

A Christmas Carol

Revision for AQA GCSE Literature



EMC

Publications

Acknowledgements

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Teachers' Notes

These revision materials have been designed to use with students sitting the AQA GCSE English Literature paper. They have all been written with the assessment objectives that apply to the study of a 19th-century novel in mind. These are as follows:

Assessment Objective	Marks awarded
AO1 ■ Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response– use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.	12
AO2 ■ Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.	12
AO3 ■ Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.	6

While we recognise the importance of students understanding the assessment objectives, we also believe that separating them out too systematically into their constituent parts can hinder a proper understanding of the text – and so a coherent response in the final examination. With this in mind, several of the activities encompass all three assessment objectives at once. Consequently, you will find within the material activities that model and encourage the exploration of all of the following in different ways and at different times:

- writing in a critical style
- developing a personal response
- using textual references and quotations
- developing interpretations
- analysing language, form and structure
- using subject terminology
- exploring context

Teachers are free to photocopy and distribute the resources among students within their own institution, or to simply use them in the classroom. In the latter instance, we have designed several of the activities in ways that encourage detailed discussion about the novel. We believe this will help students extend their long-term memory of particular details and ideas, develop their understanding of personal response and recognise different possibilities available to them.

WHAT CAN YOU REMEMBER ABOUT *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*?

Total Recall: Factual Questions

There are lots of ways that you can use the questions on pages 6 and 7 to test your factual knowledge of *A Christmas Carol*. Here are some suggestions:

What I know, sort of know and don't know

1. Read a stave that you need to revise.
2. Read through the questions about this stave.
3. Divide the questions into ones you are sure you know the answer to, ones you sort of know and ones you do not know.
4. Join with a partner and together see if you can work out the answers to all the questions.
5. Finally identify the ones you are still not sure about and ask your teacher for the answer sheet.

Testing a partner

1. In pairs, choose a stave that you want to revise. (You can also do this activity for the whole book all at once.)
2. Look at the questions for your stave, or staves, and, in your head, place them in order of difficulty.
3. Take it in turns to ask your partner what you think is the hardest question available, until you have run out of questions to ask.
4. Keep a score and see who gets the most correct answers.

Which facts are most important?

1. With a partner, work through questions for a stave.
2. When you are confident that you know all of the answers, decide which five facts in that stave are the most significant to remember.

The Questions (answers on pages 36-38)

Stave One

1. What is Marley's full name?
2. What is the name of Scrooge's business?
3. How long has Marley been dead?
4. Who stops Scrooge in the street to ask how he is?
5. When, exactly, does the story open (time and date)?
6. Why is the door to Scrooge's office open?
7. Why can't Cratchit put coal on the fire in his work room?
8. Who is Scrooge's first visitor and why has he come?
9. What is Cratchit's reaction to this visitor's passionate speech about Christmas?
10. Who visits Scrooge immediately after his first visitor?
11. Which institutions does Scrooge tell his visitors are there to take care of the poor?
12. What does Scrooge suggest is the benefit of poor people dying?
13. Why does Scrooge resent having to give Cratchit Christmas Day as a holiday?
14. Which aspect of the weather is mentioned most in the first stave?
15. What does the knocker on Scrooge's door turn into?
16. What does Scrooge suggest is causing Marley to appear before him?
17. What happens to Marley's ghost when it removes a bandage from its head?
18. Why is Marley's ghost 'fettered' (chained)?
19. Why is Marley's ghost condemned to wandering the earth?
20. What kinds of things does Marley say his business should have been concerned with when alive?
21. What message does Marley's ghost have for Scrooge?
22. Which word is Scrooge unable to say once Marley's ghost has gone?

Stave Two

1. What time does Scrooge wake up? Why does this confuse him?
2. Describe what the Ghost of Christmas past looks like in as much detail as possible.
3. Where does the Ghost of Christmas Past first take Scrooge?
4. Why is Scrooge upset when he is taken to his old school?
5. Who comes to collect Scrooge in another scene that he is shown from his schooldays?
6. How many children does Fan have?
7. Who is Scrooge's fellow apprentice when he works for Mr Fezziwig?
8. What is the main entertainment at the Fezziwig Christmas party?
9. Where do Scrooge and the other apprentice sleep at night?
10. What does the woman who Scrooge was due to marry (Belle) say he has replaced her with?
11. Who and what is Scrooge taken to see by the Ghost of Christmas Past last of all?
12. How does Scrooge get rid of the Ghost from Christmas Present?

Stave Three

1. When Scrooge goes into his own room, on hearing the Ghost of Christmas Present call him, it is transformed. In what way?
2. What is the Ghost of Christmas Present wearing?
3. How many brothers does the Ghost of Christmas Present claim to have?
4. Where does the Ghost of Christmas Present first take Scrooge?
5. Where are all the people carrying their dinners to in this scene?
6. How many Cratchits are there? What are their names?
7. What bird do the Cratchits eat for Christmas dinner?
8. What earlier words of Scrooge's does the Ghost of Christmas Present throw back at him?
9. What does Bob Cratchit call Scrooge when he toasts him?
10. Which three groups of people does the Ghost of Christmas Present take Scrooge to see after the Cratchits?
11. Which games are played at the house of Scrooge's nephew, Fred.
12. Which characters emerge from the Ghost of Christmas Present's garments at the end of the stave?

Stave Four

1. What does the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come look like?
2. Which group of people does the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come show Scrooge first?
3. Which of Scrooge's possessions are brought to Old Joe's shop to sell?
4. There are no people looking over Scrooge's deathbed, but two types of animal are in the room. What are they?
5. Why are the members of one family pleased that Scrooge is dead?
6. What has happened to Tiny Tim?
7. Who has shown particular kindness to the Cratchits?
8. What does it say on the gravestone that Scrooge is taken to?
9. Does the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come speak?

Stave Five

1. What does Scrooge ask a boy to buy for him and who is the purchase for?
2. Scrooge meets a man who appeared briefly in the first stave. Who is he and what does Scrooge promise him?
3. Who does Scrooge have Christmas dinner with?
4. What does Scrooge do for Bob Cratchit the day after Christmas?
5. Does Scrooge see the spirits again?
6. What are the final words in the novel and who is being quoted?

Generating Knowledge

Discussing *A Christmas Carol*

These questions have been designed for you to discuss in a number of different ways. It is important that you compare your ideas with others in order to generate as much knowledge as possible around each one.

Make sure that your teacher sometimes joins in too as they will have a particular expertise in studying literature that will add to the knowledge and understanding in the room.

■ Here are some of the ways you might use these questions:

- Have a go at answering all of the questions, focus on a few that you select yourself, or answer ones set by your teacher.
- Try to think of 3-5 things to say in response to each question that you tackle.
- In a small group, take a question each and take it in turns to try to talk non-stop about it for one minute.
- Take the same question as other members of your group and spend a few minutes writing a response. Read your different responses to each other and see how you have each approached it differently or in similar ways.
- In small groups, pick a question at random. See who can be the first to come up with five things to say about it.

Stave One

1. What do you notice about the narrative voice in the first few pages? You might like to comment on how it is established – tone, variation, and so on.
2. What examples of repetition can you find in the first few pages? Why do you think Dickens uses so much repetition here? What is its effect?
3. What do you notice about the way that the weather is described in this stave? What effect do these descriptions have on the reader?
4. What different ideas about Christmas do Scrooge and his nephew have? What is the effect of placing these side-by-side at the start of the novel?
5. The first stave establishes this as a ghost story. But is it scary? If so, how? If not, why not? And what kind of story is it exactly?
6. Why do you think Dickens chooses to have ‘two portly gentlemen’ come to Scrooge to ask him to contribute to charity? What is their effect on the reader?
7. How is Marley’s ghost presented? What emotions might readers feel about this ghost?
8. What does this first stave have to say about human nature?
9. How does Dickens show his skill as a storyteller in this opening stave, particularly in terms of building expectations?

Stave Two

1. What does the Ghost of Christmas Past look like? How does it match with your idea about what a ghost should look like?
2. Come up with ideas about why this stave might be criticised as being too sentimental.
3. How is young Scrooge presented? What emotions might readers feel about him?
4. How are the Fezziwigs portrayed and what is their significance in the novel?

5. What is the effect of seeing Scrooge observing his former self with his fiancé, Belle, and then Belle's married life with another man?
6. In what ways and how effectively does Dickens make the reader feel sympathy for Scrooge in this stave?

Stave Three

1. How is the Ghost of Christmas Present described? How does he compare to modern day representations of Father Christmas?
2. How is Christmas at the Cratchits presented? What do you think Dickens is suggesting about Christmas here?
3. In what ways do the male characters seem to have more sympathy for Scrooge than the female ones (Mrs Cratchit, Fred's wife)? Why do you think this is?
4. How is Scrooge presented in this stave? What emotions might readers feel about him?
5. What different locations around Britain does the Ghost take Scrooge to see? Why do you think Dickens makes the Ghost take Scrooge to different parts of the country? And why in particular to see miners, lighthouse keepers and sailors?
6. What is life like for most people in Britain, as they are shown by Dickens here? Why do you think he has chosen to portray them like this?
7. How are Ignorance and Want portrayed at the end of this stave? What is their effect on the reader?

Stave Four

1. What is the effect on readers of seeing Scrooge being shown scenes following his own death? Why do you think Dickens decided that Scrooge should not realise he is 'dead' until the end of the stave?
2. What do the scenes following Scrooge's death suggest about the life he lived? What is Dickens suggesting by showing his death like this?
3. Come up with arguments to justify both of these statements:
 - Dickens makes us feel sympathy for Scrooge in this chapter
 - Dickens makes us enjoy Scrooge's suffering in this chapter
4. What are the Cratchit family shown doing following Tiny Tim's death? What is the effect of this scene on the reader?
5. Why do you think Dickens chose not to have the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come speak? How does he communicate and how is this presented? What is the effect of this ghost on the reader?

Stave Five

1. How does Dickens show Scrooge's delight at still being alive on Christmas Day? How successful is he at doing this?
2. How does Scrooge's reaction to being alive feed into ideas about what a perfect Christmas should be?
3. How does the language in this final stave compare to that in previous sections? How does Dickens use language to show Scrooge's mood?
4. Argue for or against this statement: the final stave of *A Christmas Carol* turns it into a fairy tale.
5. What is the effect of ending the book with reference to Tiny Tim's words?

KEY ASPECTS OF *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*

Character: Scrooge

‘Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge!’

This quotation comes from a long, descriptive passage at the start of the novel that leaves the reader in no doubt about Scrooge’s mean character. Most of the rest of the novel, however is about his *redemption*: how he comes to be saved from his own miserly and miserable life.

There are two lists on page 11, one giving examples of Scrooge’s miserliness and how he was perceived at that time in his life, the other showing moments on his path to redemption.

- Choose three from each list that make you feel sympathy for Scrooge.
- Choose three from the first list that you think make him sound the meanest.
- Choose three from the second list that you think most make him sound like a reformed character.
- Choose points from both lists that make him sound like a man psychologically scarred by various events in his life.
- Choose points from both lists that make his portrayal seem like a caricature rather than realistic.
- Choose what you consider to be the five most important points from each list.

Tight-fisted Scrooge	The road to redemption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His name seems to be a compound of negative words, such as screw, grudge and gouge. • He is described in physical terms as twisted and cold. • He continued to do business on the day of Marley's funeral. • He makes Cratchit work in terrible conditions – cold, cramped, constantly watched over by his boss. • He resents having to pay Bob Cratchit's wages on Christmas Day – likens it to 'picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!' • He calls Christmas 'a humbug'. • He rejects his nephew, Fred's, offer of spending Christmas dinner with his family. • He seeks out his own company and no one else's. • He suggests to the 'two portly gentlemen' that prisons and workhouses are there to take care of the hundreds of thousands 'in want of common comforts'. • He suggests that if the poor die off then this benefits society because it 'decrease(s) the surplus population'. • He lives in 'a gloomy suite of rooms'. • His fiancée, Belle, left him because he started to worship money rather than pay attention to her. • He gives nothing to a boy singing a Christmas carol at his door. • He is mocked, disliked and perhaps even hated by various characters, including his nephew's wife and Mrs Cratchit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marley's Ghost has an immediate impact on him. E.g. he can no longer say 'humbug' once this ghost has left. • He had a difficult childhood – sent away to school he did not like, where he was sometimes left alone. • As a child he enjoyed stories and was close to his sister. • He was happy, sociable and hard-working when apprenticed to Fezziwig. • He is delighted to see the happy moments of his past life. • The Ghost of Christmas Past has an immediate impact on him – so he wishes he had given the Christmas carol singer some money, or could help Bob Cratchit. • He finds it painful to watch the scene of Belle's family life. • He tries to join in with the Christmas games when the Ghost of Christmas Present shows him his nephew's home. • He is pained by everything that the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come shows him. • He spends Christmas dinner with his nephew and family. • He gives Bob Cratchit a pay rise. • He becomes 'a second father' to Tiny Tim. • He comes to know how to keep Christmas as well as anyone. • He spends Christmas dinner with his nephew and family.

The Four Ghosts

Which ghost?

Below are quotations about each of the four spirits: Marley's Ghost, the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.

- Identify which quotation goes with which ghost (answers on page 39).
- Use the quotations as a starting point to note down two or three things that are distinctive about each ghost. For example: This ghost doesn't speak.

1. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. The garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice.
2. 'I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere.'
3. It was a strange figure – like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions.
4. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.
5. The very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.
6. ... the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.
7. At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear indoors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast.
8. The kind hand trembled.
9. 'Touch my robe.'
10. Its dark brown curls were long and free: free as its genial face, its sparkling eyes, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air.
11. From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.
12. The phantom slowly, gravely, silently, approached.
13. It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand.
14. 'I wear the chain I forged in life ... I make it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.'

The role of the ghosts

The statements below are all about the role of the ghosts in the novel. Place them into what you consider to be their order of significance.

1. They represent Scrooge's conscience.
2. They offer a moral code for both Scrooge and the reader to follow.
3. They create sympathy for Scrooge.
4. They add to the Gothic atmosphere of the novel.
5. Each represents something slightly different.
6. They show the possibility that everyone has a second chance in life.
7. They attract the reader's attention.
8. They are more comic than Gothic or scary.
9. They show that the different events throughout our lives are all linked.

A Christmas Carol and Social Commentary

Jumbled up mini-essays

Below are two mini-essays about social commentary in *A Christmas Carol*. They offer two opposing views about the effectiveness of this social commentary.

The mini-essays have been placed in the wrong order and jumbled together.

- Sort the statements into two separate mini-essays (four paragraphs each).
- Put the paragraphs for each mini-essay into what you think is the correct order. (The suggested orders are on page 40.)
- Discuss which mini-essay you agree with most and why.
- Identify words and phrases that helped you to order each mini-essay.
- Finally, put the mini-essays to one side and use what you learned from them, plus your own ideas, to answer this question:

'How effective is *A Christmas Carol* as a social commentary on conditions in 1840s England?'

This vision of plenty is not, however, a view of the world held by everyone. Many believed that the world contained too many people and so could not support them all. They used the arguments of economist, Thomas Malthus, about 'surplus population' to justify their beliefs. Malthus argued in his 1798 book, *An Essay on the Principles of Population*, that those who could not support themselves should be left to die. When Scrooge refers to Malthus's work to the 'two portly gentlemen', Dickens is making it clear that he belongs to a monstrous, inhumane system.

While on the surface *A Christmas Carol* appears to be a heart-warming story of one miserly individual's redemption, below the surface it offers a savage critique of society in the 1840s. Scrooge is a representative of a harsh version of capitalism that destroys the lives of millions. The reader might only see an individual in his counting-house, but he stands for a whole system that denies others access to wealth and opportunity.

A Flawed Solution to a Real Problem

There is also the slightly odd suggestion that Christmas simply makes people forget about the difficult realities of their day-to-day lives. So when the Ghost of Christmas Present takes Scrooge around the country, showing him miners and sailors and lighthouse-keepers, they all seem happy simply because it is Christmas day. Would this really be the case?

The book does make it clear that poverty is a serious concern, one that destroys lives. We see this, for example, in the character of Tiny Tim, and in the childish figures of Want and Ignorance. However, the solution offered depends on the very people who are the cause of the problem in the first place. Consequently the likes of the Cratchits are not given the means to help themselves; rather they have to rely on the support of wealthy individuals such as Scrooge.

Throughout the novel we see other examples of the poor relying on the wealthy for any chance of a better life. So we have the 'two portly gentlemen' collecting money for charity; and we have Fezziwig hosting a Christmas party for his employees. In both these instances, Christmas is presented as a time when the better off must help the worse off. However, it does imply that ignoring grotesque inequalities for the rest of the year is absolutely fine.

Dickens is also showing, however, that things can change for the better. The reformed Scrooge at the end of the novel offers a healthy form of capitalism. He uses his wealth to help others and to make society a better place.

Stunning Critique of a Society Obsessed by Money

Dickens shows us the consequences of this system in the death of Tiny Tim, revealed to Scrooge by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. Tim's father, Bob Cratchit, works hard but is in a system that denies him a decent wage, which means that he cannot get decent care for his son, or support him properly. We also witness the terrible condition in which many children were forced to live through the characters of Want and Ignorance. They appear at the end of a stave in which Scrooge is shown scenes of abundance by the Ghost of Christmas Present: Dickens is making it obvious that there is enough for everyone.

While *A Christmas Carol* is often hailed as offering an effective attack on living and working conditions in England in the 1840s, in reality it does little to address the root causes of the problems that existed.

Noticing Context

You can fill in the blank space in the sentence below with lots of different words and phrases linked to the book's context, such as 'poverty', 'wealth', 'family life', 'city life', and so on.

What do you notice about _____ in *A Christmas Carol*?

- The questions in the grid then help you to explore whatever aspect of context you are focusing on. What do you notice about it from your own reading? This is a good starting point when thinking about context, because the book itself tells you so much about the time in which it was written.
- When you have finished the grid, you can then think about how what you have noticed links into additional contextual details. On the following page, such details have been provided to help you think about exploring Christmas in *A Christmas Carol*.

What happens?

Who is involved?

What different perspectives are offered?

How is this aspect of the novel presented overall?

What morals or messages does the writer get across?

What themes or motifs attach to it?

Noticing context: matching the text to the wider world

How does the contextual information about Christmas that you have learned from Dickens' novel relate to any of the historical and social points below?

By 1843, when the novel was published, the Industrial Revolution had transformed British society, breaking down old social structures, as people moved on a massive scale from the countryside to urban areas.

The first commercially available Christmas card was produced in 1843. It depicts three generations of a family sitting at a table and raising a toast. On either side it shows acts of charity, with food and clothing being given to the poor. Noticeably absent is any reference to Christianity.

With no safety net (social security, NHS) for those without money, many people relied on charity.

Working conditions in factories and mines were often very poor for workers, including children.

There were extremes of poverty and wealth in society; industrialisation led to a growing, prosperous middle class, living alongside the urban poor.

In 1798 economist Thomas Malthus published his theory that England would soon become overpopulated and unable to feed its people. He called the poor 'surplus' and believed that if people could not support themselves then they should be left to die. His theory was still taken seriously by some in 1843.

Many Christmas traditions that are still central to the festival today (gift-giving, tree, cards, turkey etc.) developed in the Victorian period. Dickens played a key role in popularising some of these traditions and Christmas as a whole.

Christmas had been an established part of the calendar in much of Europe long before the Victorian period. It marked the birth of Christ, but also drew on ancient pagan rituals. In medieval times it was celebrated over 12 days in the household of the local lord, bringing relief from the hardships of winter.

Revising Structure

Commenting on the structure of a novel, or part of a novel, can be difficult. However, if you use some of the words below when talking or writing about a piece of written work, then you are almost certainly talking about structure.

- In pairs, come up with something to say about *A Christmas Carol*, using a word from the 'beginning' section. For example:

At the *beginning* of the novel Scrooge is portrayed as a 'tight-fisted' miser.

- Now build on your first sentence using a word from the 'middle' section. For example:

A series of *flashbacks* of his life, shown to him by the Ghost of Christmas Past, suggest he was not always like this.

- Next use a word from the 'end' section to extend your ideas further. For example:

The *culmination* of the interventions by the ghosts is that Scrooge is a reformed character, now full of joy and generosity towards his fellow human being.

- Repeat the process, focusing on different aspects of the novel, or on short sections, and using different words.

N.B. You can use different forms of the words if this helps your sentence structures. For example: 'foreshadows' instead of 'foreshadowing'. You should also bear in mind that a straightforward word used correctly is more effective than a more unusual word used incorrectly.

Beginning

opening
foreshadowing
foregrounding
introduction
first
initial
starting point

Middle

development
continuation
evolution
expansion
extension
unfolding
elaboration
complication
tension
suspense
reinforcement
magnification
intensification
decline
reduction
flashback
shift

End

conclusion
closure
denouement
culmination
finale
consequence
outcome
revelation

Setting and Significance

The following are all significant settings in *A Christmas Carol*, which takes the reader to a surprising number of places, given how short it is.

- Make sure you can remember what happens in each of the settings listed in the left-hand column.
- Identify the significance of the setting from the options listed in the right-hand column.
- Find one of the settings in your novel and write about how it is presented by Dickens. You should think carefully about:
 - tone of voice
 - vocabulary choices
 - sentences
- Compare the different things you have written around your class to build up a picture of how Dickens uses setting in *A Christmas Carol*.

Scrooge's counting-house	Christmas as a joyful, community celebration
Scrooge's living chambers	
The market town where Scrooge grew up	The ruling, capitalist system
Scrooge's old school	Nostalgia for a better past
Fezziwig's warehouse	The bond shared by everyone at Christmas, no matter where they are or what conditions they live in
Belle's family home	
Busy city streets on Christmas morning	Miserliness; the exploitation of the poor
The Cratchit's home on Christmas Day	
'a bleak and desert moor'	Shared family happiness
'a solitary lighthouse'	
A ship	The result of an unjust, uncaring society
The house of Scrooge's nephew, Fred, at Christmas	
London's finance district	A harsh upbringing
A shop in a slum district of London	Loneliness
The Cratchit's house after Tiny Tim has died	Poverty
A churchyard	
London's streets on Christmas morning	
Christmas dinner at Fred's	

Revising Key Themes

- Cut out the themes on page 21 into cards.
- In small groups take it in turns to pick a card at random.
- Your challenge is to speak for a minute, non-stop, about that theme. You should take into account:
 - its importance to the novel as a whole
 - examples from the novel
 - what the novel suggests about this theme
- As you are listening to others in your group, make a note of anything new or interesting that they say.
- As a class, share any new and interesting ideas.

Here is a model of how you might speak, using the theme of 'joy' as an example.

You're not expecting *A Christmas Carol* to be about joy when you start it because Scrooge is so horrible and everything around him seems to match his personality. So the weather is dreadful, all cold and foggy, his offices are cold and dingy, and he lives in miserable chambers. But even so, there are glimmers that something more positive might emerge. So his nephew, Fred, seems full of joy, keen to invite his uncle to Christmas dinner even though he is so gloomy. In fact, perhaps from this early point it is clear that the book is more about joy than misery. Scrooge is portrayed in such an exaggerated way as a miserable miser that it is impossible to think that Dickens has created him for any other reason than to show that there is a better way. And it is Scrooge alone who does not seem to take joy from Christmas. So when Dickens describes the scene outside Scrooge's office early in the book, even though the weather is miserable people in the streets are happy. They gather round a fire 'in rapture', for example. The theme of joy is then developed further when Scrooge is taken to where he grew up by the Ghost of Christmas Past ... etc.

Poverty	Redemption	Community
Wealth	Christmas	Misery
Charity	Personal reform	The future
Want	Joy	Family
Abundance	The past	Generosity

Quotations in *A Christmas Carol*

Here are some useful quotations from *A Christmas Carol*.

- Read through them and sort them into different categories, for example ones about Scrooge, ones about miserliness, ones about generosity etc.
- Select one or two from each category that you think you will be best able to remember.
- List your different categories on a piece of paper. Hand the paper to a partner and take it in turns to try to remember off by heart a quotation that matches one of your categories.

Quotations from Stave One

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him.

‘There’s more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!’ [Scrooge to Marley’s ghost]

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes.

‘I wear the chain I forged in life,’ replied the Ghost. ‘I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.’ [Marley’s ghost]

‘Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business.’ [Marley’s ghost]

He tried to say ‘Humbug!’ but stopped at the first syllable.

Quotations from Stave Two

‘A small matter,’ said the Ghost, ‘to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.’ [Comment about Fezziwig’s party]

‘He has the power to render us happy or unhappy ... The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.’ [Scrooge about Fezziwig]

‘Another idol has displaced me... A golden one’ [Belle to Scrooge]

‘You fear the world too much,’ [Belle to Scrooge]

‘Remove me!’ Scrooge exclaimed, ‘I cannot bear it!’ [Scrooge to Ghost of Christmas Past]

Quotations from Stave Three

... nothing between a baby and rhinoceros would have astonished him very much.

There never was such a goose... Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration.

There was nothing very cheerful in the climate or the town, and yet was there an air of cheerfulness abroad that the clearest summer sun might have endeavoured to defuse in vain.

‘God bless us every one!’ said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

Scrooge was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party...

And every man on board, waking or sleeping, good or bad, had had a kinder word for another on that day than on any day in the year

‘His wealth is of no use to him. He don’t do any good with it.’ [Fred]

‘I am sorry for him; I couldn’t be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims! Himself, always.’ [Fred]

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable.

Quotations from Stave Four

‘... he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard.’ [Bob Cratchit about Fred]

Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God!

‘Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?’ [Scrooge to Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come]

‘Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope!’

‘I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me.’

Quotations from Stave Five

‘No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold ... Oh, glorious! Glorious!’

‘A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!’

Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!

He had never dreamed that any walk - that anything - could give him so much happiness.

Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness!

... to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father.

... he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset

[Scrooge] lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards

... he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge

WORKING WITH EXTRACTS

Responding to an Exam Task – Sample Task One

Below is an example of what an exam task for *A Christmas Carol* might look like. You are going to be taken through the various stages of planning and writing a response to the task, before having a go at some different ones of your own.

Stage one: initial reading

- Read through the task.
- Discuss as a class where the passage occurs in the novel and how you might go about putting together your response.

Sample Task One

- Starting with this extract, write about how Dickens presents different settings in *A Christmas Carol*.

Write about:

- a) How Dickens presents the setting in this extract.
- b) How Dickens presents the setting in the novel as a whole.

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at Scrooge out of a gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street, at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowings sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp-heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed. Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up tomorrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef.

Stage two: exploring the extract

The extract for the response has been annotated.

- Discuss what aspect of the text is being addressed by the annotations.
- Discuss how you might use the notes as a starting point for writing about how Dickens presents setting in this passage.
- Now have a go at writing a response to the first half of the question, drawing on these notes. Remember that you should try to:
 - identify some of the writing methods Dickens has used
 - use some linguistic or literary terminology
 - use some quotations
 - make reference to the context within which the passage is set.
- Write about:
 - a. How Dickens presents the setting in this extract.

Gloomy atmosphere, with strong emphasis on weather. 'Thickened' evocative verb. Contrast between 'fog' and 'flaring'

Sense that generally people are very helpful – and that there are lots of people

Sense of foreboding created by the Church tower disappearing in the fog

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at Scrooge out of a gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense.

Personification of the bell – even objects can pass judgement on Scrooge

Contrast between 'misanthropic ice' and the bright shops – human activity seems to triumph over whatever nature can throw in its way

In the main street, at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowings sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp-heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed. Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up tomorrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef.

Real sense of community: even in the cold, these men are working hard, enjoying themselves and finding 'rapture' in the flames

Rich and poor alike seem to enjoy Christmas in this setting – there is no moral judgment about the Lord Mayor having so much and the tailor so little. They are both enjoying the occasion.

Rich, positive descriptions of Christmas goods and people: hard consonants and alliteration help this stand out.

Stage three: a model for answering part a

■ Now compare your response to the one here. You should comment on:

- similarities and differences in the writing styles
- what your response and this model have done well
- what your response and this model could do better.

You should also look out for where the answer meets criteria in the assessment criteria that your work will be marked against:

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts.

Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

AO2: Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

AO3: Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

a. How Dickens presents setting in this extract.

Dickens structures this extract in a way that presents London as a city of contrasts. On one hand, the weather is gloomy and the buildings old and forbidding; on the other hand, the spirit of the people is bright and the shops filled with Christmas riches. For example, in the first paragraph the fog – made to sound particularly severe by the use of the verb ‘thickened’ – stands in contrast to the ‘flaring links’ carried by people to guide horse-drawn carriages. The passage focuses less on the buildings and more on the people as it goes on: so the structure suggests that the spirit of the people will triumph over the weather and general gloom.

The language, ultimately, feels triumphant too. Dickens uses personification to make it sound initially like both buildings and weather are against people. So the ‘ancient tower of a church’ is given a ‘gruff old bell’ and the ice is labeled ‘misanthropic’. But they are soon pushed aside by human spirit and the delights of Christmas. Consequently the church tower becomes ‘invisible’ behind the fog, the vibrations of the bell extending the personification in being likened to ‘teeth chattering’. Cold weather and old building are replaced by a list of vibrant human activity, the richness of the language matching the richness of the scene. The use of hard consonants and alliteration makes this scene explode from the page. For example, the ‘brightness’ of the shops is such that it is as if the ‘berries’ are on fire – hence they ‘crackled in the lamp-heat of the windows’. Powerful, positively directed adjectives such as ‘splendid’, ‘mighty’ and ‘glorious’ add to the sense of well-being. Perhaps Dickens is even aware that he is over-idealising this Christmas setting. He lists a wide-range of characters, ending with ones you would not expect to be happy, such as a tailor recently fined for being drunk and his ‘lean’ wife. ‘Lean’ implies she does not get to eat enough, yet she is going out to buy beef. The choice of verb ‘sallied’ to describe how she does this suggests both her contentment and also that Dickens is painting a vaguely comical scene.

Stage four: planning your whole response

This grid might be useful for planning the other sample tasks that come with this work. You can find a blank example on page 35.

- Read the details that have been filled in and discuss how useful this approach might be for writing a response in exam conditions.
- Have a go at writing one of the paragraph ideas suggested for part b.

Task <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Starting with this extract, write about how Dickens presents different settings in <i>A Christmas Carol</i>. Write about:
a) How Dickens presents setting in this extract. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Contrast between gloomy weather/buildings and spirited people/bright shops2. Several uses of personification3. Triumphant feel to the language4. Slight air of exaggeration and comedy
b) How Dickens presents the setting in the novel as a whole. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The weather2. Contrast between small towns and big cities3. Christmas in settings around the country4. The transformative power of Christmas on a setting5. Scenes of Christmas in family homes <p>Conclusion</p>
Contextual factors to consider <ul style="list-style-type: none">• London was a vibrant city with gloomy conditions created by smoke from thousands of fires• London was a city of contrasts, particularly between rich and poor• Christmas was becoming a significant secular celebration• Dickens' books often feature poor individuals benefiting from the generosity of the wealthy
Identification of writer's methods, including terminology to use <p>Personification, juxtaposition, setting, rich description, tone of voice, gothic and comic styles</p>
Possible quotations to draw on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'the darkness and the mist had vanished'• 'reeked with crime, with filth, and misery'• 'a bleak and desolate moor', 'upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks', 'black and heaving sea'• 'undergone a surprising transformation'

Stage five: exploring part b

- Read the second half of the response to the exam task.
- Annotate the text with marks and comments exploring the following:
 - Words and phrases that link one paragraph to another.
 - Words and phrases that give coherence within a paragraph.

You should also look out for where the answer meets criteria in the assessment objectives that your work will be marked against:

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts.

Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

AO2: Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

AO3: Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

b. How Dickens presents the setting in the novel as a whole.

Weather plays an important part in the way that setting is shown throughout the novel. Essentially winter weather is shown in two ways: miserable, gloomy and fog-bound, as in the extract looked at, or bright, frosty and snow-bound. The kind chosen depends on the point Dickens wants to make about Scrooge's life. For example, when Scrooge is taken by the Ghost of Christmas Past to the rural town where he went to school and grew up, we are told that 'the darkness and the mist had vanished' and that it was 'a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground'. The scene is like that on a modern day Christmas card, and is part of the process by which Dickens helped establish the ideal of Christmas. This type of weather is matched in the final stave when Scrooge has been saved and is happy to be alive.

The contrast in the way the weather is portrayed at different times is matched by the different descriptions of towns and the city of London. London is generally dirty and crowded, never more so than in the fourth stave when Scrooge is shown around by the Ghost of Christmas Past. The highly descriptive language matches the scenes of dirt and squalor as they pass through an area which 'reeked with crime, with filth, and misery'. In contrast, when Scrooge goes back in time he finds himself in 'a little market-town', with a bridge, church and winding river. While Dickens finds creative inspiration in the bustle and diversity of London, it seems that he is using setting here to suggest that previous times were simpler and more innocent.

Nowhere does Dickens use setting to better effect to suggest a more innocent past than when he takes the reader to the Fezziwigs party. Inside Fezziwig's warehouse is a world of happiness and harmony. Work and community seem joined together here. So Scrooge and Dick Wilkins not only work there, but they sleep under the counter at night, seemingly happy. Their happiness increases when the setting plays host to the Christmas party though, the dance scene perhaps the most joyful in the whole book. Dickens seems to be suggesting that Christmas itself transforms a location. We see this when he takes the action to less obviously happy places. The Ghost of Christmas Present takes Scrooge on a tour around Britain, showing him miners living on 'a bleak and desolate moor', lighthouse-keepers living 'upon a

dismal reef of sunken rocks' and sailors on a 'black and heaving sea'. Despite these harsh locations, though, all are happy because they are celebrating Christmas with others.

It is possible to suggest that Dickens shows Christmas as a transformative festival. And its transformative powers extend to settings. This is particularly apparent when the Ghost of Christmas Present takes Scrooge back into his own room after it has 'undergone a surprising transformation. It has been filled with Christmas produce, richly described over the course of several hundred words. And when the produce vanishes, the Ghost takes him around city streets that have undergone a similar transformation. The house fronts are 'black' and 'the sky was gloomy', but the people are all 'jovial and full of glee', reveling in the abundant produce in shops, hurrying off to church, and to the bakers where they would be able to use the stoves to cook their Christmas dinners. In a sense Dickens is sentimentalising the setting. It is hard to imagine anywhere being quite this jolly, or that everyone would be happy. But he seems to have two purposes. Again, he is establishing Christmas as a time of community and goodwill; and he is also suggesting that there actually is plenty in the world to go round, that there needn't be poverty and want in the world.

The scenes of joy on the city streets are matched by those inside various family homes at different stages in the novel. Whether it is the Cratchits making the most of their Christmas goose, or Scrooge's nephew Fred and family, or the family of Scrooge's former fiancée, Belle, everyone is harmonious, happy and fulfilled. It is these settings more than the others that most seem to tug at Scrooge's conscience, leading him to change his ways. The scenes described match the scene on the very first Christmas postcard, sold in 1843, the year of *A Christmas Carol's* publication. This shows a large, extended family, sitting round a table, eating and drinking. This is, perhaps, the Christmas setting that Dickens most wants to promote.

Dickens does not present his Christmas settings in a way that assumes everything will turn out all right. An alternative ending has Scrooge looking in on the Cratchit family grieving Tiny Tim's death and then looking on at his own death. It is human neglect, though, that has brought these deaths about, not the setting in which people live. Humans can overcome the disadvantages of various settings, the book suggests, if they come together harmoniously, for Christmas at least. I'm not sure that I agree with Dickens on this, but I certainly enjoyed being taken to various settings as he tried to convince.

Sample Task Two

- Starting with this extract, write about how Dickens presents the supernatural in *A Christmas Carol*.

Write about:

- a. How Dickens presents the supernatural in this extract.
- b. How Dickens presents the supernatural in the novel as a whole.

A churchyard. Here, then; the wretched man whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place!

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape.

'Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point,' said Scrooge, 'answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?'

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

'Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead,' said Scrooge. 'But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!'

The Spirit was immovable as ever.

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, Ebenezer Scrooge.

Sample Task Three

- Starting with this extract, write about how Dickens creates sympathy for Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*.

Write about:

- a. How Dickens creates sympathy for Scrooge in this extract.
- b. How Dickens creates sympathy for Scrooge in the novel as a whole.

The Ghost was greatly pleased to find him in this mood, and looked upon him with such favour, that he begged like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests departed. But this the Spirit said could not be done.

‘Here is a new game,’ said Scrooge. ‘One half hour, Spirit, only one!’

It was a Game called Yes and No, where Scrooge’s nephew had to think of something, and the rest must find out what; he only answering to their questions yes or no, as the case was. The brisk fire of questioning to which he was exposed, elicited from him that he was thinking of an animal, a live animal, rather a disagreeable animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, and walked about the streets, and wasn’t made a show of, and wasn’t led by anybody, and didn’t live in a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every fresh question that was put to him, this nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter; and was so inexpressibly tickled, that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp. At last the plump sister, falling into a similar state, cried out:

‘I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!’

‘What is it?’ cried Fred.

‘It’s your Uncle Scro-o-o-o-o-oge!’

Sample Task Four

- Starting with this extract, write about how Dickens portrays family life in *A Christmas Carol*.

Write about:

- a. How Dickens portrays family life in this extract.
- b. How Dickens portrays family life in the novel as a whole.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course—and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah!

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked.

Sample Task Five

- Starting with this extract, write about how Dickens explores the theme of helping others in *A Christmas Carol*.

Write about:

- How Dickens explores the theme of helping others in this extract.
- How Dickens explores the theme of helping others in the novel as a whole.

‘Hallo!’ growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it. ‘What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?’

‘I am very sorry, sir,’ said Bob. ‘I am behind my time.’

‘You are?’ repeated Scrooge. ‘Yes. I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.’

‘It’s only once a year, sir,’ pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. ‘It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir.’

‘Now, I’ll tell you what, my friend,’ said Scrooge, ‘I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore,’ he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again; ‘and therefore I am about to raise your salary!’

Bob trembled, and got a little nearer to the ruler. He had a momentary idea of knocking Scrooge down with it, holding him, and calling to the people in the court for help and a strait-waistcoat.

‘A merry Christmas, Bob!’ said Scrooge, with an earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he clapped him on the back. ‘A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you, for many a year! I’ll raise your salary, and endeavour to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob! Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit!’

Planning Grid

Task
a) 1. 2. 3. 4.
b) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Conclusion
Contextual factors to consider
Identification of writer's methods, including terminology to use
Possible quotations to draw on

ANSWERS

Total Recall: What Can You Remember About *A Christmas Carol*?

The answers

Stave One

1. Jacob Marley
2. Scrooge and Marley
3. Seven years to the day
4. Nobody
5. 3pm, Christmas Eve
6. So he can keep an eye on Bob Cratchit
7. Because it is kept in Scrooge's office
8. His nephew – later we find out he is called Fred – to invite him to Christmas dinner
9. Claps involuntarily
10. Two portly gentlemen
11. Workhouses
12. Decreases the surplus population
13. He has to pay him a full day's wages for no work.
14. Fog
15. Marley's head
16. A stomach upset, such as indigestion
17. It's jaw drops on to its chest
18. As punishment for the metaphorical chains he forged in life through the way that he lived
19. Because he did not wander freely in spirit when alive, but kept himself in his counting-house
20. 'mankind', 'common welfare', 'charity', 'mercy', 'forbearance', 'benevolence'
21. He has a chance to escape the same fate but first he will be visited by three spirits
22. Humbug

Stave Two

1. 12 midnight; he went to bed at 2 in the morning
2. It was a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the

crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Even this, though, when Scrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, was not its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light one instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts, no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as ever.

3. The village where he grew up
4. He was ignored by the other children ('A solitary child, neglected by his friends')
5. His sister, Fan
6. One, Scrooge's nephew, Fred
7. Dick Wilkins
8. Dancing
9. 'under a counter in the back-shop'
10. A golden idol (in other words, a love of money)
11. Christmas at the family of the woman he was engaged to marry
12. Pushes it under an extinguisher cap (device used to put out candles)

Stave Three

1. 'The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's, or for many and many a winter season gone.'
2. 'one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur.'
3. 1800
4. A busy town at Christmas
5. Bakers' shops (These would be closed for Christmas Day, with their ovens available for people who did not own their own.)
6. Eight: Bob and Mrs Cratchit, Peter, Martha, Belinda, Tiny Tim and 'the two ubiquitous young Cratchits'
7. Goose
8. His words to the two portly gentlemen about the poor being left to die in order to decrease the surplus population. The ghost says, ironically, of Tiny Tim: 'If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.'
9. 'The Founder of the Feast'
10. Miners, two lighthouse keepers and sailors
11. 'Forfeits', 'Blind-man's buff', 'How, When and Where', and 'Yes and No'
12. Abundance (boy) and Want (girl)

Stave Four

1. It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded. He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.
2. Businessmen
3. 'A seal or two, a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve-buttons, and a brooch of no great value'; 'Sheets and towels, a little wearing apparel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few boots'; bed-curtains, blankets, a shirt
4. A cat and rats
5. They will no longer be chased by him for the money they owe
6. He has died
7. Scrooge's nephew, Fred
8. EBENEZER SCROOGE
9. No

Stave Five

1. A big turkey for the Cratchits
2. One of the portly gentlemen; Scrooge promises him a large amount of money for his charity
3. Fred and his family
4. Raises his salary and promises to help his family
5. No
6. 'God bless Us, Every One!' Tiny Tim's words

Which Ghost?

Marley's Ghost

2. 'I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere.'

7. At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear indoors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast.

14. 'I wear the chain I forged in life ... I make it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.'

Ghost of Christmas Past

3. It was a strange figure – like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions.

4. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Ghost of Christmas Present

1. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. The garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice.

9. 'Touch my robe'

10. Its dark brown curls were long and free: free as its genial face, its sparkling eyes, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air.

11. From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

5. The very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.

6. ... the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.

8. The kind hand trembled.

12. The phantom slowly, gravely, silently, approached.

13. It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand.

Jumbled Up Mini-essays – Suggested Order

Stunning Critique of a Society Obsessed by Money

While on the surface *A Christmas Carol* appears to be a heart-warming story of one miserly individual's redemption, below the surface it offers a savage critique of society in the 1840s. Scrooge is a representative of a harsh version of capitalism that destroys the lives of millions. The reader might only see an individual in his counting-house, but he stands for a whole system that denies others access to wealth and opportunity.

Dickens shows us the consequences of this system in the death of Tiny Tim, revealed to Scrooge by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. Tim's father, Bob Cratchit, works hard but is in a system that denies him a decent wage, which means that he cannot get decent care for his son, or support him properly. We also witness the terrible condition in which many children were forced to live through the characters of Want and Ignorance. They appear at the end of a stave in which Scrooge is shown scenes of abundance by the Ghost of Christmas Present: Dickens is making it obvious that there is enough for everyone.

This vision of plenty is not, however, a view of the world held by everyone. Many believed that the world contained too many people and so could not support them all. They used the arguments of economist, Thomas Malthus, about 'surplus population' to justify their beliefs. Malthus argued in his 1798 book, *An Essay on the Principles of Population*, that those who could not support themselves should be left to die. When Scrooge refers to Malthus's work to the 'two portly gentlemen', Dickens is making it clear that he belongs to a monstrous, inhumane system.

Dickens is also showing, however, that things can change for the better. The reformed Scrooge at the end of the novel offers a healthy form of capitalism. He uses his wealth to help others and to make society a better place.

A Flawed Solution to a Real Problem

While *A Christmas Carol* is often hailed as offering an effective attack on living and working conditions in England in the 1840s, in reality it does little to address the root causes of the problems that existed.

The book does make it clear that poverty is a serious concern, one that destroys lives. We see this, for example, in the character of Tiny Tim, and in the childish figures of Want and Ignorance. However, the solution offered depends on the very people who are the cause of the problem in the first place. Consequently the likes of the Cratchits are not given the means to help themselves; rather they have to rely on the support of wealthy individuals such as Scrooge.

Throughout the novel we see other examples of the poor relying on the wealthy for any chance of a better life. So we have the 'two portly gentlemen' collecting money for charity; and we have Fezziwig hosting a Christmas party for his employees. In both these instances, Christmas is presented as a time when the better off must help the worse off. However, it does imply that ignoring grotesque inequalities for the rest of the year is absolutely fine.

There is also the slightly odd suggestion that Christmas simply makes people forget about the difficult realities of their day-to-day lives. So when the Ghost of Christmas Present takes Scrooge around the country, showing him miners and sailors and lighthouse-keepers, they all seem happy simply because it is Christmas day. Would this really be the case?

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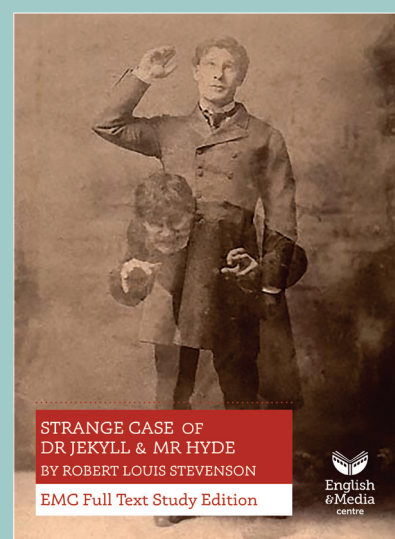
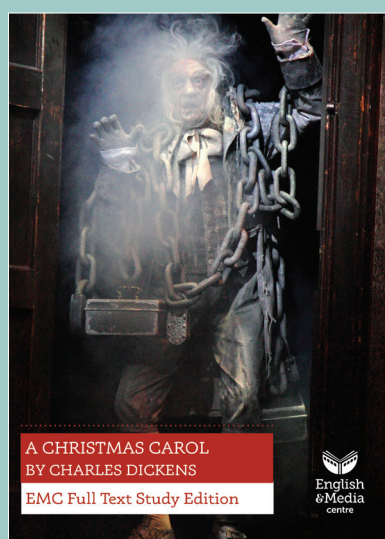
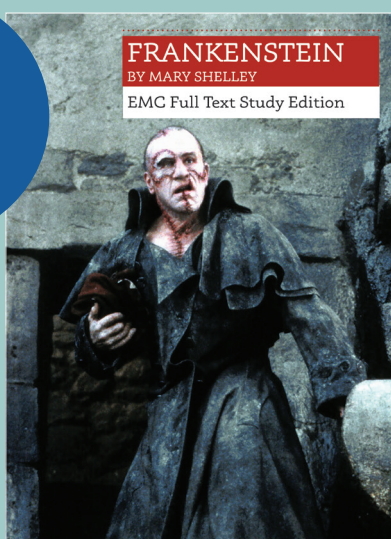
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