

A Christmas Carol
AQA Literature Paper 1



Contents Page

Plot Summary.....	3
Contextual Information.....	4
Stave 1	
<i>Scrooge's Character</i>	5
<i>Scrooge and his nephew, Fred</i>	7
<i>The Charity Men</i>	9
<i>Marley's Ghost</i>	11
<i>Comprehension Questions</i>	12
Stave 2	
<i>The Ghost of Christmas Past</i>	13
<i>Scrooge's Childhood</i>	15
<i>Scrooge as a Worker</i>	17
<i>Scrooge and Belle</i>	19
<i>Scrooge's Reaction</i>	21
<i>Comprehension Questions</i>	22
Stave 3	
<i>The Ghost of Christmas Present</i>	23
<i>The Cratchit Family</i>	25
<i>Ignorance and Want</i>	26
<i>Comprehension Questions</i>	28
Stave 4	
<i>The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come</i>	29
<i>Scrooge's Gravestone</i>	31
<i>Comprehension Questions</i>	33
Stave 5	
<i>Scrooge's Transformation</i>	34
<i>Comprehension Questions</i>	36
Revision	
<i>Non-Fiction Extracts</i>	37
<i>Key Character Quotes</i>	39
<i>Key Themes</i>	42
<i>Creative Writing</i>	43

'A Christmas Carol' Plot Summary

The story begins on Christmas Eve. Ebenezer Scrooge, a mean, unkind old man, is working in his office with Bob Cratchit, his clerk. His nephew Fred visits him and invites Ebenezer to celebrate Christmas day at his house. Scrooge refuses. He hates Christmas because he thinks it's too expensive. Next a charity worker collecting money for the poor arrives, but Scrooge gives her nothing. When it is time to finish work, Scrooge is angry that he has to give Bob Cratchit a day off work on Christmas day.

After work Scrooge goes home to spend Christmas alone and unhappy. That night the ghost of his dead business partner, Jacob Marley, visits him. He tells Scrooge that he must change his way of life or face the consequences. He tells him that three ghosts will visit him. Scrooge is scared but he goes to sleep. He wakes up to see The Ghost of Christmas Past, who takes him to re-visit his own past. They go to his old school and see Scrooge as a lonely and unhappy child. They also visit him as a happy, young man working in his first job, with a kind boss called Mr. Fezziwig. Finally, they see Scrooge's girlfriend leave him because of his love of money.

Later that night, Scrooge meets The Ghost of Christmas Present. He takes Scrooge to see the Cratchit family's Christmas. They are happy even though they are poor. The only thing that makes them sad is that the youngest son, Tiny Tim, is ill. Tiny Tim is likely to die without a doctor, something the Cratchit family cannot afford to pay for. Scrooge also visits the house of his nephew. The people are all having fun and are happy.

Finally, The Ghost of Christmas Future arrives. He doesn't speak but shows Scrooge people talking about a man who has died. They speak about the man without affection and are not sad that he is dead. When Scrooge sees the grave of the man, he realises it has his name on it. It is his death the people are talking about! He regrets his actions and wishes he could change his ways.

When he wakes up the next morning, Scrooge realises it is still Christmas morning and he is very happy. He wants to help everyone now and become a better person. He buys a big Turkey for the Cratchit family and pays for the doctor for Tiny Tim. Next, he goes to his nephew's house and joins in the celebrations. He is sorry for all the bad things he has done and promises to start a new life.

Contextual Information

A Christmas Carol was written in 1843 at a time of great change in Victorian Britain. The industrial revolution was taking place and there was a sudden growth of the cities as the economy shifted from agriculture to industry and trade people moved from the countryside to the cities and many lived in squalor as the housing was appalling.

Money from industry made the rich, richer and the gap between rich and poor widened. Workers had to toil for long hours and for little money. Children didn't go to school and worked long hours for a low wage to help support their families who barely had enough money to buy food. In the poorer areas of Britain's larger cities almost 1 in 5 children born in the 1830s and 40s had died by the age of five. The main causes of death were polluted drinking water, damp and tuberculosis, which claimed between 60,000 and 70,000 lives in each decade of Queen Victoria's reign.

There was no healthcare at this time and if you got ill and couldn't work, your whole family was at risk of death. For those who were unable to support themselves, there were the workhouses: these were not intended as pleasant places to stay. Men, women and families were separated and those who were physically able were expected to work for their keep. Those who could not pay their debts were sent to debtors' prisons such as Marshalsea, where Charles Dickens' father spent time.

During this period a small number of people became very wealthy and they lived in luxury with large houses, plenty of money, food and clothes. Their children didn't work and were educated. Being seen to be civilised and adhering to a strict set of morals was important to high society in the Victorian age.

In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act ensured that no able-bodied person could get poor relief unless they went to live in special workhouses. The idea was that the poor were helped to support themselves, so they had to work for their food and accommodation in bad conditions.



Stave 1 – Scrooge's Character

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind-stone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dogdays; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!"

But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.

Once upon a time -- of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve -- old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already -- it had not been light all day: and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to

part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

Analysis Questions:

1. What does the adjective “tight-fisted” show us about Scrooge?
2. Why does Dickens list the verbs “squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching” to describe Scrooge? What does this show us about him?
3. What does “covetous” mean? What does this show us about Scrooge?
4. Why would Scrooge be described as a “sinner”? How did the Victorian era feel about religion? How does Dickens want his readers to feel about Scrooge?
5. What does the simile “solitary as an oyster” show about Scrooge’s character? What is inside of an oyster? What could this symbolise about Scrooge?
6. How is Scrooge presented when we are told that “No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place”? What does Dickens use the repetition of ‘no’ to emphasise?
7. What could the pathetic fallacy in “It was cold, bleak, biting weather” suggest to the reader about Scrooge?
8. How is Scrooge presented in the following quote: “he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters”? What does the adjective “dismal” show? Why does Dickens use the noun “cell” to present the workplace? (Think about how this could link to the novella’s context)

Challenge: Pick other quotes to zoom in to, looking at: word classes, subject terminology, and its significance.

Exam Question: Starting with this extract, explore how Scrooge is presented as an outsider to society in ‘A Christmas Carol’.

Stave 1 – Scrooge and his nephew, Fred

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

"Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said Scrooge's nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure."

"I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

"Come, then," returned the nephew gaily. "What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough."

Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said "Bah!" again; and followed it up with "Humbug."

"Don't be cross, uncle!" said the nephew.

"What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

"Uncle!" pleaded the nephew.

"Nephew!" returned the uncle, sternly, "keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine."

"Keep it!" repeated Scrooge's nephew. "But you don't keep it."

"Let me leave it alone, then," said Scrooge. "Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!"

"There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew. "Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round -- apart from the veneration due to its

sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that -- as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

Analysis Questions:

1. What is happening in this extract? Write a brief summary
2. How is Fred presented in this interaction? What adjectives from this extract could you use to support your interpretations?
3. How does Dickens show Scrooge's attitude to the lower class in the quote: "What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough"?
4. How does Scrooge feel about Christmas time? Why do you think this might be?
5. When Scrooge says that Christmas is "but a time for paying bills without money", what does this imply that his focus is?
6. How could Fred be considered the antithesis (opposite) of Scrooge?
7. What is the significance of Christmas time? How is society supposed to act?

Challenge: To what extent do you think that Scrooge is justified in his feelings about Christmas? Think about how materialistic people are and whether or not the true meaning of Christmas has been lost.

Exam Question: How does Dickens present the theme of charity and Christmas Spirit in this extract?

Stave One – Scrooge and the Charity Men

This lunatic, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their hands, and bowed to him.

"Scrooge and Marley's, I believe," said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?"

"Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years," Scrooge replied. "He died seven years ago, this very night."

"We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner," said the gentleman, presenting his credentials.

It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word "liberality," Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back.

"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman, taking up a pen, "it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and Destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir."

"Are there no prisons?" asked Scrooge.

"Plenty of prisons," said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

"And the Union workhouses?" demanded Scrooge. "Are they still in operation?"

"They are. Still," returned the gentleman, "I wish I could say they were not."

"The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?" said Scrooge.

"Both very busy, sir."

"Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course," said Scrooge. "I'm very glad to hear it."

"Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude," returned the gentleman, "a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?"

"Nothing!" Scrooge replied.

"You wish to be anonymous?"

"I wish to be left alone," said Scrooge. "Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned -- they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there."

"Many can't go there; and many would rather die."

"If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides -- excuse me -- I don't know that."

"But you might know it," observed the gentleman.

"It's not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge returned his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

Analysis Questions:

1. List four things we learn about the two gentleman who visit Scrooge.
2. How does Dickens present Scrooge's attitude towards other people? What quotes support your ideas?
3. Liberality means the quality of giving or spending freely. What does the man mean when he says "We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner"? How could this be an example of dramatic irony?
4. What does the rhetorical question "Are there no prisons?" reveal about how Scrooge thinks of the lower class? What are the connotations of the noun "prison"?
5. What does "surplus" mean? How do we feel about Scrooge when he argues that we should "decrease the surplus population"? How are the poor presented in this quote?

Challenge: Research the Treadmill and the Poor Law and explore how the lower classes were often treated during the Victorian era.

Exam Question: A student said 'In Stave One, Scrooge is a completely unsympathetic character.' To what extent do you agree?

Stave One – Marley’s Ghost

“It is required of every man,” the Ghost returned, “that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world—oh, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!”

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands.

“You are fettered,” said Scrooge, trembling. “Tell me why?”

“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. Is its pattern strange to you?”

Scrooge trembled more and more.

“Or would you know,” pursued the Ghost, “the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!”

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

“Jacob,” he said, imploringly. “Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!”

“I have none to give,” the Ghost replied. “It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more is all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house—mark me!—in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!”

Analysis Questions:

1. Why is mankind not granted peace after they die? What actions have caused this?
2. When Marley explains “I wear the chain I forged in life”, what does the noun “chain” symbolise? Why is it so important that he repeats the personal pronoun “I”?
3. What does Marley warn Scrooge about? What does Scrooge need to do in order to avoid the same fate as Marley?

Challenge: Why was Marley not offered the same chance of redemption as Scrooge?

Exam Question: How does Dickens present the theme of charity and Christmas Spirit in this extract?

Stave One – Comprehension Questions

1. How long has Jacob Marley been dead for?
2. Who attended his funeral?
3. What is Scrooge's typical response to Christmas? What does this show about his attitude to Christmas?
4. What is a quote that shows Scrooge's physical description?
5. What is a quote that shows Scrooge's personality?
6. What is the name of Scrooge's clerk?
7. How is the clerk treated?
8. How is Fred related to Scrooge?
9. In three words describe Fred's personality.
10. Who asks Scrooge for a charitable donation?
11. What is Scrooge's attitude towards the poor? What does he say?
12. What is Dickens' moral message through Scrooge's conversation with the charity men?
13. Who appears on Scrooge's door-knocker?
14. What is Jacob Marley forced to drag as a result of his sinful life? What do these objects represent?
15. Why does Scrooge like darkness?
16. Why is Marley living in torment?
17. What is Marley's message to Scrooge?
18. What does Marley show Scrooge through the window and who do they represent? Which law is Dickens criticising here?
19. Why is Marley's appearance here important to the story?
20. Write down four adjectives that describe Scrooge in Stave 1

Stave Two – The Ghost of Christmas Past

The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand. Not the curtains at his feet, nor the curtains at his back, but those to which his face was addressed. The curtains of his bed were drawn aside; and Scrooge, starting up into a half-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them: as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow.

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.

“Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?” asked Scrooge.

“I am.”

The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.

“Who, and what are you?” Scrooge demanded.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.”

“Long Past?” inquired Scrooge: observant of its dwarfish stature.

“No. Your past.”

Analysis Questions:

1. Why might Dickens repeat that “the curtains of his bed was pulled aside”? What atmosphere is he trying to create?
2. This spirit is described as “yet not so like a child as like an old man” – what could the conflicting appearances suggest?
3. When the spirit is said to be wearing a tunic of “the purest white”, what are the connotations?
4. What is the purpose of this spirit? What do you think Scrooge could learn from this experience?

Challenge: To what extent can Scrooge be seen to be a bad person so far in the novella? What evidence can you find? What might have caused him to become this way?

Exam Question: Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the power of the spirits who visit Scrooge?



Stave Two – Scrooge’s Childhood

As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground.

“Good Heaven!” said Scrooge, clasping his hands together, as he looked about him. “I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!”

The Spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man’s sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand odours floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long, forgotten!

“Your lip is trembling,” said the Ghost. “And what is that upon your cheek?”

Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that it was a pimple; and begged the Ghost to lead him where he would.

“You recollect the way?” inquired the Spirit.

“Remember it!” cried Scrooge with fervour; “I could walk it blindfold.”

“Strange to have forgotten it for so many years!” observed the Ghost. “Let us go on.”

They walked along the road, Scrooge recognising every gate, and post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church, and winding river. Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting towards them with boys upon their backs, who called to other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by farmers. All these boys were in great spirits, and shouted to each other, until the broad fields were so full of merry music, that the crisp air laughed to hear it!

“These are but shadows of the things that have been,” said the Ghost. “They have no consciousness of us.”

The jocund travellers came on; and as they came, Scrooge knew and named them every one. Why was he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them! Why did his cold eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past! Why was he filled with gladness when he heard them give each other Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and bye-ways, for their several homes! What was merry Christmas to Scrooge? Out upon merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

“The school is not quite deserted,” said the Ghost. “A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.”

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

Analysis Questions:

1. Why are “darkness and the mist” associated with London? How could this be an example of pathetic fallacy?
2. How does Scrooge react to seeing his old school? What does this show about his character?
3. Jocund means light and cheerful – how does this contrast with Scrooge in the present?
4. Scrooge is described as “a solitary child, neglected by his friends” – what does the adjective “solitary” imply about his childhood? What quote could this link to from Stave One?

Challenge: To what extent do you think that your upbringing influences your future? Is the way you were raised more important than your genes?

Exam Question: Starting with this extract, how does Dickens portray the power of memory to change Scrooge?



Stave Two – Scrooge as a Worker

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (an artful dog, mind! The sort of man who knew his business better than you or I could have told it him!) struck up “Sir Roger de Coverley.” Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who would dance, and had no notion of walking.

But if they had been twice as many—ah, four times—old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to her, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that’s not high praise, tell me higher, and I’ll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig’s calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn’t have predicted, at any given time, what would have become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curtsy, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig “cut”—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two ‘prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

“A small matter,” said the Ghost, “to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.”

“Small!” echoed Scrooge.

The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig: and when he had done so, said, “Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?”

“It isn’t that,” said Scrooge, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self. “It isn’t that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or

unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

Analysis Questions:

1. Why might Dickens have put so much detail into the description of the celebration?
2. How are Mr and Mrs Fezziwig presented in this extract?
3. What could Scrooge's reaction suggest about his character and his memories of this time?
4. When the spirit explains that it was a small matter "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude", what is he trying to show Scrooge?
5. Scrooge states that Fezziwig had "the power to render us happy or unhappy" – what does this show about the power of a boss? How could this contrast Scrooge's own actions in Stave One?

Challenge: What are the qualities of a good boss or leader? Which of these do you think Scrooge has shown?

Exam Question: How does Dickens present the relationship between wealth and happiness in A Christmas Carol?



Stave Two – Scrooge and Belle

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past.

“It matters little,” she said, softly. “To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.”

“What Idol has displaced you?” he rejoined.

“A golden one.”

“This is the even-handed dealing of the world!” he said. “There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!”

“You fear the world too much,” she answered, gently. “All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?”

“What then?” he retorted. “Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you.”

She shook her head.

“Am I?”

“Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man.”

“I was a boy,” he said impatiently.

“Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are,” she returned. “I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you.”

“Have I ever sought release?”

“In words. No. Never.”

“In what, then?”

“In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us,” said the girl, looking mildly, but with steadiness, upon him; “tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!”

He seemed to yield to the justice of this supposition, in spite of himself. But he said with a struggle, “You think not.”

“I would gladly think otherwise if I could,” she answered, “Heaven knows! When I have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl—you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.”

He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed.

“You may—the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!”

She left him, and they parted.

Analysis Questions:

1. How is Belle presented in this exchange?
2. When Belle states that “another idol has displaced me”, what does this mean? What has Scrooge prioritised instead of their relationship?
3. Dickens reveals that “the master-passion, Gain, engrosses” Scrooge – how is Scrooge presented? How does he feel about money? Why is “Gain” personified?
4. How does Dickens want the reader feel about Scrooge during this extract?

Challenge: ‘Having money and being successful is far more important than love’ – to what extent do you agree?

Exam Question: How does Dickens present the theme of charity and Christmas Spirit in this extract?

Stave Two – Scrooge’s Reaction

“Spirit!” said Scrooge in a broken voice, “remove me from this place.”

“I told you these were shadows of the things that have been,” said the Ghost. “That they are what they are, do not blame me!”

“Remove me!” Scrooge exclaimed, “I cannot bear it!”

He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

“Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!”

In the struggle, if that can be called a struggle in which the Ghost with no visible resistance on its own part was undisturbed by any effort of its adversary, Scrooge observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head.

The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light: which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground.

He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own bedroom. He gave the cap a parting squeeze, in which his hand relaxed; and had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep.

Analysis Questions:

1. What does Scrooge’s “broken” voice suggest about his reaction to the past?
2. How is the reader encouraged to feel about Scrooge at this moment in the novella?
3. What might the imperative command “remove me” imply about Scrooge?
4. What could the light symbolise? Think of at least three the different interpretations and explain how each is significant.
5. When Scrooge extinguishes the light, what does this show us about his character?

Challenge: If you were shown three significant moments of your own past, what would they be? How would your reactions differ from Scrooge’s? Do you think he is justified in his anger?

Exam Question: Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present shock and anger in *A Christmas Carol*?

Stave Two – Comprehension Questions

1. Why does Dickens use pathetic fallacy and sounds and waits a long time before the first ghost appears?
2. Why does Dickens describe the Ghost of Christmas Past as ‘was a strange figure -- like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man...’?
3. Why does the ghost have a ‘glowing head’?
4. Find and copy another description of the ghost
5. Write in order the characters Scrooge visits with the Ghost of Christmas Past
6. What does the audience learn about Scrooge as a child?
7. What does Scrooge regret?
8. How is Fan related to Scrooge?
9. In your own words, describe Fan briefly from this stave.
10. How does Scrooge know Fezziwig?
11. Fezziwig is another character that Dickens uses as a foil for Scrooge. Give some examples of this idea.
12. How does Scrooge know Belle?
13. What does the audience learn about his experiences with Belle?
14. Explain the following quote fully: ‘It matters little,’ she said softly. ‘Another idol has displaced me...’
15. What does the above quote show the audience about Belle?
16. How does Dickens show that Scrooge regrets his decision with Belle?
17. What does Scrooge begin to wish for?

18. What does Scrooge do to the Ghost that show he regrets his decisions he made in the past?

Stave Three – The Ghost of Christmas Present

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the Bell struck One, and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time, he lay upon his bed, the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour; and which, being only light, was more alarming than a dozen ghosts, as he was powerless to make out what it meant, or would be at; and was sometimes apprehensive that he might be at that very moment an interesting case of spontaneous combustion, without having the consolation of knowing it. At last, however, he began to think -- as you or I would have thought at first; for it is always the person not in the predicament who knows what ought to have been done in it, and would unquestionably have done it too -- at last, I say, he began to think that the source and secret of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room, from whence, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine. This idea taking full possession of his mind, he got up softly and shuffled in his slippers to the door.

The moment Scrooge's hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. 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. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see, who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

"Come in." exclaimed the Ghost. "Come in, and know me better, man."

Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Present," said the Spirit. "Look upon me."

Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdainful to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.

“You have never seen the like of me before,” exclaimed the Spirit.

“Never,” Scrooge made answer to it.

“Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years,” pursued the Phantom.

“I don't think I have,” said Scrooge. “I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?”

“More than eighteen hundred,” said the Ghost.

“A tremendous family to provide for,” muttered Scrooge.

The Ghost of Christmas Present rose.

“Spirit,” said Scrooge submissively, “conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.”

“Touch my robe.”

Analysis Questions:

1. Why does Dickens delay the arrival of this next spirit? What atmosphere is he trying to create?
2. Dickens writes that Scrooge “obeyed” the voice and entered “timidly” – what does this show about the change his character has already started to experience?
3. Why does Dickens list that “heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat...”? What could Dickens be suggesting about the upper classes during the Victorian era?
4. The Spirit refused to be “concealed with artifice”, but what does this actually mean? What could it show about his role in the novella? How is he described?
5. When Dickens described the spirit’s “antique scabbard; but no sword was in it”, what does this show us about his character?

Challenge: How does the Ghost of Christmas Present compare to the Ghost of Christmas Past? Which one do you think is more important for Scrooge?

Exam Question: A student, having read this extract, said that “the Ghost of Christmas Present represents all that is bad in society.” To what extent do you agree?

Stave Three – The Cratchit Family

Then up rose Mrs Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable Parks. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; and basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

"What has ever got your precious father then?" said Mrs Cratchit. "And your brother, Tiny Tim; And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour."

"Here's Martha, mother," said a girl, appearing as she spoke.

"Here's Martha, mother!" cried the two young Cratchits. "Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!"

"Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!" said Mrs Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

"We'd a deal of work to finish up last night," replied the girl, "and had to clear away this morning, mother."

"Well. Never mind so long as you are come," said Mrs Cratchit. "Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye."

Analysis Questions:

1. Mrs Cratchit is described “in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons.” What does “twice-turned” show us about the Cratchit’s social position? How could the adjective “brave” contrast society’s view on the poor?
2. How are the Cratchit family present in this extract?
3. Bob Cratchit later describes Tiny Tim to be “as good as gold” – what does this literally mean? How could it also link to the family’s view on money?

Challenge: How could Bob Cratchit and his family be seen as the antithesis of Scrooge?

Exam Question: Starting with this extract, how does Dickens explore the importance of family?

Stave Three – Ignorance and Want

"Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask," said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, "but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?"

"It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it," was the Spirit's sorrowful reply. "Look here."

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.

"Oh, Man, look here! Look, look, down here!" exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and a girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

"Spirit, are they yours?" Scrooge could say no more.

"They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. "And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!" cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end."

"Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge.

"Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. "Are there no workhouses?"

The bell struck twelve.

Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

Analysis Questions:

1. How are the children presented in this extract?
2. Why does the spirit specifically inform Scrooge that the children “are Man’s”? What does Dickens want to tell his readers?
3. “This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both” – why are Ignorance and Want both personified? How could they represent different parts of society?
4. Why does the spirit repeat Scrooge’s earlier words of “are there no prisons”? What does Dickens try to show us about Scrooge at this point in the novella?

Challenge: Why do you think Dickens moves straight from one spirit to the next? How could this link to the theme of time that is present in the novella?

Exam Question: How does Dickens present the theme of poverty in A Christmas Carol?



Stave Three – Comprehension Questions

1. How does Dickens build the tension as Scrooge awaits for the Ghost of Christmas present?
2. Where does the spirit actually appear?
3. Who do we think his 1800 brothers are?
4. Describe what the Ghost of Christmas present is wearing and why?
5. How does Dickens show that the Ghost of Christmas Present represents abundance and is a personification of generosity?
6. How does this setting contrast from the entrance of the previous Ghost? What is Dickens' message about Scrooge here?
7. How is Scrooge's manner different from Stave 2? What does this show about him?
8. Dickens uses connotations of freedom, openness and cheerfulness. Find some of the examples.
9. Find and copy the quote which shows that Scrooge has not fully changed. Explain the quote.
10. What is the atmosphere and weather like in London?
11. Dickens criticises Robert Malthus' theory. How does he do this?
12. What is Scrooge's concern about Sunday trading?
13. What is the ghost's concern about the religious hypocrisy?
14. Who do the Cratchit family collectively represent/symbolise for Dickens?
15. Briefly describe how Bob Cratchit is presented in this stave?
16. Briefly describe how his wife, Mrs Cratchit is presented in this stave
17. Why does Dickens want the reader to view the Cratchit family in a positive light and how does he do this?
18. What does Scrooge's concern for Tiny Tim suggest about him?
19. What words does the Spirit remind Scrooge of?
20. What are the streets of London like when Scrooge leaves the Cratchit family?
21. Where does the Spirit take Scrooge first when he whisks him away from the city?
22. Where do they go next?
23. What is the third strange location they visit?
24. Where do they go to when they return to London?
25. Why is the ghost of Christmas present ageing so quickly?
26. What are the children of Man?
27. What do they mean and which one is presented as worst? Why?
28. What does Scrooge say that shows he has changed?

29. What is the spirit's response?

Stave Four – The Final Phantom

The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached. When it came, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery. 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.

"I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?" said Scrooge.

The Spirit answered not, but pointed downward with its hand.

"You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us," Scrooge pursued. "Is that so, Spirit?"

The upper portion of the garment was contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit had inclined its head. That was the only answer he received.

Although well used to ghostly company by this time, Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it. The Spirit pauses a moment, as observing his condition, and giving him time to recover.

But Scrooge was all the worse for this. It thrilled him with a vague uncertain horror, to know that behind the dusky shroud there were ghostly eyes intently fixed upon him, while he, though he stretched his own to the utmost, could see nothing but a spectral hand and one great heap of black.

Analysis Questions:

1. How does Scrooge react to the final spirit? Why was he "bent down upon his knee"? How does this compare with his initial reaction to the spirits in the novella?
2. What do the adverbs "slowly, gravely, silently" imply about this spirit? How is the reader encouraged to feel about this character?
3. Why does Dickens describe the spirit as being "shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head"? What could the "black" symbolise? Why is it "shrouded" and "concealed"?
4. Why does this Spirit not talk? What effect does this have on both Scrooge and the reader?

Challenge: What is the purpose of this Spirit? Which spirit do you think has the most significant impact on Scrooge? Justify your reasoning.

Exam Question: How does Dickens present the theme of poverty in A Christmas Carol?



Stave Four – Scrooge's Redemption

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.

"Am I that man who lay upon the bed?" he cried, upon his knees.

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

"No, Spirit! Oh no, no!"

The finger still was there.

"Spirit!" he cried, tight clutching at its robe, "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?" For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

"Good Spirit," he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it: "Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life."

The kind hand trembled.

"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. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!"

In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him.

Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate aye reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.

Analysis Questions:

1. How is Scrooge presented in this extract?
2. Why does the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come not speak? What atmosphere does this create?
3. Why is Scrooge shown his future gravestone? What will happen to Scrooge if he does not change his ways?
4. Scrooge reveals that "I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been" – why has he changed? What is he afraid of happening in the future?
5. Scrooge wants to know that he "may sponge away the writing on this stone" – what does this show the reader about his character's transformation?

Challenge: Which event do you think has had the biggest impact on Scrooge? Do you think his change will be permanent?

Exam Question: How does Dickens explore the idea of redemption in this extract?



"No, spirit! Oh, no, no!"

Stave Four – Comprehension Questions

1. What term is used to describe this ghost?
2. There are two men whose conversations are described - What are they discussing?
3. How have these people been affected by the death they are discussing?
4. Does Scrooge know who they are talking about? Do we yet? Or do we just infer?
5. Where does the phantom lead Scrooge next?
6. What have the three visitors to the shop done?
7. How are these characters presented to the reader?
8. What is ironic about the way they treat Scrooge in death?
9. What sort of things do they steal from him?
10. How do we as a reader feel towards them? Why?
11. Where does the phantom take Scrooge next?
12. How is the body described?
13. Scrooge asks to be shown somebody who feels an emotion connected to the man's death – where does the spirit take him?
14. What is the situation of this young family? Why are they glad about the death?
15. Why are the Cratchit family sad?
16. How do the family feel about his death? What positives are there linked to his death?
17. What is Dickens' message about the way a life should be lived and the legacy you should leave in death?

Stave Five – Scrooge’s Transformation

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh, he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes, he did! The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o’clock.

“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!”

Analysis Questions:

1. Why does Scrooge want to get to work before Bob Cratchit? What is he trying to do?
2. Bob enters and begins to work “as if he were trying to overtake nine o’clock” – how does he think Scrooge will react to him being late?
3. Why does Scrooge offer to raise Bob’s salary?

4. How does this scene compare with Bob and Scrooge's relationship in Stave One?

Challenge: "The narrator's is the most important voice in A Christmas Carol." How far do you agree with this opinion?

Exam Question: Starting with this extract, how important are Scrooge's experiences with the Cratchits in conveying Dickens' own views about society?



"Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town," said Scrooge.

Stave Five – Comprehension Questions

1. What does Scrooge vow to live in?
2. What does he mean?
3. Why is he happy his curtains are not torn down?
4. How has Scrooge's speech changed?
5. How has Scrooge's attitude to money changed?
6. Over has Scrooge's overall demeanour changed?
7. How does Dickens use similes to show the change in Scrooge?
8. What examples are there of Scrooge's new generosity?
9. Where does Scrooge spend Christmas Day?
10. What trick does Scrooge play on Bob?
11. Why does Bob think Scrooge has gone mad?
12. Dickens mentions people who laugh at Scrooge – why do this? What is his message to us?
13. How is the tone of this final stave so different to the others?
14. What is the religious message of A Christmas Carol – how is Scrooge shown to be reborn?

Revision – Non-Fiction Analysis - Ragged Schools

Here is a letter from Charles Dickens on “ragged schooling” that first appeared in The Daily News on Feb 4th 1846. In it Charles Dickens reflects on his visit to Field Lane Ragged School. Ragged schools were set up to provide free education to children in poverty and formed part of the drive towards a fairer system of education in the 1800s.

Dickens begins his letter with a warning that unless something is done about children’s poverty, then ‘the capital city of the world,’ would become, ‘a vast hopeless nursery of ignorance, misery and vice; a breeding place for the hulks and jails’.

This attempt is being made in certain of the most obscure and squalid parts of the Metropolis, where rooms are opened, at night, for the gratuitous instruction of all comers, children or adults, under the title of RAGGED SCHOOLS. The name implies the purpose. They who are too ragged, wretched, filthy, and forlorn, to enter any other place: who could gain admission into no charity school, and who would be driven from any church door; are invited to come in here, and find some people not depraved, willing to teach them something, and show them some sympathy, and stretch a hand out, which is not the iron hand of Law, for their correction.

Before I describe a visit of my own to a Ragged School, and urge the readers of this letter for God’s sake to visit one themselves, and think of it (which is my main object), let me say, that I know the prisons of London well; that I have visited the largest of them more times than I could count; and that the children in them are enough to break the heart and hope of any man. I have never taken a foreigner or a stranger of any kind to one of these establishments but I have seen him so moved at sight of the child offenders, and so affected by the contemplation of their utter renouncement and desolation outside the prison walls, that he has been as little able to disguise his emotion, as if some great grief had suddenly burst upon him.

[We] know perfectly well that these children pass and repass through the prisons all their lives; that they are never taught; that the first distinctions between right and wrong are, from their cradles, perfectly confounded and perverted in their minds; that they come of untaught parents, and will give birth to another untaught generation; that in exact proportion to their natural abilities, is the extent and scope of their depravity; and that there is no escape or chance for them in any ordinary revolution of human affairs. Happily, there are schools in these prisons now. If any readers doubt how ignorant the children are, let them visit those schools and see them at their tasks, and hear how much they knew when they were sent there. If they would know the produce of this seed, let them see a class of men and boys together, at their books (as I have seen them in the House of Correction for this county of Middlesex), and mark how painfully the full grown felons toil at the very shape and form of letters; their ignorance being so confirmed and solid. The contrast of this labour in the men, with the less blunted quickness of the boys; the latent shame and sense of degradation struggling through their dull attempts at infant lessons; and the universal eagerness to learn, impress me, in this passing retrospect, more painfully than I can tell.

(He goes on to describe the ragged school) ...

It consisted at that time of either two or three—I forget which—miserable rooms, upstairs in a miserable house. In the best of these, the pupils in the female school were being taught to read and write; and though there were among the number, many wretched creatures steeped in degradation to the lips, they were tolerably quiet, and listened with apparent earnestness and patience to their instructors. The appearance of this room was sad and melancholy, of course—how could it be otherwise!—but, on the whole, encouraging.

The close, low chamber at the back, in which the boys were crowded, was so foul and stifling as to be, at first, almost insupportable. But its moral aspect was so far worse than its physical, that this was soon forgotten. Huddled together on a bench about the room, and shown out by some flaring candles stuck against the walls, were a crowd of boys, varying from mere infants to young men; sellers of fruit, herbs, lucifer-matches, flints; sleepers under the dry arches of bridges; young thieves and beggars—with nothing natural to youth about them: with nothing frank, ingenuous, or pleasant in their faces; low-browed, vicious, cunning, wicked; abandoned of all help but this; speeding downward to destruction; and UNUTTERABLY IGNORANT.

This, Reader, was one room as full as it could hold; but these were only grains in sample of a Multitude that are perpetually sifting through these schools; in sample of a Multitude who had within them once, and perhaps have now, the elements of men as good as you or I, and maybe infinitely better; in sample of a Multitude among whose doomed and sinful ranks (oh, think of this, and think of them!) the child of any man upon this earth, however lofty his degree, must, as by Destiny and Fate, be found, if, at its birth, it were consigned to such an infancy and nurture, as these fallen creatures had!

This was the Class I saw at the Ragged School. They could not be trusted with books; they could only be instructed orally; they were difficult of reduction to anything like attention, obedience, or decent behaviour; their benighted ignorance in reference to the Deity, or to any social duty (how could they guess at any social duty, being so discarded by all social teachers but the gaoler and the hangman!) was terrible to see. Yet, even here, and among these, something had been done already. The Ragged School was of recent date and very poor; but he had inculcated some association with the name of the Almighty, which was not an oath, and had taught them to look forward in a hymn (they sang it) to another life, which would correct the miseries and woes of this.

First published February 4, 1846, *The Daily News*

Revision – Character Key Quotes

Scrooge:

- “Hard and sharp as flint”
- “Solitary as an oyster”
- “He carried his own low temperature around with him”
- “Nobody stopped him in the street to say ‘My dear Scrooge, how are you?’”
- “Bah! Humbug”
- “Every idiot who goes around with Merry Xmas on his lips... should be buried with a stake of holly through his heart”
- “Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?”
- “If they would rather die, they had better do it and decrease the surplus population”
- “It’s not my business”
- “I will honour Christmas in my heart. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.”
- “I am light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy, I am giddy as a drunken man. “
- “I don’t know anything. I’m quite a baby.”
- “I’ll send it to Bob Cratchit!”
- “Not a farthing less. A great many back payments are included in it.”
- “I have come to dinner. Will you let me in Fred?”
- “Therefore I am about to raise your salary!”
- “Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all and became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew.”

Marley:

- “On the very day of the funeral, (Scrooge) solemnised it with an undoubted bargain”
- “I wear the chain I forged in life...The chain was made up of cash boxes...ledgers...heavy purses”
- “You may be an undigested bit of beef”
- “My spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money changing hole”
- “Mankind was my business!”

The Cratchit Family:

- “The clerk’s fire was so very much smaller that it looked like only one coal”
- “There’s another fellow, my clerk with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I’ll retire to Bedlam”
- “Tiny Tim hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and remember upon Christmas day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.”
- “Mrs Cratchit made the gravy hissing hot, Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour, Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple sauce...”
- “There never was such a goose cooked.”

- “Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes”
- “God bless us every one”
- “Mr Scrooge. I’d give him a piece of my mind. An odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man” (Mrs Cratchit)

The Ghost of Christmas Past:

- “Would you (Scrooge) so soon put out..the light I give?”
- “Scrooge was conscious of a thousand odours floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts and hopes and joys long long forgotten.”
- “Strange to have forgotten it for so many years”
- “A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still – Scrooge sobbed.”
- “To see Scrooge’s extraordinary voice between laughing and crying..and his excited face..would have been a surprise to his business friends in the city”
- “I should like to have given him (the boy carol singer) something: that’s all.”
- “One child: true! your nephew!”
- (With Fezziwig) “Scrooge’s heart and soul were in the scene..he remembered everything, enjoyed everything.”
- “A small matter to make these folks so full of gratitude”
- “I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That’s all.”

The Ghost of Christmas Present:

- “A jolly giant who bore a glowing torch with a cheery voice and a joyful air”
- “To a poor one most. Because it needs it most”
- “I see a vacant seat. The child will die”
- “Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be in the sight of heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man’s child”
- “Scrooge was the ogre of the family and the mention of his name cast a dark shadow”
- “The numbers of people on the way to friendly gatherings”
- “Even here.. two men wished each other Merry Christmas in their can of grog.”
- “Yes/No game.. a disagreeable, savage animal. It’s Uncle Scro-o-o-o-ge!”
- “They are Man’s. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware for I see that written which is Doom.”

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come:

- “It was shrouded in a deep black garment which concealed its head, its face, its form and left nothing visible except one outstretched hand”
- “Ghost of the Future. I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, I am prepared to bear you company with a thankful heart.”
- “I don’t mind going (to the funeral) if a lunch is provided.”
- “Old Scratch has got his own at last hey?”
- “So I am told.. Cold isn’t it?”
- “He frightened everyone away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead, ha, ha!”

- “If there is any person in the town who feels emotion caused by this man’s death, show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you!”
- “It would be bad fortune to find so merciless a creditor. We may sleep tonight with light hearts, Caroline!”
- “I am sure none we shall none of us forget Tiny Tim”
- “A churchyard, overrun by weeds, the growth of vegetation’s death not life –a worthy place!”
- “Scrooge crept towards it, trembling, and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, Ebenezer Scrooge.”

Fred:

- “What reason have you to be morose? You’re rich enough.”
- “I have always thought of Christmas as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time”
- “Don’t be angry Uncle. Merry Christmas!”
- “If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a man more blest in a laugh than Scrooge’s nephew, all I can say is I should like to know him too.”
- “Scrooge’s offences carry their own punishment. Who suffers? Himself!”

Belle:

- “Another idol has displaced me.. a golden one”
- “I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off, until the master passion, Gain engrosses you”
- “May you be happy in the life you have chosen”
- “No more! Show me no more!”
- “Now a comely matron sitting opposite her daughter”

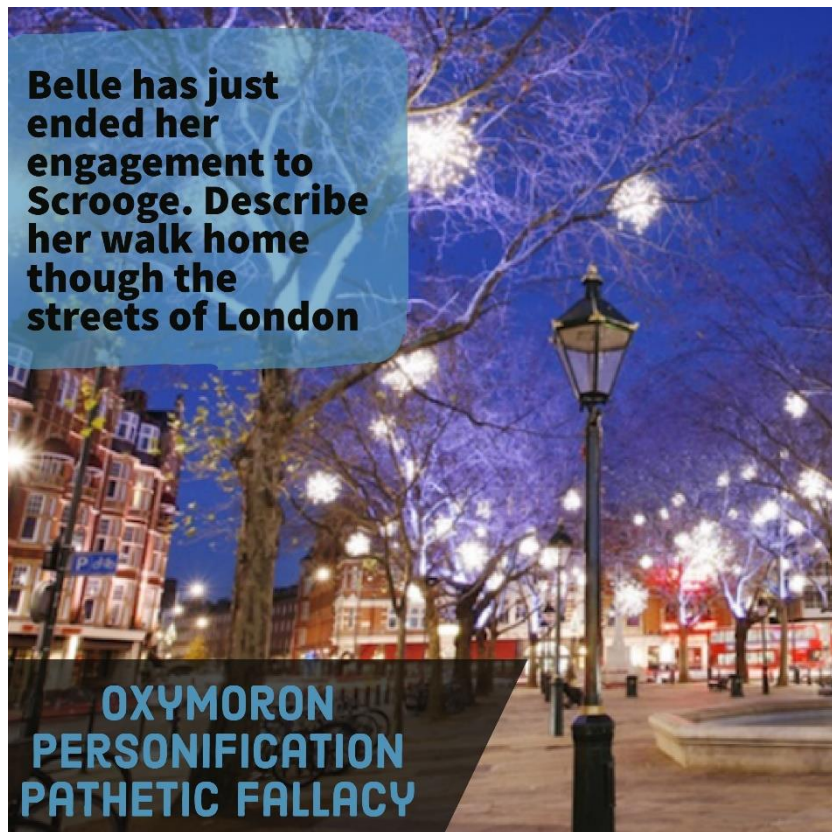
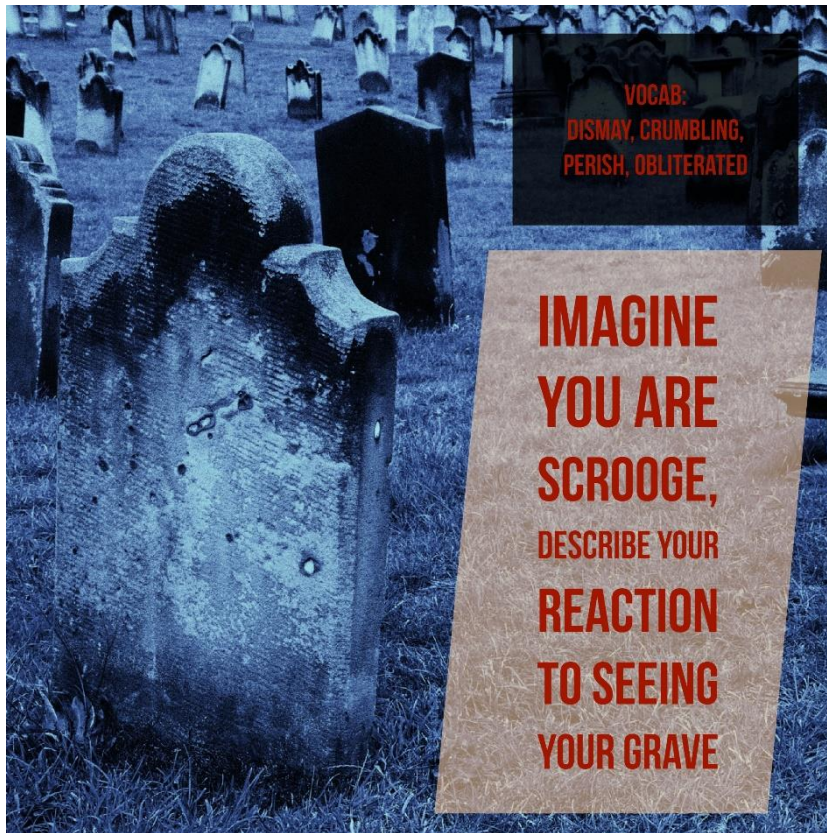
<u>Isolation</u>	<u>Compassion and Forgiveness</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Family</u>
<u>Guilt and Blame</u>	<u>Poverty</u>	<u>Memory</u>	<u>Greed and Money</u>	<u>Any other themes?</u>

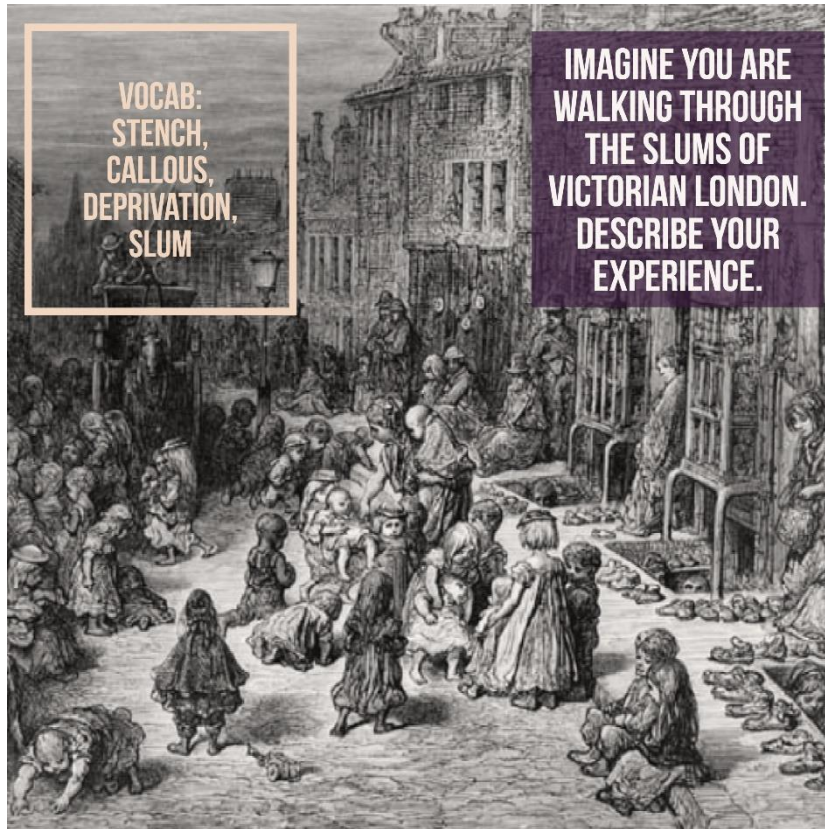
Revision – Key Themes

Colour code the quotations according to the **themes** of the novella. Some quotes may relate to **more than one** theme.

“I wear the chain I forged in life”	“I am as light as a feather”	“What Idol has displaced you?” “A golden one”	“Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign”	“solitary as an oyster”
“I will honour Christmas in my heart”	“What right have you to be merry? You’re poor enough”	“clerk’s fire was so much smaller that it looked like one coal”	“brave in ribbons”	“This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want”
“My time grows short”	“His wealth is of no use to him. He don’t do any good with it”	“It was a small pudding for a large family”	“tight-fisted hand at the grindstone.”	“Mankind was my business”
“Hard and sharp as flint”	“No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle”	“To any kindly given. To a poor one most”	“Marley was dead; to begin with”	“the cold within him froze his old features”
“A solitary child, neglected by his friends”	“Are there no prisons? Are there no work houses”	“The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached”	“Decrease the surplus population”	“The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it had cost a fortune”

Revision – Creative Writing





VOCAB:
STENCH,
CALLOUS,
DEPRIVATION,
SLUM

**IMAGINE YOU ARE
WALKING THROUGH
THE SLUMS OF
VICTORIAN LONDON.
DESCRIBE YOUR
EXPERIENCE.**

**GOLDEN
ENGROSSES
CONTRACT
GRIEVE**

**ANAPHORA
THREE ADJECTIVE
SENTENCE
IF IF SENTENCE
SEMANTIC FIELD OF
WEALTH OR POVERTY**

Write
a final
farewell
letter
to Scrooge
from
Belle

**250
words
25
minutes**



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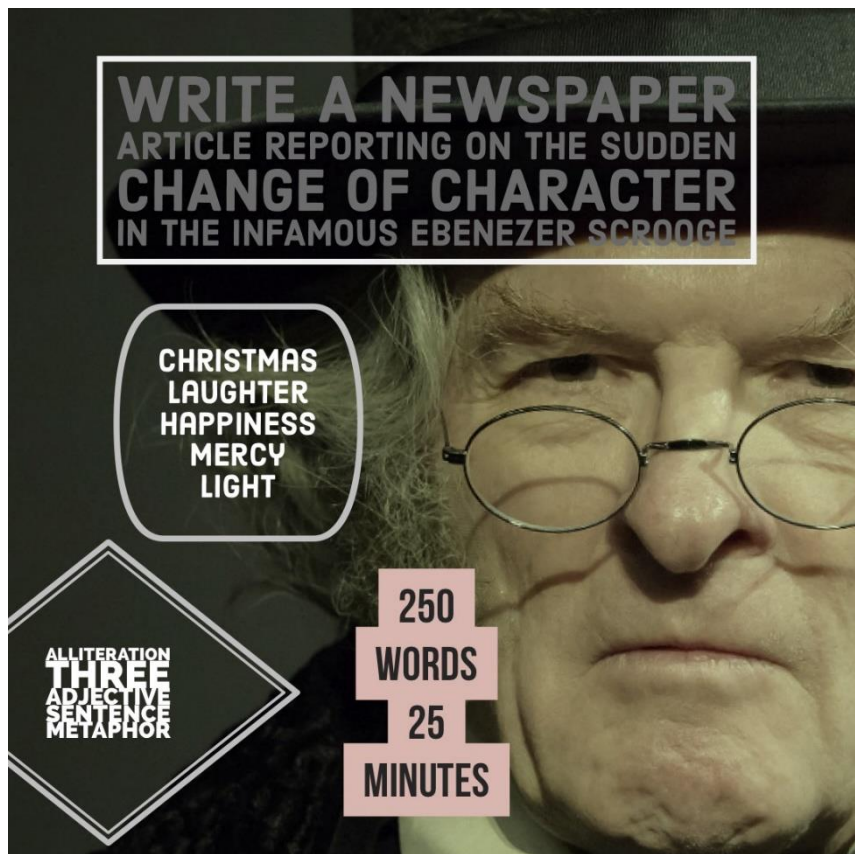
**METAPHOR
ANECDOTE
ANAPHORA
ALLUSION**

”

GENEROSITY
LESSON
COST
TIME

250 WORDS
25 MINUTES

**WRITE A SPEECH FOR TINY
TIM TO DELIVER IN CHURCH
ON CHRISTMAS DAY ABOUT
THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS**



**WRITE A NEWSPAPER
ARTICLE REPORTING ON THE SUDDEN
CHANGE OF CHARACTER
IN THE INFAMOUS EBENEZER SCROOGE**

CHRISTMAS
LAUGHTER
HAPPINESS
MERCY
LIGHT

ALLITERATION
THREE
ADJECTIVE
SENTENCE
METAPHOR

250
WORDS
25
MINUTES