

 Prestwick House

# Instant Short Story Pack



**Each pack contains:**

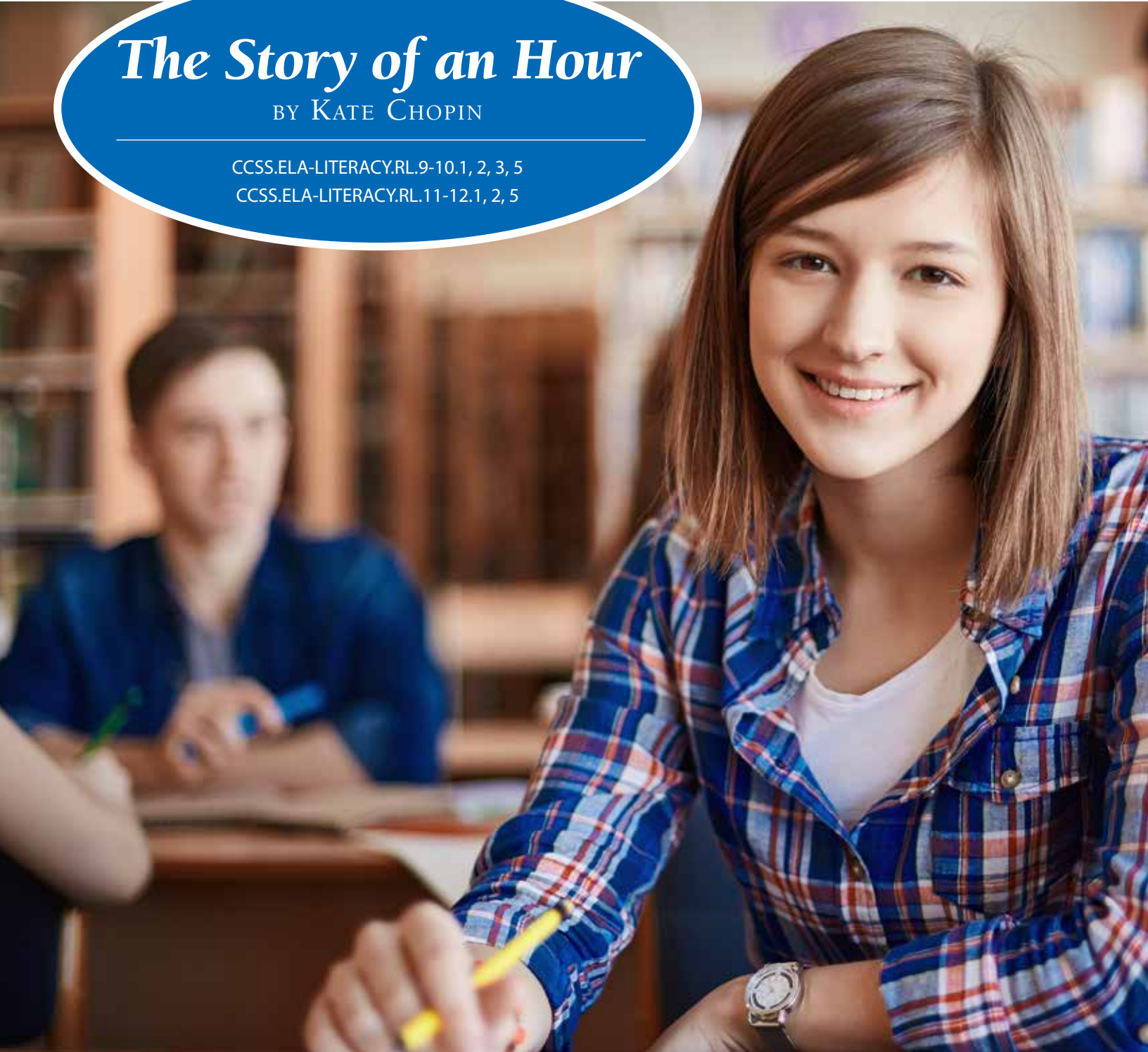
- Objectives
- Full Text of Story
- Student Questions
- Activities and Graphic Organizers
- Teacher Answer Guide

## *The Story of an Hour*

BY KATE CHOPIN

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, 2, 3, 5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1, 2, 5



## Objectives:

After completing the activities in this packet, the student will be able to:

- cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text (RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1),
- determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details (RL.9-10.2; 11-12.2),
- analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text...advance the plot, [and] develop the theme (RL.9-10.3), and
- analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it... create...surprise (RL.9-10.5; 11-12.5).

## Time:

1-2 class periods

## Materials:

✓ 1 copy of each handout per student:

- **Handout #1** (2 pages) – Purpose-setting and Motivational Activities
- **Handout #2** (3 pages) – Text of Story
- **Handout #3** (1 page) – Student Questions
- **Handout #4** (7 pages) – Activities and Graphic Organizers

✓ Teacher Answer Guide

## Procedure:

1. Reproduce all handouts.
2. Distribute **Handouts #1** and **#2**.
  - Allow students to read the short biography of Chopin (approximately 10 minutes).
  - Read and discuss the information about Chopin's work and ideas (approximately 20 minutes).
  - Assign the story to be read for homework OR
  - Allow students to read the story in class and perform the two **As you read**...activities.
3. Distribute **Handout #3**.
4. Give students time to read the questions (approximately 5 minutes).
5. Review with students what each question is asking for and what type of information is required for a thorough answer (e.g., references to prior knowledge, quotations from the story, additional reading or research, etc.).
6. Distribute **Handout #4**.
7. Walk the class through Question 1, demonstrating that in order to address a complex issue, it is often helpful to divide it into smaller subtopics. Students can then use the ideas generated by each subtopic to build a complete and thoughtful answer to the full question.
8. Have students answer the questions.

Kate Chopin

## *The Story of an Hour*

Like many other of Kate Chopin's stories, "The Story of an Hour" created something of a commotion when it was first published in December of 1894. Louise Mallard's feelings of exhilaration and liberation at hearing the news of her husband's death shocked and angered many readers. The story was originally published under the title "The Dream of an Hour" in *Vogue* magazine. In January 1895, it was reprinted in *St. Louis Life* under its current title.

"The Story of an Hour" is not a difficult story. The word choice might be a little old-fashioned, but the language overall should not create any problems. Despite its surface simplicity, however, it is a powerful story. As you experience the full range of Louise Mallard's emotions as she reacts to the news she receives, try to remember that Mrs. Mallard is not a twenty-first-century wife. She is a woman living toward the end of the nineteenth century, bound by all of the laws and traditions we associate with the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Think about how Mrs. Mallard feels, and then consider how Chopin's readers would expect her to feel, how they would think she was *supposed* to feel. Then, you will have discovered the full, shocking impact of the story.

Chopin became famous for her nontraditional views of marriage, womanhood, and independence. To many, she is, first and foremost, a feminist author. "The Story of an Hour" is one of the earliest works that contributed to that reputation. Love Mrs. Mallard, hate her, sympathize with her, or criticize her. Whatever your reaction, as long as you *do* react, Chopin will have achieved her purpose.

### ***Before you read:***

#### **Know something about the life of the author:**

Katherine O'Flaherty was born on February 8, 1850, in St. Louis, Missouri. Her father was Irish and her mother of French descent. Chopin grew up bilingual, speaking both English and French. Her father died in a railroad accident when she was five, and one of her half-brothers died of typhoid fever while imprisoned in a Union prisoner of war camp during the Civil War.

She met Oscar Chopin at a party in 1869, and they were married in 1870. He was from Louisiana, and the couple moved to New Orleans after their wedding. They had six children together. Oscar Chopin tried to establish himself in the cotton trade, but this was during the

Kate Chopin

## *The Story of an Hour*

Lexile Measure: 960L

KNOWING THAT MRS. MALLARD was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself, she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

Kate Chopin

## *The Story of an Hour*

### STUDENT QUESTIONS:

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1. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1) Did Mrs. Mallard love her husband? What evidence does Kate Chopin provide in the text to support your assertion?
2. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2; 11-12.2) Examine the way Chopin describes Mrs. Mallard's realization:

There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime...

What is the full significance of Mallard's epiphany? What view of marriage and the relationship between men and women does it suggest?
3. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5; 11-12.5) Much of the point of "The Story of an Hour" is to deliver the surprise ending. Examine the structure of the story and explain how Chopin creates that surprise. How does she also succeed in delivering the surprise while ending the story on a humorous note?
4. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1) What is Kate Chopin suggesting about Mrs. Mallard's life when she writes, "There would be no one to live for her [Mrs. Mallard] during those coming years; she would live for herself"? To what aspect of nineteenth-century marriage is Chopin referring?
5. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3) Is "The Story of an Hour" the story of a woman's (Mrs. Mallard) *developing* an independent spirit, or is it the story of the *emergence* of an independent spirit? How do you know?

**ACTIVITIES AND GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS:**

Kate Chopin, *The Story of an Hour*

**Question 1: Did Mrs. Mallard love her husband? What evidence does Kate Chopin provide in the text to support your assertion?**

STEP 1: Using the chart that follows, examine Mrs. Mallard's relationship with her husband through her thoughts and her reaction to the news of his death. In the boxes on the left, fill in events or quotations from the text regarding Mrs. Mallard's relationship with her husband. On the right, describe how each event or quotation supports one of the two assertions: that Mrs. Mallard does love her husband, or that she does not.

Details/Examples from the Text:	Evidence of:
	•
On hearing the news of her husband's death, Mrs. Mallard "wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment."	•
	•
	•
	•