“The Gift of the Magi” Guiding Questions

Directions: After reading “The Gift of the Magi,” answer these questions. Use evidence from the text to support your answers.

Part 1

What does Della do to get her gift for Jim? What evidence in the text explains why she does this?

What does the gift Della gives mean to her? What evidence in the text explains this?

Part 2

What has Jim done to get his gift? What evidence in the text explains why he does this?

What have the characters gained by giving? Was it worth it?
Why does the author say, “Of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. . . . They are the magi”?

What is the story’s theme? How does it develop throughout the text? Cite examples from the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Consider:

- how events in the story mirror each other
- Jim’s final gesture near the end of the story
- the author’s point of view in the last paragraph

Reread the last four sentences of the last paragraph. Which words are repeated? What is the effect of the author’s use of repetition? What style do you think the author wants to achieve?