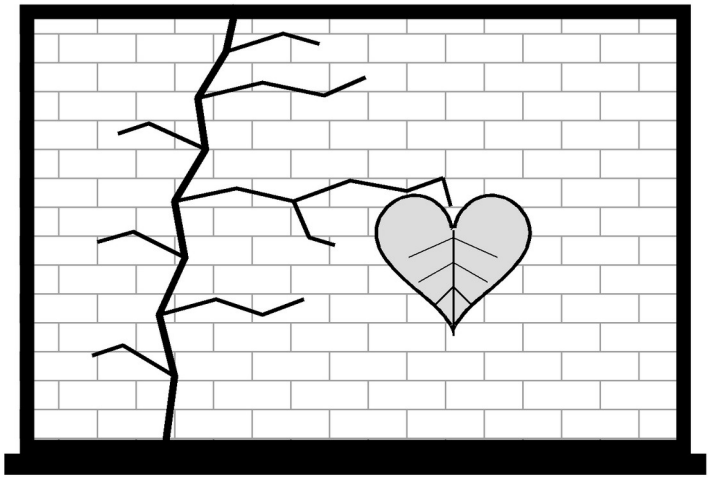
ESL Reading Packet

The Last Leaf

by O. Henry · a story in easy English

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Before You Read



1. Look at the picture. What can you see?

_____

2. In which season do leaves fall from the trees?

_____

3. The story is called “The Last Leaf.” What do you think will happen in the story?

_____

_____

Meet the Characters

Johnsy	A young artist. She becomes very sick.
Sue	A young artist. She is Johnsy’s best friend. They live together.
Mr. Behrman	An old painter. He lives downstairs, in the same building.
The doctor	He comes to help Johnsy.

The Story

Read each part. The bold words are your new vocabulary words. Look at the "Word help" box under each part for other words.

Part 1: Two Friends

In a small district in New York, many artists lived in one building. Two young women, Sue and Johnsy, shared a studio on the top floor. They came from different places, but they both loved art, so they became great friends.

In November, a cold and invisible visitor came to the city: **pneumonia**. It hit many people, and poor Johnsy became very **ill**. She lay in her bed and hardly moved. She looked through the small window at the **brick** wall of the house next door.

Word help

district	רובע, שכונה	**studio**	חדר עבודה של אמן	**invisible**	בלתי נראה
hardly moved	כמעט לא זזה	**next door**	הבית הסמוך		

Part 2: The Doctor's Words

One morning, the doctor spoke to Sue in the hallway. "She has one **chance** in ten," he said. "But that chance depends on her **desire** to live. Your friend has decided that she is not going to get better. Is she worried about something?"

"She wants to paint the Bay of Naples one day," Sue said.

"Does she have anything worth living for?" the doctor asked.

"No, doctor," said Sue. "There is nothing like that."

Word help

hallway	מסדרון	**depends on**	תלוי ב	**worth living for**	ששווה לחיות בשבילו
the Bay of Naples	מפרץ נאפולי				

Part 3: Counting the Leaves

After the doctor left, Sue went into the room with her drawing board. She whistled and tried to be cheerful. Suddenly, she heard a low sound. Johnsy was **whispering**. She was counting backwards: "Twelve… eleven… ten… nine… eight… seven…"

Sue looked out of the window. She saw an old **ivy vine** climbing up the brick wall. The cold autumn wind had blown almost all of its **leaves** away.

"What is it, dear?" Sue asked.

“Six,” Johnsy said in a weak voice. “They are falling faster now. Three days ago, there were almost a hundred. Now it’s easy to count them. There goes another one. Only five left now.”

“Five what, sweetheart?”

“Leaves on the ivy vine. When the last one falls, I must go, too. I’ve known it for three days.”

“Oh, what a load of rubbish!” Sue said. “The doctor said you have a good chance of getting better. Try to eat some soup.”

“There goes another one,” said Johnsy. “No, I don’t want any soup. Only four left now. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I’ll go, too.”

Word help

cheerful	עליז, שמח	**count backwards**	לספור לאחור	**weak**	חלש
sweetheart	מתוקה	**a load of rubbish**	שטויות		

Part 4: Old Mr. Behrman

Sue went downstairs to visit Mr. Behrman, an old painter who lived on the ground floor. He was a **fierce-looking** little man, and he was a **failure** as an artist. For forty years he had talked about painting a **masterpiece**, but he had never started it.

Sue told him about Johnsy’s silly idea. Behrman shouted, “Are you mad? Is it possible that anyone could be so stupid as to die because leaves fall from a vine? I am going up to see Johnsy!”

They went upstairs. Johnsy was sleeping. They went into the other room and looked out of the window at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A cold rain was falling, mixed with snow. Sue sat down to paint, and Behrman sat in a chair as her model.

Word help

ground floor	קומת קרקע	**mad**	משוגע	**silly**	טיפשי
model	מישהו שמצייירים אותו				

Part 5: The Last Leaf

The next morning, Johnsy woke up and asked Sue to pull up the curtain. Sue was afraid, but she did it. The ivy vine was still there. And look! On the brick wall, there was still one leaf. It was the last one. It was dark green near the stem, but its edges were yellow. It hung bravely from a branch, twenty feet above the ground.

“It is the last one,” said Johnsy. “I thought it would fall during the night. I heard the wind.”

The day passed. All through the night the wind blew, but the leaf stayed.

The next morning, Johnsy looked out again. The leaf was still there. She called Sue to her side.

“I’ve been a bad girl, Sue,” Johnsy whispered. “Something made that last leaf stay there to show me how **wicked** I was. It is a **sin** to want to die. Please bring me some soup.”

An hour later, the doctor came. “You are doing well,” he said. “In a few days, you will be out of danger.”

Word help

curtain	וילון	**stem**	גבעול	**edges**	קצוות
bravely	באומץ	**out of danger**	מחוץ לסכנה		

Part 6: Behrman’s Masterpiece

Later that day, Sue came to Johnsy’s bed. She had sad news. “Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today, in the hospital,” she said. “He was sick for only two days. On the first morning, the janitor found him in his room, helpless and in pain. His shoes and clothes were soaking wet and very cold. No one could understand where he had been on such a terrible night. Then they found a **lantern** that was still lit, a **ladder** that had been moved, and some brushes with green and yellow paint on them.

“Look out of the window, dear. Look at that ivy leaf on the wall. Didn’t you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Oh, darling, it is Behrman’s masterpiece. He painted it there the night that the last leaf fell.”

Word help

janitor	שרת	**helpless**	חסר אונים	**soaking wet**	רטוב לגמרי
lit	דולק	**brushes**	מכחולים	**fluttered**	התנופף

THE END

Vocabulary

Learn these 15 words from the story. Read the word, the meaning and the Hebrew.

#	Word	Meaning (easy English)	בעברית
1	**pneumonia**	a serious sickness of the lungs	דלקת ריאות
2	**ill**	sick; not healthy	חולה
3	**brick**	a hard block used to build walls	לבנה (אבן בניין)
4	**chance**	the possibility that something will happen	סיכוי
5	**desire**	a strong wish; wanting something very much	רצון חזק
6	**whisper**	to speak very quietly	ללחוש
7	**ivy vine**	a plant that climbs up walls	צמח קיסוס מטפס
8	**leaf (leaves)**	the flat green part of a plant	עלה (עלים)
9	**fierce-looking**	looks angry, strict or a little scary	נראה קשוח ומפחיד
10	**failure**	a person or thing that does not succeed	כישלון
11	**masterpiece**	the best work an artist ever makes	יצירת מופת
12	**wicked**	very bad; evil	רע מאוד, רשע
13	**sin**	a wrong thing that goes against God’s law	חטא
14	**lantern**	a lamp you can carry in your hand	פנס
15	**ladder**	a thing with steps that you climb to reach high places	סולם

Practice A: Match the Word to the Meaning

Write the correct letter on the line. The first one is done for you.

1. whisper	**d**	a. a strong wish
2. masterpiece	____	b. the best work of an artist
3. brick	____	c. a plant that climbs up walls
4. desire	____	d. to speak very quietly
5. ladder	____	e. very bad; evil
6. wicked	____	f. a thing with steps that you climb
7. chance	____	g. the possibility that something will happen
8. ivy vine	____	h. a hard block used to build walls

Practice B: Fill in the Blanks

Choose a word from the Word Bank. Write it in the sentence. Use each word one time.

Word Bank

leaves	**ill**	**pneumonia**	**fierce-looking**
lantern	**failure**	**sin**	**masterpiece**

1. In autumn, the _____ fall from the trees.
2. I was _____ yesterday, so I stayed in bed.
3. My grandfather had _____, a sickness of the lungs, so he went to the hospital.
4. The dog looks _____, but it is really very friendly.
5. It was dark outside, so we used a _____ to see the way.
6. He tried many times, but his plan was a _____.
7. Stealing is a _____.
8. This painting is the best work of the artist. It is his _____.

Practice C: Write Your Own Sentences

Choose 3 words from the vocabulary list. Write one sentence with each word.

Example: My little brother was **ill**, so he stayed home from school.

1. Word: _____

_____

_____

2. Word: _____

_____

_____

3. Word: _____

_____

_____

Questions About the Story

A. True or False?

Read the sentence. Circle T (true) or F (false).

1.	Sue and Johnsy were artists.	**T** **F**
2.	Johnsy lived on the ground floor.	**T** **F**
3.	The doctor said Johnsy had one chance in ten.	**T** **F**
4.	Johnsy wanted to eat soup when she was counting the leaves.	**T** **F**
5.	Mr. Behrman painted a masterpiece when he was young.	**T** **F**
6.	The last leaf fell during the night.	**T** **F**
7.	The doctor said Johnsy would be out of danger in a few days.	**T** **F**
8.	Mr. Behrman got sick because he was outside in the cold rain at night.	**T** **F**

Bonus: Choose one false sentence. Write it again so it is true.

_____

B. Choose the Best Answer

Circle a, b or c.

1. Where did Sue and Johnsy live?

a) in London
b) in New York
c) in Naples

2. What sickness did Johnsy have?

a) pneumonia
b) a broken leg
c) a toothache

3. What did Johnsy count from her bed?

a) the bricks on the wall
b) the days of the week
c) the leaves on the ivy vine

4. What did Johnsy believe?

a) She will die when the last leaf falls.
b) She will paint the last leaf.
c) The doctor will bring her a new leaf.

5. Who was Mr. Behrman?

a) a young and famous painter
b) an old painter who never painted his masterpiece
c) Johnsy's doctor

6. What was the weather like on the night of the storm?

a) sunny and warm
b) cold rain and snow, with strong wind
c) quiet and dry

7. Why did Johnsy ask for soup at the end?

a) She was angry with Sue.
b) She wanted to live again.
c) She did not like the doctor.

8. Who painted the last leaf?

a) Sue
b) Johnsy
c) Mr. Behrman

C. Who Said It?

Who said these words? Write the name: Sue, Johnsy, the doctor or Mr. Behrman.

#	What did they say?	Who?
1.	“She has one chance in ten.”	
2.	“When the last one falls, I must go, too.”	
3.	“Oh, what a load of rubbish!”	
4.	“Is it possible that anyone could be so stupid as to die because leaves fall from a vine?”	
5.	“It is a sin to want to die. Please bring me some soup.”	
6.	“In a few days, you will be out of danger.”	
7.	“It is Behrman’s masterpiece.”	

D. Put the Events in Order

Number the events from 1 to 8. Number 1 is done for you.

_____	Sue told Mr. Behrman about Johnsy’s idea.
1	Johnsy became very ill with pneumonia.
_____	In the morning, one leaf was still on the wall.
_____	Johnsy counted the leaves on the ivy vine.
_____	Sue told Johnsy that Mr. Behrman painted the leaf.
_____	The doctor told Sue that Johnsy had one chance in ten.
_____	Johnsy asked for some soup.
_____	Cold rain and snow fell all night.

E. Answer the Questions

Write a short answer. You can look back at the story. The part number is in ( ).

1. (Part 1) What could Johnsy see from her bed?

2. (Part 2) The doctor says Johnsy needs something to get better. What is it?

3. (Part 3) Why was Johnsy counting the leaves?

4. (Part 4) What did Mr. Behrman always talk about but never do?

5. (Part 5) How did Johnsy change when she saw the last leaf?

6. (Part 6) What did people find that showed what Mr. Behrman did?

F. Think and Talk

Talk about these questions with a partner or the class. Then write your answer to one question.

1. Why is the painted leaf Mr. Behrman's "masterpiece"? It is a small leaf, not a big famous painting.
2. Mr. Behrman was "fierce-looking." Was he really a fierce man? What did he do for Johnsy?
3. How did Sue help her friend? What makes a good friend?
4. The leaf gave Johnsy hope. What gives you hope when things are hard?

My answer to question ____:

My Book Report

Fill in the book report card.

Title	
Author	
Characters	
Setting (Where? When?)	
The problem	
How the problem is solved	
My favorite part	
A lesson from the story	
My rating	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Creative Task: Choose ONE

Option 1: Draw the last leaf on the brick wall. Then write 3 sentences about your picture.

_____

_____

_____

Option 2: You are Johnsy. Write a thank-you note to Mr. Behrman. Finish the sentences.

Dear Mr. Behrman,

Thank you for _____

When I saw the leaf, I felt _____

Now I know that _____

You are _____

_____

Love, Johnsy

Answer Key (for the teacher)

Note on the story text: The story follows the simplified retelling in the video ("The Last Leaf by O. Henry | Learn English Through Story," English Natively; the story runs 0:10–7:26), so students can read along while they listen. Three small differences: in Part 4 Behrman sits as Sue's model, as in O. Henry's original (the video says "Behrman started to paint"); in Part 6 Sue tells Johnsy that Behrman died, as in the original (the video only says he was very sick); and the doctor's short "A man?" exchange is left out.

Practice A (matching): 1 d (example) 2 b 3 h 4 a 5 f 6 e 7 g 8 c

Practice B (fill in): 1 leaves 2 ill 3 pneumonia 4 fierce-looking 5 lantern 6 failure 7 sin 8 masterpiece

Practice C: Answers will vary. Check that the word is used with the right meaning.

A. True or False: 1 T 2 F (they lived on the top floor) 3 T 4 F (she did not want soup) 5 F (he never started it) 6 F (the leaf stayed) 7 T 8 T

B. Multiple choice: 1 b 2 a 3 c 4 a 5 b 6 b 7 b 8 c

C. Who said it? 1 the doctor 2 Johnsy 3 Sue 4 Mr. Behrman 5 Johnsy 6 the doctor 7 Sue

D. Order of events: From top to bottom: 4, 1, 6, 3, 8, 2, 7, 5

E. Short answers (possible answers):

1. She could see the brick wall of the house next door (and the ivy vine on it).
2. She needs the desire to live. She has to want to get better.
3. She believed she would die when the last leaf fell.
4. He always talked about painting a masterpiece, but he never started it.
5. She understood that it was wrong (a sin) to want to die. She wanted to live, and she asked for soup.
6. A lantern that was still lit, a ladder that had been moved, and brushes with green and yellow paint.

F. Think and Talk (ideas for discussion):

1. It is not famous or big, but it saved Johnsy's life. It gave her hope. It was his greatest work because of what it did.
2. No. He looked fierce, but he was kind and brave. He went out in the cold storm to paint the leaf, and he gave his life for her. We should not judge people by how they look.
3. Sue stayed with Johnsy, took care of her, tried to make her eat and asked Behrman for help. A good friend cares, helps and does not give up.
4. Answers will vary (family, friends, faith/prayer, a goal, small good things).

Book report (model answers):

Title: The Last Leaf • Author: O. Henry (real name William Sydney Porter)

Characters: Johnsy, Sue, Mr. Behrman, the doctor • Setting: an artists' building in New York, in November

Problem: Johnsy is very sick and believes she will die when the last ivy leaf falls.

Solution: On a stormy night Mr. Behrman paints a leaf on the wall. The leaf never falls, Johnsy gets hope and gets better.

Lesson (examples): hope can save us; true friends care for each other; a kind act can change a life; don't judge people by their looks.