

Plot summary:

1. Scrooge is at work in his counting house. Despite the Christmas Eve cold, he refuses to spend money on coals for the fire. Scrooge's turns down his nephew, Fred's, invitation to his Christmas party and the request of two men who want money for charity. Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his dead partner, Jacob Marley, who tells Scrooge that, due to his greedy life, he has to wander the Earth wearing heavy chains. He tells Scrooge that three spirits will visit him during the next three nights.

2. He wakes and the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge into the past. Invisible to those he watches, Scrooge revisits his childhood school days, his apprenticeship with a jolly merchant named Fezziwig, and his engagement to Belle, who leaves Scrooge as he loves money too much to love another human being. Scrooge sheds tears of regret before being returned to his bed.

3. The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge Christmas as it will happen that year. Scrooge watches the Cratchit family eat a tiny meal in their little home. He sees Bob Cratchit's son, Tiny Tim, whose kindness and humility warm Scrooge's heart. The spectre shows Scrooge his nephew's Christmas party. Toward the end of the day the ghost shows Scrooge two starved children, Ignorance and Want. He vanishes as Scrooge notices a dark, hooded figure coming.

4. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come takes Scrooge through a sequence of scenes linked to an unnamed man's death. Scrooge, is keen to learn the lesson. He begs to know the name of the dead man. He finds himself in a churchyard with the spirit pointing to a grave. Scrooge looks at the headstone and is shocked to read his own name. He is desperate to change his fate and promises to change his ways. He suddenly finds himself safely tucked in his bed.

5. Scrooge rushes out onto the street hoping to share his newfound Christmas spirit. He sends a turkey to the Cratchit house and goes to Fred's party, As the years go by, he continues to celebrate Christmas with all his heart. He treats Tiny Tim as if he were his own child, gives gifts for the poor and is kind, generous and warm.

'A Christmas Carol' knowledge organiser



Exam Requirements:

English Literature: Paper 1

1hr 45

Shakespeare ('Macbeth') & pre-19th century novel ('A Christmas Carol')

English Literature: Paper 2

2hr 15

Modern texts ('An Inspector Calls') & poetry (Power & Conflict collection & unseen)

English Literature Grade Descriptors:

Grade 8

- sustain a convincing, informed personal response to explicit and implicit meanings of texts
- sustain a perceptive critical analysis of the ways in which writers use language, form and structure
- use judicious and well-integrated textual references to develop personal responses
- show perceptive understanding of how contexts shape texts and responses to texts
- make illuminating comparisons between texts

Grade 5

- develop a generally coherent and engaged response to explicit and implicit meanings of texts
- develop a clear understanding of the ways in which writers use language, form and structure
- use apt textual references to support responses
- use understanding of contexts to inform responses to texts
- make credible comparisons between texts

Grade 2

- make straightforward comments about explicit meanings of texts
- describe straightforward aspects of language, form or structure
- make general references to obvious details of texts
- show awareness that texts are related to contexts
- make basic links between texts

Skills: The 7 Steps

Point: what has been used and why?
“Evidence”

- 1) this suggests / on the surface / this conveys...
- 2) the word “___”
- 3) has connotations of...
- 4) metaphorically / at a deeper level...
- 5) symbolically / this becomes a symbol for...
- 6) Dickens is showing...
- 7) the reader is made to think / feel / understand

Key Quotations

“Hard and sharp as flint” (stave 1)

“As solitary as an oyster” (stave 1)

“I wear the chain I forged in life” (Stave 1)

“He could not hide the light” (stave 2)

“Are there no prisons...are there no workhouses...” (Stave 1 and Stave 3)

“I’m not the man I was. I’m not the man I must have been” (Stave 4)

“Beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up” (Stave 4)

“Glowing” (Stave 5)

Themes:

Greed

Avarice (an excessive desire for wealth – one of the 7 deadly sins of Christian tradition)

Ignorance & Want (lack of knowledge/education & need/poverty)

Redemption (being saved from sin or evil)

Predestination

Free Will

Poverty

Class

Isolation

Transformation

The passage of time

Family

Guilt

Generosity

Social Responsibility

Justice

The supernatural

Christmas

Death



Characters:

Scrooge – A selfish business man who transforms into a charitable philanthropist.

Fred – Scrooge’s nephew whose party invitation he declines

Jacob Marley – Scrooge’s dead partner who returns as a ghost to warn Scrooge to change his ways.

Bob Cratchitt – Scrooge’s clerk who doesn’t have much money. He loves his family and is shown to be happy and morally upright.

Tiny Tim – Bob’s ill son whose story plays a part in inspiring Scrooge’s transformation.

Mrs Cratchitt – Bob’s wife

The Ghost of Christmas Past – A strange combination of young and old, wearing white robes and looking like a candle.

The Ghost of Christmas Present – A portly, jovial gentleman surrounded by a warm glow. He brings joy to the neediest.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come – A robed and hooded spirit who confronts Scrooge with his own tombstone.

Fezziwig – Scrooge’s ex-employer

Belle – A woman who Scrooge was in love with; she left him due to his greed.

Fan – Scrooge’s sister

Context:

- Dickens wrote ‘A Christmas Carol’ in 1843 focusing on how many of society’s ills can be blamed on greed for money and status.

- Dickens’ early life gave him first-hand experience of poverty.

- 1832 – The Great Reform Bill gave many middle class property owners the right to vote for the first time. Large sections of the middle classes, the working classes and women still didn’t have the right to vote.

- 1834 – Poor Law Amendment Act – Led to a cut in aid given to the poor. Workhouses were created which poor people would have to live and work in, if they were unable to pay for their own housing.

- in 1843, Dickens read a government report on child labour in England. Dickens wanted to use his popularity to bring the problem of child poverty to the attention of a wider public.

- Victorian London was a place of great wealth and great poverty.