



Big ideas!

Power
Conflict
Identity
Perspectives

Themes

Logic and Time

Scrooge's sense of logic is continually disrupted, helping to dismantle his cold and rational view of society. He initially dismisses the **supernatural** appearances, before then submitting to them. The ghosts are late to visit him, and then distort time as they seem to visit him all in one night – not over three nights as planned. This discarding of logic reflects Dickens' criticism of the heartless economical logic that was used to create the New Poor Law.

Compassion, Forgiveness and Reclamation

Dickens uses different characters to demonstrate compassion and forgiveness (Fred and Bob who feel pity for him) and how these people lead happy lives. In contrast, he shows the selfish nature of mankind in the dark and sinister Stave Four. Fred shows compassion and forgiveness to Scrooge in Stave Five by welcoming him for Christmas.

Poverty and Greed

Dickens wanted to highlight the plight of the poor in Victorian England, and how they are exploited by the greed of the wealthy. He used the harshness of winter to further emphasise this. He also uses Scrooge as a vehicle to show that financial wealth does mean contentment. Scrooge is impoverished in other ways (family, friends, happiness).

Isolation versus Family

We quickly learn that Scrooge ('solitary as an oyster') and Marley are isolated, and unhappy, characters. Scrooge was Marley's 'sole friend and sole mourner'. The warmth and emotional richness of families (Bob Cratchit's, Fred's, his ex-fiancée's) are used as a contrast to Scrooge's self-determined isolation. The disruption to Scrooge's childhood family life may have also contributed to his future behaviour. The message may be that family is the cornerstone of a happy society.

Transformation

The **novella** contains many examples of transformation: the transformation of young Scrooge into an embittered old man; his transformation to a benevolent man; the transformation of Marley from selfish human to eternally-suffering ghost; supernatural transformations; the transformation of the future – to save Scrooge and Tiny Tim. Dickens message may have been that it is never too late to change.

Context (AO3):

Dickens' message on poverty

Dickens had a comfortable childhood until the age of 12 when his father was sent to a debtors' prison and young Charles had to work in a factory. The harsh conditions made a lasting impression: through his works of social criticism, he sought to draw attention to the plight of the poor.

The New Poor Law, 1834

In order to deter poor people from claiming financial help, the government made claimants live in workhouses: essentially, prisons for the poor. Dickens hated this concept. He spent 1843 touring factories and mines in England and wished to highlight the situation facing poor people. *A Christmas Carol* was published soon after – in December 1843.

The ingredients for a hit novella

Dickens previous novel had not sold well and so he needed a hit. He deliberately combined elements that he knew would appeal to Victorian readers: a parable; the supernatural; a happy conclusion; and Christmas.

Dickens' construction of secular Christmas values

Until the mid-1800s, Christmas was solely a religious festival. Dickens helped to popularise many of the cultural elements that we now associate with Christmas. This imagery (the food, the decorations, the music) is used throughout the novella. This has contributed to a more secular (non-religious) Christmas, based on good-will, benevolence and forgiveness.

Dickens' Life

1. Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812 in Hampshire into a middle class family.
2. His dad was imprisoned for debt leading to poverty for the family.
3. Charles was put to work at Warren's Blacking Factory.
4. Dickens found employment as an office boy at an attorneys.
5. A Christmas Carol was written in 1843

Industrial Revolution

1. From 1780 factory owners in Britain began to use coal-fired steam engines to power the machines in big factories, bringing great fortune.
2. Transition from traditional farming methods to machinery led to Industrial revolution.
3. People flocked from the countryside to the cities. London's population between 1800 and 1900 from 1 million to 6 million people. This led to over-crowding and hunger, disease and crime. There were no proper drainage / sewage systems. Many families had to share one tap / toilet. Children suffered the most and were exploited by factory owners who forced them to work long hours in dangerous conditions.

Charity

1. Industrial revolution led to a gap between the rich and poor with many struggling to survive relying on the generosity of those better off than themselves.
2. Some philanthropists were keen to enhance the lives of the workers. Cadburys tried to provide quality homes and improve lifestyles of workers at their factory in Bournville.

Religion

1. Christianity held a strong influence in Victorian Britain, especially amongst the middle / upper classes.
2. Good Christians believed in a strict moral code – attending church regularly, avoiding alcohol and exercise sexual restraint.
3. Dickens' view on Christianity was different. He believed that to be a good Christian people should seek out opportunities to do good deeds for other people.

Assessment Objectives

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts.

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.

AO4 - SPaG

FLASH CODES):

CF

SR

WT / Z / KW

ER

CON

WM

FLASH CODES):

In A Christmas Carol, Dickens...

This is evident as...

The writer's use of ... suggests...

In this way, Dickens makes the reader

realise...

This links to context because...

Dickens' message may have been...

Stave	Key Quotation	Info / Analysis
Stave One Marley's Ghost	Hard and sharp as flint	Description of Scrooge at start
	solitary as an oyster	Simile to convey his lone existence
	"I don't make myself merry at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry."	Shows his unsympathetic attitude to the poor ('idle') people.
	"It's enough for a man to mind his own business, and not to interfere with other people's."	He is obsessed with business and money.
	"I wear the chain I forged in life" <i>Jacob Marley</i>	A warning for Scrooge: Marley created his own eternal punishment through his greed.
Stave Two Ghost of Christmas Past	"There is no light part of my penance" <i>Jacob Marley</i>	Penance = punishment
	From the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light	Refers to Ghost of Christmas Past. The light represents truth and enlightenment
	"Your reclamation, then. Take heed!" <i>Ghost of Xmas Past</i>	Reclamation = recovery / change Take heed = listen and learn
	"Your lip is trembling," said the Ghost. "And what is that upon your cheek?"	Scrooge visits his old schoolhouse and first shows emotion (self-pity).
	A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still	Description of Scrooge as a child. How has his childhood affected him?
	"He has the power to render us happy or unhappy [...] The happiness he gives is quite as much as if it cost a fortune."	Scrooge speaking of Fezziwig's generosity. He realises how an employer can affect his employees.
	"I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master passion, Gain, engrosses you."	Scrooge's ex-fiancée (Belle) when she leaves him, because he is obsessed with 'Gain'.
Stave Three Ghost of Christmas Present	"Remove me!" Scrooge exclaimed. "I cannot bear it!"	Scrooge, just before extinguishing the ghost's light (he can't bear the truth).
	Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit	Scrooge is more subdued when he meets the second ghost (Ghost of Xmas Present).
	"Oh no, kind Spirit! Say he will be spared"	Scrooge shows concern and sympathy for Tiny Tim.
	"To hear the insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life amongst his hungry brother in the dust!"	The Ghost reminds Scrooge of his earlier words about decreasing the population of the poor. He compares Scrooge to an insect.
	"I am sorry for him [...] Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always."	Fred discusses his Uncle Scrooge with the family.
Stave Four Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come	Uncle Scrooge had imperceptibly become so gay and light of heart	Scrooge is delighted that his family even speak of him.
	"This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both."	The ghost warns Scrooge with personification / symbols of mankind's faults.
	plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man	Description of the man on the deathbed.
	Avarice, hard dealing, griping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly!	Scrooge's ironic statement about the dead man, before he realises that he is looking at himself.
Stave Five	"Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they the shadows of the things that May be only?"	Scrooge asks the ghost if it too late for him to transform and alter his future.
	"Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends"	Scrooge realises that his past behaviour will determine his future
	"I don't know how long I have been among the Spirits. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby."	Scrooge discards logic and is now carefree. He is a transformed character .
	Scrooge regarded everyone with a delighted smile.	He spreads good-will instead of fear and hatred.

A Christmas Carol - Knowledge Organiser

Scrooge is in his counting-house on Christmas Eve	The chain-wearing ghost of Jacob Marley visits to warn Scrooge that he will be visited by three spirits.	The Ghost of Christmas Past takes him to his old schoolhouse.	We see Scrooge's fiancée, Belle, leaving him	3	They visit nephew Fred's house	4	The <u>tone</u> of the novella <u>shifts</u> with the arrival of the deathly Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, who shows Scrooge a dark future where he has died a lonely man.	5	Scrooge wakes on Christmas morning and is enlightened and transformed.
1 Scrooge is rude to Fred, refuses the charity collectors and reluctantly allows his clerk to take Christmas Day off.	2 They visit young Scrooge at a Christmas party thrown by Mr Fezziwig.	Scrooge cannot bear anymore and tries to extinguish the ghost's light	The Ghost of Christmas Present takes him to Bob Cratchit's home to show how the poor can still be happy.	Scrooge spots two impoverished children under the ghost's cloak.	Scrooge sees his name on a grave and begs for salvation. The ghost relents and saves him.	Scrooge is forgiven: he goes for dinner at Fred's house. He is the saviour of himself and also of Tiny Tim (who now lives).			

Form and Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The novella is narrated in the third person by an omniscient narrator, who also seems very biased against Scrooge. It is a parable: a moral tale with a strong message. It is arranged in five staves (not chapters) as a metaphor for an actual Christmas carol. It contains much musical imagery throughout (church bells, clock chimes, carol singers, Fezziwig's party). Dickens uses a circular structure. Scrooge's interactions in Stave Five mirror those in Stave One, however he now treats everyone much differently (Fred, Bob Cratchit, the portly gentlemen, the young boy, Christmas itself). The weather also changes to reflect his transformation.
Key Characters
 Scrooge The protagonist who initially dismisses the goodwill and generosity associated with Christmas. After being forced to transform, he becomes a symbol of Christmas spirit in Stave Five. He is cheerful and benevolent. He is a dynamic character (a character who changes).
 Bob Cratchit and family Bob is Scrooge's downtrodden but loyal employee. His family are a symbol of Victorian poverty, cheerfulness in adversity, teamwork and Christmas Spirit. Bob shows pity for Scrooge, and provides a contrast to Scrooge's isolation and meanness.
 Nephew Fred The character of Fred serves as another contrast to Scrooge. He epitomises the Christmas spirit of goodwill and refuses to be discouraged by his uncle's misery. People (such as the Cratchits) speak highly of him and his generosity, in contrast to how they speak of Scrooge. Fred shows that Scrooge has chosen isolation.
 The Ghosts The ghosts are the antagonists to Scrooge. They force him to view his selfish and greedy ways, and to admit how his behaviour will lead to a lonely death ("Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends"): a metaphor for how the greed of the wealthy middle class will lead to a disastrous future for society.

Plot - a detailed overview

- Stave One**
1. Introduced to Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas Eve. He is a lonely miser obsessed with money. He won't pay to heat the office properly – meaning Bob Cratchit is very cold.
 2. We learn Jacob Marley, Scrooge's business partner, died exactly 7 years earlier.
 3. Scrooge is irritated that Christmas Day seems to be interrupting his business.
 4. Scrooge is visited by his nephew Fred, who invites his uncle to Christmas dinner. Scrooge refuses.
 5. Scrooge is visited by two charity workers, asking for donations. Scrooge refuses and exclaims he wants to be left alone.
 6. Scrooge allows Bob to have Christmas Day off.
 7. Scrooge, when he is home, is visited by the Ghost of Jacob Marley – warning him he will be visited by three more ghosts to help him change his ways.
- Stave Two**
1. Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Past who takes him to witness his past.
 2. Scrooge is taken first to his schoolboy years and he is reminded how his friends would go home from Christmas while he was left at school.
 3. We see him with his sister, who one year took him home for the holidays.
 4. Next we are shown Scrooge as a young apprentice, working for Fezziwig. Dickens describes the Christmas ball Fezziwig organised for his employees.
 5. Finally, Scrooge is taken to see his ex-fiancée, Belle. We see the scene when they break up, as money has taken over Scrooge's life.
 6. Scrooge cannot bear to see any more and struggles with the spirit.
- Stave Three**
1. Scrooge is then visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present.
 2. The spirit shows Scrooge how the Cratchit family celebrate Christmas. Scrooge asked if Tiny Tim will live. The spirit explains unless there are changes, he will die. The spirit reminds Scrooge of his earlier words: 'If he is to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population'
 3. Scrooge is then taken to see how others celebrate Christmas: miners, lighthouse workers, sailors on a ship.
 4. He is then taken to Fred's house at Christmas, where they are playing games.
 5. The spirit then begins to age, and see under the spirit's robes two children: Want and Ignorance.
 6. The Ghost of Christmas Future then appears.
- Stave Four**
1. The Ghost of Christmas Future is described.
 2. The spirit takes Scrooge to see a group of businessmen discussing someone who has died.
 3. Scrooge is then taken to see Old Joe, where he is in the process of buying property of the dead man – which have been stolen.
 4. Scrooge then returns to Bob Cratchit's house, where it is revealed Tiny Tim has died.
 5. Scrooge is then taken to the graveyard and is shown a grave stone and realises this is for him.
 6. Scrooge falls to his knees and begs that he will change his ways.
- Stave Five**
1. Scrooge wakes up in his own bed.
 2. Scrooge wonders how much time has passed and calls to a boy. He then sends the boy to the poulterer for the prize turkey to give to Bob Cratchit,
 3. Scrooge meets one of the charity collectors from earlier and whispers to him that he will give a large donation.
 4. Scrooge then goes to Fred's house and is welcomed in. He enjoys the dinner and party.
 5. On Boxing Day, Scrooge arrives early to work, and plays a trick on Bob. Scrooge then tells him he is going to raise his salary and promises to help Bob's struggling family.
 6. Scrooge is described to have completely changed and becomes a 'second father' to Tiny Tim – 'who did not die.'

VOCABULARY - describing the characters:

- 1. Ebenezer Scrooge:** Miserly, mean, bitter, materialistic, unsympathetic, indifferent, cold, selfish, isolated, cynical, charitable, value driven, generous, happy, sociable, transformed.
- 2. Marley's Ghost:** Materialistic, self-centred, terrifying, haunting, exhausted, direct, reformed, regretful, hopeful, selfless, wise
- 3. Bob Cratchit:** Uncomplaining, tolerant, courteous, deferential, patient, civil, eager, pleasurable, good-humoured, playful, caring, tender, cheerful, loving, forgiving.
- 4. Fred:** Warm-hearted, empathetic, cheerful, optimistic, even-tempered, insightful, determined, generous, forgiving, jovial, enthusiastic, caring
- 5. Ghost of Christmas Past:** Contradictory, strong, gentle, quiet, forceful, questioning, mysterious
- 6. Ghost of Christmas Present:** Compassionate, abundant, generous, cheerful, jolly, friendly, severe, sympathetic
- 7. Ghost of Christmas Future** : Mysterious, silent, ominous, intimidating, frightening, resolute
- 8. Tiny Tim:** Frail, ill, good, religious