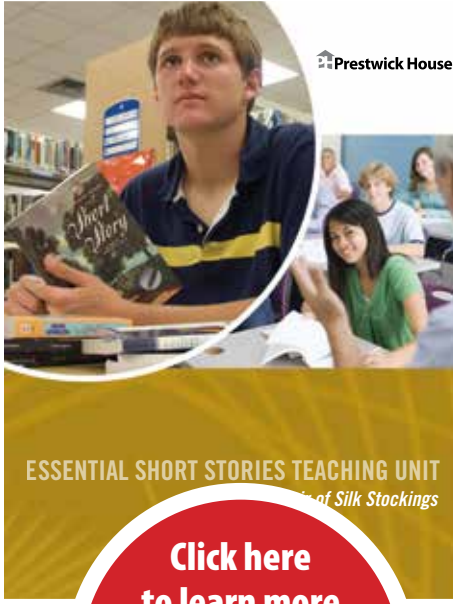




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**A Pair of Silk Stockings**

by Kate Chopin

Written by Katie Mitchell

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# A Pair of Silk Stockings

## Biography

Kate (O’Flaherty) Chopin was born February 8, 1851, in St. Louis, Missouri. Before he died when Chopin was just a child, her father, Thomas, was a successful businessman who immigrated to the United States from Ireland. Chopin’s mother, Eliza, was of French Creole descent and raised Kate with the help of her mother and grandmother (Chopin’s grandmother and great-grandmother).

Chopin was an avid reader and writer, and she attended school at the Sacred Heart Convent. When she was 19, she married Oscar Chopin, a successful cotton farmer, and they settled in New Orleans for several years. By the time Chopin was twenty-eight years old, they had six children. Poor business decisions forced the family to move, and when Oscar died of swamp fever in 1882, Kate faced enormous debt. She ended up moving back to St. Louis with her mother, who died a year later.

On the advice of her doctor who was treating her for depression, Chopin took up writing as a therapeutic activity. Many of her short stories were published in magazines, and she enjoyed her success as a writer. However, the general rejection of works like *The Awakening*, which was considered ahead of its time, caused Chopin to retreat from writing and public life. She died at the age of fifty-four of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Chopin’s major works include, “Desiree’s Baby,” “A Night in Acadie,” “A Respectable Woman,” “The Dream of an Hour,” “A Pair of Silk Stockings,” and *The Awakening*.

# A Pair of Silk Stockings

## Objectives

*By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:*

1. identify the point of view used in the story.
2. describe the protagonist of the story and characterize her as static or dynamic.
3. identify possible themes of the story, including but not limited to:
  - the role of women in society
  - the meaning of happiness
  - the importance of fulfillment in life
  - the loss of identity or individuality
4. define and cite examples of the following literary terms:
  - symbolism
  - simile
  - metaphor
  - personification
  - alliteration
  - onomatopoeia
  - hyperbole
  - mood
5. identify the central conflict in the story and define it as internal or external
6. identify the climax of the story.
7. identify setting details in the story.
8. make predictions about events after the end of the story.
9. define and use new vocabulary from the story.
10. cite instances of irony in the story.
11. make inferences about the protagonist's life and general situation.
12. describe the author's style.

7. Does the story contain a climax, or turning point? Discuss.

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8. How does this sentence affect your feelings about Mrs. Sommers? “A vision of the future like some dim, gaunt monster sometimes appalled her, but luckily to-morrow never comes.”

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9. How does “A Pair of Silk Stockings” relate to issues you see around you?

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**Questions for Essay and Discussion**

1. Mrs. Sommers tells the shoe salesman that she “did not mind the difference of a dollar or two more in the price so long as she got what she desired.” What change in Mrs. Sommers does this statement indicate?

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2. Only a brief reference to Mrs. Sommers’s “better days” is made, but her neighbors know that she used to be a more fortunate person. Mrs. Sommers refuses to participate in “such morbid retrospection” by remembering her past. In what ways do you think she was more prosperous, and what do you think caused the change in her situation?

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3. The “monster” of the future seems to frighten Mrs. Sommers. Chopin writes, “luckily tomorrow never comes.” Why is Mrs. Sommers afraid of tomorrow?

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