmy and Bob were once very close. This emphasizes how Jimmy put his job above his own feelings.

Evidence from Text

The story says something about them being like brothers.

Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

This proves Jimmy to be an honorable person – which is a characteristic all cops should have.

Evidence from Text

Paragraph 3 transition word & topic sentence

Also, if Jimmy had not turned in his friend Bob, someone may have been hurt.

Reason/Point – What can I say to explain this topic sentence?

It is clear that Bob is a well-known criminal.

Evidence from Text

In the end of the story, Bob is referred to as "Silky Bob". He is such a well-known criminal, he has his own nick name- mafia maybe?

Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

If Jimmy had not turned Bob in, someone could have been hurt.

Evidence from Text

Bob is a "wanted" man. He is known for his criminal behavior.

Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

If someone in the community had been hurt or killed by Bob, Jimmy would have to live with the guilt of not turning Bob in.

Evidence from Text

It is evident that Jimmy would feel guilt based on how Bob describes him -*truest, staunchest old chap in the world.*

Paragraph 4 transition word & topic sentence

In addition to being true to his job and protecting others from getting hurt, Jimmy's decision to turn in his old friend may have kept him from losing his job as a police officer.

Reason/Point – What can I say to explain this topic sentence?

Someone could have seen what Jimmy did and turned him in.

Evidence from Text

The story says "spectators were few" – does not say there were none.

Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

What if Bob had told others in his criminal group that a cop let him off the hook. Word would spread.

Evidence from Text

Reason/Point – What else can I say to explain this topic sentence?

In 20 years, a lot can change. Even though the two were close in the old days, they really weren't when they met up again. It wouldn't be worth Jimmy losing his job over.

Evidence from Text

Paragraph 5 – Conclusion ~ Topic sentence restated and closing sentence(s)

In conclusion, I truly believe that Jimmy took the best course of action by having his long, lost friend arrested. In my opinion, when someone takes the oath to protect people, this must be his/her number one priority. Jimmy put his own feelings secondary, and did what he had to do to protect his community. I think this makes him somewhat of a hero.

7th grade student essay sample

Imagine meeting up with an old friend after twenty years. The two of you would not look the same, but you would most likely recognize each other. With today's technology, it seems impossible to lose touch with a best friend, but before the Internet or cell phones, it was very possible not to see or talk to an old friend for years and years. In the short story "After Twenty Years" by O. Henry, two friends make a plan to meet each other in a designated spot after twenty long years. Things do not turn out as planned, and one of the friends, who is a cop, ends up turning in the other, who is a known criminal. In my opinion, I think Jimmy made the right decision to have Bob arrested.

To begin with, when Jimmy chose to turn in his friend, it proved him to be honorable. Early in the story, it is evident that Jimmy takes pride in being a policeman. He does it out of duty and not to show off. "The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few." He does his job so well that he is characterized as impressive. The duty of a police officer is to keep the peace and to rid the streets and community of criminals. In fact, a police officer takes an oath to serve and protect. It took a great deal of courage for Jimmy to stay true to his duty rather than to his friendship. Jimmy and Bob were very close. In the story, Bob says, "He and I were raised here in New York, just like two brothers, together." This makes Jimmy's decision to turn in his old friend extremely hard, thus emphasizing his commitment to his job.

Another reason that I believe Jimmy did the right thing is because if Jimmy had not turned in his friend Bob, someone may have been hurt. It is very clear that Bob is a criminal, and a well-known one. The cops even refer to him as "Silky' Bob". When a person has a criminal nickname, he/she is most likely notorious for disturbing the peace. If Jimmy had chosen not to turn Bob in, someone could have been mugged, robbed, or worse, even killed. The term "silky" makes me think that Bob may have been involved in the mafia, and most people would agree that organized crime can certainly cause a great deal of harm to others. If someone had ended up hurt or killed as a result of Bob, Jimmy would probably have never been able to forgive himself. By turning him in, Jimmy saved his conscious this nagging worry. Jimmy would also have to live with the guilt. Even Bob describes Jimmy as the "truest, staunchest old chap in the world". This type of person would probably feel very guilty for letting a criminal go. Sometimes doing the right thing is hard but necessary in order to protect others from being hurt.

In addition to being true to his job and protecting others from getting hurt, Jimmy's decision to turn in his old friend may have kept him from losing his job as a police officer or at least from having serious regrets later. Sometimes, when people are faced with a difficult, ethical decision and they make the wrong choice, this haunts them for a long time. What if someone on the street had recognized Bob and had seen Jimmy let this criminal off the hook? The story says "spectators were few" but few means that there were some people out on the street. If someone turned Jimmy in, Bob wouldn't be the only one facing trouble. Jimmy would have put his job on the line by not arresting Bob. By turning him in, Jimmy saved his conscious this nagging worry. Also, in 20 years, a lot can change. Even though the two were close in the old days, they really weren't when they met up again. How could you be considered close when you haven't spoken in two decades! So, while some may argue that it would not be right to turn in a friend, I would say that if you haven't spoken in twenty years, you are not really the best of friends anyway. It would not be worth Jimmy losing his job over. Arresting Bob was definitely the right thing to do because Jimmy's job was at stake.

In conclusion, I truly believe that Jimmy took the best course of action by having his long, lost friend arrested. In my opinion, when someone takes the oath to protect people, this must be his/her number one priority. Jimmy put his own feelings secondary and did what he had to do to protect his community. I think this makes him somewhat of a hero.

7th Grade Student Sample Essay

Could the wanted criminal Silky Bob be old best friends with police officer Jimmy Wells? Would you be able to completely betray your best friend? What if he or she was a criminal? In the story *After Twenty Years* by O. Henry, I agree with the character Jimmy Wells' decision to arrest his friend Bob.

First of all, officer Jimmy Wells did not stay true to his and Bob's friendship. Jimmy was Bob's friend, but Jimmy recognized Bob as a criminal and just left, leaving Bob to wonder if his friend was actually going to show up for the appointment they had set up twenty years prior. According to the story, Jimmy says, "I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right." Just like that, Jimmy did not look back. Once Bob was arrested, Jimmy did not even have regards of how long Bob would be in jail or if he would never leave jail. When a friend leaves, it is only natural to give a proper goodbye, right? Jimmy says, "Goodnight, sir." Then he left without another word. I wouldn't want a friend to leave without a special goodbye. This is not what a true friend does.

Also, Bob was betrayed when Jimmy chose work over their friendship, and Jimmy could have helped Bob instead. Even when Jimmy chose work, he could not even arrest Bob himself. Jimmy could have at least done the job all the way and not only halfway. If my friend was going to send me to jail, I wouldn't want them to get some stranger to do it. As it is stated in the short story, Jimmy says, "I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right." Without another word, Jimmy left Bob. A true friend would have helped Bob escape, but Jimmy would rather have his job than this lifetime of friendship. Furthermore, as soon as Bob gets out of jail, more than likely, he isn't magically going to become a saint. He will probably return to his old ways, and Jimmy perhaps could have stopped him. What if instead of having him arrested Jimmy had counseled his old friend and talked him out of his life of crime? Instead of choosing his job, Jimmy should have helped Bob out of his criminal lifestyle. Jimmy arresting Bob probably ended their friendship forever, but more importantly, it ruined a great opportunity for one friend to help out another in need.

In addition, not only did he endanger Bob, Jimmy endangered himself. If Bob was part of the mafia, as the name "Silky Bob" infers, this organized crime group could find out that Jimmy was the one who turned Bob in, and then Jimmy could be toast. In the story, it says, "I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago." Although Jimmy wasn't the one to arrest Bob, he still took part in it. Additionally, Bob could be so angry that Jimmy betrayed him, that he would want revenge himself. Jimmy betrayed Bob, and Bob might want to let Jimmy know how it feels to be stabbed in the back by your best friend. When Bob is released from jail, he may immediately seek vengeance on Jimmy. Jimmy truly created a dangerous situation, one that could have been avoided if he had not turned Bob in to be arrested.

As you can see, I completely disagree with Jimmy Wells' decision to have Bob arrested. In my opinion, a friendship like this probably is not ever going to be a friendship at all. Bob isn't the only one guilty of something.

Mini Lesson

Make sure your pronouns are understood. The two main characters in this story are men, so you cannot simply use the pronoun *he*. It can become confusing.

First of all, he did not stay true to his and Bob's friendship. He was told a complete lie at the restaurant where they were supposed to meet. Jimmy was Bob's friend but recognized him as a criminal and just left, leaving Bob to wonder where his friend was. According to the story, he says, "I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right." Just like that, **he** did not look back. Once he was arrested, Jimmy did not even have regards of how long he would be in jail or if he would never leave jail. When a friend leaves, it is only natural to give a proper goodbye, right? He says, "Goodnight, sir." Then he left without another word. I wouldn't want a friend to leave without a special goodbye.

Paragraph where pronouns are clear

First of all, officer Jimmy Wells did not stay true to his and Bob's friendship. Bob was told a complete lie at the restaurant where they were supposed to meet. Jimmy was Bob's friend but recognized him as a criminal and just left, leaving Bob to wonder where his friend was. According to the story, Jimmy says, "I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right." Just like that, Jimmy did not look back. Once Bob was arrested, Jimmy did not even have regards of how long Bob would be in jail or if he would never leave jail. When a friend leaves, it is only natural to give a proper goodbye, right? Jimmy says, "Goodnight, sir." Then he left without another word. I wouldn't want a friend to leave without a special goodbye.

After Twenty Years **(Extra Activity) Tableau**

A **tableau** is a living picture that captures a moment. You will create a group tableau. This means that you will create a frozen scene from this story. You will stand in a line in front of the class and one by one “come to life”, say a line from the story while showing emotion and/or actions that fit that line, and then freeze again. Then, the person beside you will “come to life”, say his/her line and then freeze again until the entire group is done.

Follow the directions below to prepare for your dramatic presentation:

Choose some dialogue, a moment, or situation from the story for your group to portray. Make sure you choose a significant passage or line. If you wish, each person in the group may choose his/her own line(s), which do not have to be in the same passage. For example, person one in the group may choose the line, “Twenty years ago tonight, I dined here at Big Joe Brady’s with Jimmy Wells, my best chum and the finest chap in the world.” The second person in the group may choose the line, *I’ll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth, he’ll be here by that time. So long, officer.* While these lines are not on the same page, they are still related.

Once each person in the group has chosen a line or two or three, decide how each person will “come to life” and portray this line. You will memorize the line and say it out loud, but as you do so, you should include facial expressions, and movements or gestures when possible. For example, for the line *I’ll give him half an hour at least*, the speaker would look at his/her watch while saying the line.

Once everyone in the group has decided on a line, facial expressions, and motions to accompany that line, practice performing the tableau. Everyone in the group should stand frozen. Put your heads down so you are not tempted to smile or laugh. The first person in line will begin by lifting his/her head, saying and acting out his/her line. Once this line has been brought to life, that person will freeze right where he/she is, and the next person will “come to life.”

Now, before you perform your tableau for the class, you must first write something for your teacher. 😊 Write a paragraph explaining the significance of your chosen piece to act out. Why did you choose it? What is significant about it? Why is it memorable?

Good Luck!

Answer Keys

After Twenty Years

Do you know these words?

Before we read the story, see if you know some of the vocabulary words that we will encounter. Match the words in the box to the correct definitions below. Use the sentences to help you.

beat The policeman on the beat walked up and down the sidewalk looking for anything suspicious.

habitual It would be one thing if he had only lied once, but his habitual lies are upsetting his friends.

vicinity After the robbery, the police sealed off all roads in the vicinity.

destiny We all have a destiny; we just aren't sure of the details of it.

simultaneously The two girls simultaneously raised their hands, so the teacher didn't know which one to call on for the answer.

proposition The neighbors considered my proposition to mow their lawn for a reasonable fee.

staunchest Buster may be a dog, but he is the staunchest fellow I know.

plodder He is such a plodder; he never gets in a hurry!

The area near a particular place vicinity

Loyal staunchest

Area regularly patrolled by a policeman beat

Done over and over again habitual

Done at the same time simultaneously

One's fate or future events in one's life destiny

One who works slowly and monotonously plodder

An offer proposition

Close Reading of the First Paragraph ~ After Twenty Years by O. Henry

The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely ten o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the streets.

In police terminology, a **beat** is the territory and time that a police officer patrols. Beat policing is based on traditional policing (late 19th century) and utilizes the close relationship with the community members within the assigned beat(area) to strengthen police effectiveness and encourage cooperative efforts to make a safer community.

What does *moved up the avenue **impressively*** mean? To answer this, think of times when you have heard someone say, "That's impressive!"

He was unafraid, and he did his job in a remarkable, striking way that made people notice.

*If the impressiveness was habitual, this means **he was not doing this for show, for it is the way he moves over and over. If something is habitual, it is routine or customary.***

The way the policeman moved was not for show because **there weren't many people to impress – "...spectators were few"**.

*...depeopled the streets means **people had left the streets.*** (Think of what the prefix *-de* means to help you.

The reason the streets were depeopled was because **it was cold, windy, and either misting rain or about to rain.**

Paraphrase the first paragraph in the box below. Remember, paraphrase means to put something in your own words.

A policeman is making his rounds on this street that is not crowded. Most people are gone. It's 10:00 at night, cold, windy, and misting rain. The policeman is impressive as he does his job. You can tell that he is not showing off, for this is something he does routinely.

After Twenty Years

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is the act of presenting hints to events that will occur later in a story. Sometimes, a reader is able to pick up on foreshadowing, and sometimes the reader does not realize a line or passage from a story was foreshadowing until he/she finishes the story and thinks back.

In "After Twenty Years", O. Henry provides some clues that hint to the ending. Go back through the story looking for any hints that the tall man was not Jimmy or hints that policeman actually was Jimmy. Record this foreshadowing in the following chart.

Clues that the tall man was not Jimmy	Clues that the policeman was Jimmy	Clues that Bob may have been a criminal
<p>He has his <i>collar turned up to his ears, most likely to hide his identity.</i></p> <p>Bob says, "<i>You've changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches.</i>"</p>	<p>Bob described Jimmy as "...the truest, staunchest old chap in the world." He also says that "Jimmy would never forget the meeting." Bob's description of Jimmy being dependable and good hint that Jimmy would show up and also that he would do the right thing in the end.</p>	<p>The description of Bob at the beginning when the match is struck, we are given a description of Bob. <i>The light showed a pale, square-jawed face with keen eyes and a little white scar... His scarf pin was a large diamond oddly set.</i></p> <p>The keen eyes, scar, and diamonds all hint to Bob's past.</p>

Foreshadowing is used to create suspense and make the reader wonder what is going to happen. It is also used to make the story more believable by preparing the reader for a particular outcome. In this story, did O. Henry most likely use the foreshadowing to create suspense or to make the ending more believable? Explain your answer.

Sample Answer: O. Henry most likely used foreshadowing in this story to make it more believable. The subtle hints given about Bob and Jimmy did not add suspense. In fact, most readers would not recognize them as hints until the story was finished. The foreshadowing does, however, cause us to look back and think, "Oh, well he did say that he didn't remember Jimmy not being so tall."

After Twenty Years

Situational irony occurs when what happens is very different from what is expected to happen. Or, sometimes situational irony comes from the oddness or unfairness of a situation.

The ending of After Twenty Years is ironic. Explain why the ending could be considered situational irony.

It is ironic that these two old friends who were raised “just like two brothers together” turn out to be the opposite, a policeman and a criminal. It is also ironic that Bob, who thought he was waiting for his friend, was actually talking to his friend. It is also ironic that Bob fled the law in Chicago but ran face to face into it in New York.

Discussion

1. Why does the officer need to know if the man would wait for his friend or “call time on him sharp”?

At this point in the story, the policeman knew that the man in the doorway was “Silky Bob”, his long lost friend but also a wanted criminal. Jimmy wanted to know if he had time to have Bob arrested or if he needed to take action right then.

2. Do you think Jimmy did the right thing? Why or why not?

Accept reasonable answers.

3. Create a new title for this story, one that hints at what will happen at the end.

Accept reasonable answers.

After Twenty Years Imagery

Imagery is language that creates a sensory impression within the reader’s mind. It allows the reader to see, hear, feel, smell, or even taste what is happening in the story – all in the mind of course. Imagery makes the reader feel like he/she is there, in the story, experiencing the same things that the character is experiencing. This story is full of visual imagery – imagery that allows you to picture something. Let’s examine how the author creates it.

Three ways to create visual imagery efficient

- **Create imagery through descriptions and sensory language.**

- Authors pay attention to detail when they write. They use words that pertain to all of our senses, not just our sense of sight. Read the following passage from the story. Underline the details and sensory language that help you imagine the scene.

The time was barely ten o’clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with the taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the street.

- **Create imagery with strong verbs!**

- Authors use action verbs when they want to create imagery. These words help you to imagine something happening. With a specific, strong verb, you can pinpoint exactly what is going on. Read the following passage from the story. Underline or highlight the action verbs that help you picture the action.

Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye down the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace.

- **Create imagery with figurative language and adjectives.**

- Authors use literary devices such as similes, metaphors, and personification to help them create imagery. Figurative language allows you to picture something in your mind and then relate it to something else. Adjectives describe nouns so that you can “see” them. Read the following passage. Underline the figurative language and the adjectives that helps you picture the scene.

There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady

Find another passage in this story that contains visual imagery.

Complete the following chart.

Page #	Passage	How imagery is created...sensory language, strong verbs, figurative language, adjectives
	Sample answer There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands.	Strong verbs – risen, hurried Adjectives – cold, steady, dismally, silently, pocketed Personification – wind being uncertain

After Twenty Years

Grammar

Name: _____

Date: _____

Review the following capitalization rule.

Remember, words such as east, west, north, south are **not** capitalized when the words are used as directions. Only capitalize these words when they are referring to sections of the country.

Go **south** on Highway 72.

The weather in the **South** is usually warm.

Now, reread this passage from the story.

Twenty years ago tonight, I dined here at “Big Joe’ Brady’s” with Jimmy Wells, my best chum and the finest chap in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just the two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. ***The next morning, I was to start for the West to make my fortune.*** You couldn’t have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be.

Based on the rule above, explain why the word *west* is capitalized in the passage.

West is capitalized in this passage because it is referring to a region of the country. It is not simply a direction in which someone is traveling.

After Twenty Years

Theme

Name: _____ Date: _____

Theme: the story's central message; a life lesson

Some things to remember about theme are:

- Theme is what the author wants you to remember most.
- Occasionally the theme is stated directly in the story, novel/passage.
- Most often, the theme is unstated and is revealed to the reader gradually throughout the story.
- Theme is written as a statement, not just a word.
- Different readers can have completely different theme statements. This is fine as long as each reader can support his/her idea with evidence from the story.

Plan for understanding theme in "After Twenty Years"

Step 1: List words from the story that express the big ideas or topics from the story. – For example, for some stories, you may list words like *love* or *jealousy*. These two words do not work for this story, but write some that do.

Sample words: friend, loyalty, honesty, doing the right thing, change

Step 2: Think about what the characters in the story do and say that relate to the topics you listed above.

"It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one."

Step 3: Come up with a statement of the author's point or message based on one or more of your big ideas.

Sample answer: *Being honest and doing the morally right thing is sometimes more important than remaining loyal to an old friend.*

Step 4: Find passages and/or quotes from the story that support your theme statement. ... *for he always was the truest, staunchest old chap in the world*