**Literary Analysis Worksheet**

A literary analysis closely examines key elements of a literary work and explores how those elements affect the meaning of the work. In this assignment, we will explore the ending of “the Gift of the Magi” and consider it in relation to what critics have said about the story.

Complete this worksheet to clarify ideas. Type answers. In the block.

|  |
| --- |
| RECOLLECTION: Recall the story—(use short sentences to answer)   1. Briefly describe the “surprise” ending of “The Gift of the Magi.” Are there multiple surprises? 2. What is the story’s thematic message? 3. How does conveying the story’s thematic message rely upon the surprise ending? |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| COLLECTION: Gather details from criticism  Identify source –provide interesting quotation concerning ending  You can collect more of these in your notes | Summarize meaning/importance of quotation |
| 1. (example)   “Introduction” by Harold Bloom”—“Love, Dr. Samuel Johnson observed, was the wisdom of fools and the folly of the wise. That would be an admirable critical perception of Shakespeare's King Lear but is too grand and fierce for the gentle "Gift of the Magi," where at the story’s close the foolishness of love pragmatically manifests itself as a wisdom.” | (Example)  The “Gift of the Magi” is sentimental. Its ending tries to suggest the rash things we do for love are the wisest things we do even if in the end they don’t turn out to be very practical. |
| 2.“O. Henry's Conclusions” |  |
| 3.“Writers from Twain to James” |  |
| 4.“The American Short Story” |  |
| 5. “On O. Henry's Plot Patterns” |  |

You can add more if you’d like

|  |
| --- |
| Synthesis: Synthesize the positions of the commentaries. Type your answers here. Add as much as you need  Based on the critical commentaries, O. Henry’s typical plot and story ending can be identified by…  Based on the critical commentaries, the ending of “The Gift of the Magi” is typical of O. Henry’s endings because….  Based on the critical commentaries, the ending of “The Gift of the Magi” could be seen as problematic because… |

|  |
| --- |
| Conclusion: (Based the evidence you’ve gathered from the commentaries and your own reaction to the story, what have you decided about the success, surprise, and sentimentality of this single story’s ending and its usefulness in conveying the story’s thematic message?) use support, 500 words |