

# **GCSE English Literature**

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens  
Knowledge organisers



## Stave summaries

<b>Stave 1</b> <i>Marley's Ghost</i>	<b>Stave 2</b> <i>The First of the Three Spirits</i>
<p>On a frigid, foggy Christmas Eve in London, a shrewd, mean-spirited cheapskate named <b>Ebenezer Scrooge</b> works meticulously in his counting-house. <b>Jacob Marley, Scrooge's business partner, has died seven years previous.</b> Inside the office, Scrooge watches over his <b>clerk, a poor diminutive man named Bob Cratchit.</b> Despite the harsh weather Scrooge <b>refuses to pay for another lump of coal to warm the office.</b></p> <p>Suddenly, a ruddy-faced young man bursts into the office offering holiday greetings and an exclamatory, "Merry Christmas!" <b>The young man is Scrooge's jovial nephew Fred</b> who has stopped by to invite Scrooge to Christmas dinner. The grumpy Scrooge responds with a "Bah! Humbug!" <b>refusing to share in Fred's Christmas cheer.</b> After Fred departs, <b>a pair of portly gentlemen enters the office to ask Scrooge for a charitable donation to help the poor.</b> Scrooge angrily replies that prisons and workhouses are the only charities he is willing to support and the <b>gentlemen leave empty-handed.</b></p> <p><b>Scrooge follows the same old routine,</b> taking dinner in his usual tavern and returning home through the dismal, fog-blanketed London streets. Just before entering his house, the doorknocker on his front door, the same door he has passed through twice a day for his many years, catches his attention. <b>A ghostly image in the curves of the knocker gives the old man a momentary shock: It is the peering face of Jacob Marley.</b> When Scrooge takes a second re-focused look, he sees nothing but a doorknocker. With a disgusted "Pooh-pooh," Scrooge opens the door and trudges into his bleak quarters. He makes little effort to brighten his home: "darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it." As he plods up the wide staircase, Scrooge, in utter disbelief, sees a locomotive hearse climbing the stairs beside him.</p> <p>After rushing to his room, Scrooge locks the door behind him and puts on his dressing gown. As he eats his gruel before the fire, <b>the carvings on his mantelpiece suddenly transform into images of Jacob Marley's face.</b> Scrooge, determined to dismiss the strange visions, blurts out "Humbug!" All <b>the bells in the room fly up from the tables and begin to ring sharply.</b> Scrooge hears footsteps thumping up the stairs. <b>A ghostly figure floats through the closed door--Jacob Marley, transparent and bound in chains.</b></p> <p>Scrooge shouts in disbelief, <b>refusing to admit that he sees Marley's ghost--</b>a strange case of food poisoning, he claims. The ghost begins to murmur: <b>He has spent seven years wandering the Earth in his heavy chains as punishment for his sins.</b> Scrooge looks closely at the chains and realizes that the links are forged of cashboxes, padlocks, ledgers, and steel purses. The ghost tells Scrooge that <b>he has come from beyond the grave to save him from this very fate.</b> He says that <b>Scrooge will be visited by three spirits over the next three nights--</b>the first two appearing at one o'clock in the morning and the final spirit arriving at the last stroke of midnight. He rises and backs toward the window, which opens almost magically, leaving a trembling Scrooge white with fear. The ghost gestures to Scrooge to look out the window, and Scrooge complies. He <b>sees a throng of spirits, each bound in chains. They wail about their failure to lead honorable, caring lives and their inability to reach out to others in need</b> as they and Marley disappear into the mist. Scrooge stumbles to his bed and falls instantly asleep.</p>	<p>Scrooge awakes at midnight, which leaves him baffled--it was well after two a.m. when he went to bed. Initially, he thinks he has slept through an entire day or that it's actually noon and the sun has merely gone under some sort of cover. He suddenly remembers the words of Marley's ghost. The first of the three spirits will arrive at one o'clock. Frightened, Scrooge decides to wait for his supernatural visitor.</p> <p><b>At one o'clock, the curtains of Scrooge's bed are blown aside by a strange, childlike figure emanating an aura of wisdom and a richness of experience.</b> The spirit uses a cap to cover <b>the light that glows from its head.</b> The specter softly informs Scrooge that he is the Ghost of Christmas Past and orders the mesmerized man to rise and walk with him. The spirit touches Scrooge's heart, granting him the ability to fly. The pair exits through the window.</p> <p>The ghost <b>transports Scrooge to the countryside where he was raised.</b> He sees <b>his old school, his childhood mates, and familiar landmarks of his youth.</b> Touched by these memories, <b>Scrooge begins to sob.</b> The ghost takes the weeping man into the school <b>where a solitary boy--a young Ebenezer Scrooge--passes the Christmas holiday all alone.</b> The ghost takes Scrooge on a depressing tour of more Christmases of the past--the boy in the schoolhouse grows older. <b>At last, a little girl, Scrooge's sister Fan, runs into the room, and announces that she has come to take Ebenezer home.</b> Their father is much kinder, she says. He has given his consent to Ebenezer's return. The young Scrooge, delighted to see his sister, embraces her joyfully. The aged Scrooge regretfully tells the ghost that Fan died many years ago and is the mother of his nephew Fred.</p> <p>The ghost escorts Scrooge to more Christmases of the past including a <b>merry party thrown by Fezziwig,</b> the merchant with whom Scrooge apprenticed as a young man. Scrooge later sees a slightly older yet still boyish version of himself in conversation with a lovely young woman named <b>Belle. She is breaking off their engagement crying that greed has corrupted the love that used to impassion Scrooge's heart.</b> The spirit takes Scrooge to a more recent Christmas scene <b>where a middle-aged Belle reminisces with her husband about her former fiancé,</b> Scrooge. The husband says that Scrooge is now "quite alone in the world." The older Scrooge can no longer bear the gripping visions. He begs the Ghost of Christmas Past to take him back, back to his home. <b>Tormented and full of despair, Scrooge seizes the ghost's hat and pulls it firmly over top of the mystical child's head, dimming the light.</b> As the inextinguishable, luminous rays flood downward onto the ground, Scrooge finds himself zipped back in his bedroom, where he stumbles to bed yet again and falls asleep immediately.</p>

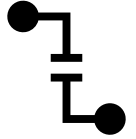
## Stave summaries

<b>Stave 3</b> <i>The Second of the Three Spirits</i>	<b>Stave 4</b> <i>The Last of the Three Spirits</i>	<b>Stave 5</b> <i>The End of It</i>
<p>The church clock strikes one, startling Scrooge, who awakes in mid-snore. Glad to be awake, he hopes to confront the second spirit just as it arrives. The echoes of the church bell fade, however, and no ghost appears. Somewhat disappointed, Scrooge waits for 15 minutes after which a bright light begins to stream down upon him. Curious and a bit befuddled, Scrooge pads into the other room where he finds the second spirit waiting for him.</p> <p>The figure, <b>a majestic giant clad in green robes, sits atop a throne made of a gourmet feast</b>. In a booming voice, the spirit announces himself as the Ghost of Christmas Present. He tells Scrooge that he has more than 1800 brothers and his lifespan is a mere single day. The spirit orders Scrooge to touch his robe. Upon doing so, the feast and the room vanish instantly and Scrooge <b>finds himself alongside the spirit in the midst of the bustling city on Christmas morning. Blissful passersby take pleasure in the wondrous sights and smells abounding through the shop doors</b>. People merrily shovel snow, tote bags of presents, and greet one another with a cheery "Merry Christmas!"</p> <p><b>The spirit then takes Scrooge to the meager home of Bob Cratchit</b>, where Mrs. Cratchit and her children prepare a Christmas goose and savor the few Christmas treats they can afford. The oldest daughter, Martha, returns from her job at a milliner's. The oldest son, Peter, wears a stiff-collared shirt, a hand-me-down from his father. Bob comes in carrying the crippled young tyke, Tiny Tim, on his shoulders. <b>The family is more than content despite its skimpy Christmas feast</b>. Scrooge begs to know whether Tiny Tim will survive. The spirit replies that given the current conditions in the Cratchit house, <b>there will inevitably be an empty chair at next year's Christmas dinner</b>.</p> <p>The spirit takes Scrooge to a number of other Christmas gatherings, including <b>the festivities of an isolated community of miners and a party aboard a ship</b>. He also takes Scrooge to <b>Fred's Christmas party</b>, where Scrooge looses himself in the numerous party games and has a wildly entertaining time, though none of the party guests can actually see him. As the night unfolds, the ghost grows older. At last, Scrooge and the ghost come to a vast and desolate expanse. <b>Here, the ghost shows Scrooge a pair of starving children who travel with him beneath his robes--their names are Ignorance and Want</b>. Scrooge inquires if nothing can be done to help them. Mockingly, the ghost quotes Scrooge's earlier retort, "Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?"</p> <p>The spirit disappears as the clock strikes midnight and Scrooge eyes a hooded phantom coming toward him.</p>	<p>The phantom, a menacing figure clad in a black hooded robe, approaches Scrooge. <b>Scrooge involuntarily kneels before him and asks if he is the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come</b>. The phantom does not answer, and Scrooge squirms in terror. Still reeling from the revelatory experiences with the last two spirits, <b>Scrooge pleads with the ghost to share his lesson, hopeful that he may avoid the fate of his deceased partner</b>.</p> <p>The ghost takes Scrooge to a series of strange places: <b>the London Stock Exchange, where a group of businessmen discuss the death of a rich man; a dingy pawn shop in a London slum, where a group of vagabonds and shady characters sell some personal effects stolen from a dead man; the dinner table of a poor family, where a husband and wife express relief at the death of an unforgiving man to whom they owed money; and the Cratchit household</b>, where the family struggles to cope with the death of Tiny Tim. <b>Scrooge begs to know the identity of the dead man</b>, exasperated in his attempts to understand the lesson of the silent ghost. Suddenly, he finds himself <b>in a churchyard</b> where the spirit points him toward a freshly dug grave. Scrooge approaches the <b>grave</b> and reads the inscription on the headstone: <b>EBENEZER SCROOGE</b>.</p> <p>Appalled, Scrooge clutches at the spirit and <b>begs him to undo the events of his nightmarish vision. He promises to honor Christmas from deep within his heart</b> and to live by the moralizing lessons of Past, Present, and Future. The spirit's hand begins to tremble, and, as Scrooge continues to cry out for mercy, the phantom's robe shrinks and collapses. Scrooge, again, finds himself returned to the relative safety of his own bed.</p>	<p>Scrooge, <b>grateful for a second chance at his life</b>, sings the praises of the spirits and of Jacob Marley. Upon realizing he has been returned to Christmas morning, Scrooge begins shouting "Merry Christmas!" at the top of his lungs. <b>Genuinely over joyed and bubbling with excitement</b>, Scrooge barely takes time to dress and dances while he shaves. In a blur, Scrooge runs into the street and offers to <b>pay the first boy he meets a huge sum to deliver a great Christmas turkey to Bob Cratchit's</b>. He meets one of the portly gentlemen who earlier sought charity for the poor and apologizes for his previous rudeness, promising to donate huge sums of money to the poor. He attends Fred's Christmas party and radiates such heartfelt bliss that the other guests can hardly manage to swallow their shock at his surprising behavior.</p> <p>The following morning, Scrooge arrives at the office early and assumes a very stern expression when Bob Cratchit enters eighteen and a half minutes late. Scrooge, feigning disgust, begins to scold Bob, before suddenly announcing his plans to give Cratchit a large raise and assist his troubled family. Bob is stunned, but Scrooge promises to stay true to his word.</p> <p><b>As time passes, Scrooge is as good as his word: He helps the Cratchits and becomes a second father to Tiny Tim</b> who does not die as predicted in the ghost's ominous vision. Many people in London are puzzled by Scrooge's behavior, but Scrooge merely laughs off their suspicions and doubts. Scrooge brings a little of the Christmas spirit into every day, respecting the lessons of Christmas more than any man alive. <b>The narrator concludes the story by saying that Scrooge's words and thoughts should be shared by all of us ... "and so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, Every one!"</b></p>

# Key Context - Victorian society's treatment of the poor

## Social divide

- Society was deeply divided by class during the 1800s.
- The upper and middle classes lived happily and in comfort, and could afford for their children to be educated
- The poor lived in slums – unhygienic, cramped housing where disease spread easily. They could not afford for their children to go to school, and sent their children out to work instead



## Changing cities

- During the Industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century, many people moved to cities from the countryside to work in factories
- Cities grew rapidly, meaning that they became overcrowded, unhygienic and full of slums



## Growing poverty

- As technology improved, many people's jobs were replaced by machinery, resulting in unemployment



## Child labour

- The cheapest way of hiring workers was to hire children. Children as young as 5 could work, meaning that many poor people were exploited.
- Many children were unable to go to school or have a happy childhood as they had to work



## Hungry forties

- A Christmas Carol was written in 1843, a time when there was mass hunger and starvation amongst the poor
- This time was known as the hungry forties



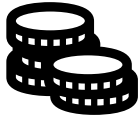
## 1834 poor law

- Ten years before the novel was written, the poor law was introduced
- Poor people were told that they had to go to workhouses if they were poor
- Workhouses were harsh places that treated the poor like criminals



## Charities

- Some thought that a way to fix poverty was by donating to charity
- However, many people thought that charity made poverty worse, as it was rewarding people for 'bad behaviour'



## Society's attitude to the poor

- Many people thought that poverty was a choice and was down to laziness
- Many rich people were ignorant to the struggles of the poor and did not want to help them
- Thomas Malthus, a famous philosopher, influenced many people's opinion of the poor. He believed that the poor were "surplus population" and should be allowed to die out from disease and starvation naturally, rather than being helped.



## Key Context – Dickens' views on Christmas

### Victorian Christmas

- Before the Victorian era, Christmas was not celebrated the way it is now. It was seen mostly as a religious ceremony where the birth of Christ was remembered.
- Christmas traditions changed in the Victorian era as society became more commercialised. Christmas cards and gifts were exchanged for the first time.
- Christmas became much less about religion, and became more of a family celebration. It became rooted more in folklore, with Christmas trees and feasting forming large parts of the celebrations. This came from more pagan ways of celebrating winter.



### Dickens' Christmas

- Dickens loved Christmas, and with his large family spent Christmas time celebrating, eating and putting on plays.
- Dickens always had happy memories of spending time with his family, believing family to be very important



### Dickens' views on Christmas

- Dickens believed that Christmas should be a time when people put aside their differences and help and love one another
- He called this the "Carol Philosophy"



### Dickens' religious views

- Dickens was a strong Christian, but confessed that he did not like the church.
- This was because he felt that many Christians had lost the true meaning and message of Christianity, which is most often seen at Christmas time.
- He felt that Christians, particularly the rich, went to church to look good rather than do good
- Dickens felt strongly that the church needed to change to become more accepting, charitable and kind to all, especially the poor



# Key Context – Dickens' life and views

## About Charles Dickens

- Dickens is one of the most famous writers in English Literature
- Dickens was alive during the Victorian era
- He has written famous books such as *Oliver Twist*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*



## Dickens' early life

- As a child, Dickens' father often got the family into debt by making bad business decisions
- When Dickens was 9, his father caused the family to go to debtor's prison at Marshalsea. During this time, if a person was in debt, the whole family had to go to prison
- Dickens was old enough to go out to work, rather than go to prison. Aged 9, he went to work in a blacking factory, putting black paint onto items. The conditions were harsh and brutal.
- This experience of child labour stayed with him for his whole life. He learnt from an early age that poverty is not a person's fault, and that punishing the poor does not help them, but instead makes things worse in society. As a result of this, he was strongly against the 1834 poor law that made poor people go into workhouses.



## Dickens the philanthropist

- When he became an adult, Dickens became a very successful writer who earned a lot of money
- Throughout his career, he wrote books and articles, explaining what life was like for the poor and campaigning for their better treatment
- He set up a charity called "The Home" that took in women who were at risk of prostitution, and gave them the chance of a better life by educating them



## Dickens and education

- Dickens believed that the most powerful way to change society was through education.
- He wrote his books in order to educate society about the poor



## Dickens' characters

- Many of Dickens' books contain poor characters.
- In these books, the poor people are often portrayed as very good, sympathetic and nice people.
- He did this to convince society that the poor were good, deserving people, and not idle criminals



## Dickens' view on the rich

- Despite being rich himself, Dickens hated the attitude of the rich who did not help the poor
- He hated the selfishness and ignorance of the upper class who did nothing to help society

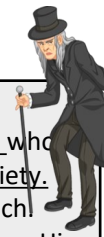


## Top 25 quotes list

1. Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! – **Stave 1**
2. Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire – **Stave 1**
3. Secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. – **Stave 1**
4. Very small fire ... one coal – **Stave 1**
5. I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round ... 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 – Fred, **Stave 1**
6. I can't afford to make idle people merry. - Scrooge, **Stave 1**
7. "If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.. - **Scrooge, Stave 1**
8. "Are there no prisons?" asked Scrooge. "And the Union workhouses?" demanded Scrooge. "Are they still in operation?" – **Scrooge, Stave 1**
9. Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. – **Marley, Stave 1**
10. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still." Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed. - **Stave 2**
11. "What Idol has displaced you?" he rejoined. "A golden one." – **Belle, Stave 2**
12. The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune." – **Scrooge, Stave 2**
13. 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. – **Stave 2**
14. Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons – **Stave 3**
15. Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.- **Stave 3**
16. Oh God! to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust! – **Ghost of Christmas Present, Stave 3**
17. They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish – **Stave 3**
18. "They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. **Ghost of Christmas Present, Stave 3**
19. 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. – **GOCP, Stave 3**
20. Ghost of the Future!" he exclaimed, "I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. – **Scrooge, Stave 4**
21. " 'And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them.' - **Stave 4**
22. and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man. - **Stave 4**
23. "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. – **Scrooge, Stave 5**
24. I'm quite a baby – **Scrooge, Stave 5**
25. he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! - **Stave 5**



# Character of Ebenezer Scrooge



## Key points (AO1)

- At the start of the novella, Scrooge is depicted as a quintessential miser and misanthrope who is an allegorical representation of the uncharitable and ignorant rich classes of Victorian society. His character is an exaggerated and extreme caricature of the immoral behaviour of the rich.
- Scrooge's name is an example of nomenclature, where his name is symbolic of his character. His first name, Ebenezer, refers to the *stone of forgiveness* in the bible, which symbolised how everyone can be forgiven. His surname, Scrooge, sounds painful and unnatural, highlighting his greedy and avaricious wrongdoings.
- At the start of the novella, Scrooge is intensely avaricious, prizing money over all other aspects of human life and society. In **Stave 2**, we learn that Scrooge developed this as a young man, choosing the "*golden idol*" of money over family and love, represented by his rejection of Belle.
- At the start of the novella, Scrooge is prejudiced against the poor, believing them to be lazy and idle. He is ignorant to their struggles and shows no empathy towards them. This is symbolised by his cruel treatment of Bob Cratchit in **Stave 1**.
- At the start of the novella, Scrooge is the antithesis of the Christmas spirit. He rejects all family relationships, symbolised by his rejection of **Fred** and **Belle**, and juxtaposes the majority of Victorian society as he ignores Christmas celebrations. He prefers to isolate himself and shun society.
- Scrooge is ignorant of his own sins and wrongdoing at the start of the novella. In **Stave 1**, he is blind to his own evil actions when he cannot see the chain that Marley says he has around him, representing his sins.
- Marley and the three spirits are catalysts to his transformation.
- In **Stave 2**, the Ghost of Christmas Past shines a light on Scrooge's past self, and reminds him that he once had the capacity to love, and was loved too.
- In **Stave 3**, the Ghost of Christmas Present reminds Scrooge of the joys of Christmas and the importance of generosity, togetherness and family as well as the ignorance of mankind through the characters of Ignorance and Want.
- In **Stave 4**, the Ghost of Christmas Present presents a dystopian, bleak fate for Scrooge, and frightens him into repenting his sins and committing to live a better life by showing him the consequences of his actions, such as the tragic death of the innocent Tiny Tim.
- In **Stave 5**, Scrooge is almost reborn as he redeems himself and his wrongdoings by showing generosity, kindness and acceptance to those he wronged at the start of the novella.
- Scrooge serves as a reminder that even the most hard-hearted and cruel in society can change their ways if they rid themselves of ignorance and commit to a way of life more influenced by the Christmas spirit.

## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Quintessential, miser, misanthrope, allegorical, uncharitable, ignorance, rich, avaricious, hardened, hard-hearted, prejudiced, lack of empathy, antithesis of Christmas spirit, isolated, dark, blinded, warmed, capacity to love, generous, familial, frightened, warned, transformed, redeemed, forgiven, reborn, kind, loving, committed, Christmas spirit

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- Scrooge is an **allegorical symbol of the selfish, greedy, and ignorant rich** that Dickens despised in Victorian society. **As a young boy, Dickens experienced poverty himself**, and considered the **prejudiced attitude of the rich** to be **despicable**.
- Scrooge is used as a **vehicle by Dickens through which he educates Victorian readers** into living a more **compassionate, generous and charitable** life.
- The Victorian reader **despises Scrooge at the start of the novel** due to his lack of empathy and cruelty. His character is **exaggerated so that readers have a strong reaction to his cruelty**. This makes the readers consider their own actions and **learn from Scrooge's mistakes** so that they too live a better life.
- Scrooge's belief that the poor are **lazy, idle "surplus population"** was a common belief during the Victorian era that Dickens despised. The **philosopher Thomas Malthus** believed that the poor should not be helped, and they were simply "surplus population" that were meant to suffer and die. **Dickens despised this attitude**, and therefore makes the Victorian reader despise Scrooge's belief too.
- Scrooge's **transformation** teaches the reader that **everyone, even the most hard-hearted of people** is capable of **love, generosity and kindness**. His transformation teaches the reader to **examine their own behaviour** and live a more generous life.

# Character of Ebenezer Scrooge

# Key evidence – Stave 1

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! – Stave 1

Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire – Stave 1

Secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. – Stave 1

He carried his own low temperature always about with him – Stave 1

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. – Stave 1

It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal – Stave 1

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. – Stave 1

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 – Stave 1



“Bah!” said Scrooge, “Humbug!” – Stave 1

Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! – Scrooge, Stave 1

“Because you fell in love!” growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. – Scrooge, Stave 1

“Are there no prisons?” asked Scrooge. ... “And the Union workhouses?” demanded Scrooge. “Are they still in operation?” – Scrooge, Stave 1

I can’t afford to make idle people merry. – Scrooge, Stave 1

“If they would rather die,” said Scrooge, “they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.. – Scrooge, Stave 1

Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. – Stave 1

“You don’t believe in me,” observed the Ghost. “I don’t,” said Scrooge. – Stave 1

“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!” – Marley, Stave 1

“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. – Marley, Stave 1

## Character of Ebenezer Scrooge

## Key evidence – Stave 2-4

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! – Stave 2

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. – Stave 2

“Why, it’s Ali Baba!” Scrooge exclaimed in ecstasy. “It’s dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know! One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he did come, for the first time, just like that. Poor boy!– Stave 2

I have come to bring you home, dear brother!” said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. “To bring you home, home, home!” – Fan, Stave 2

He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. ... The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.”– Stave 2



There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall. Stave 2

“What Idol has displaced you?” he rejoined. “A golden one.” – Belle, Stave 2

“Remove me!” Scrooge exclaimed, “I cannot bear it!”–Stave 2

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. - Stave 2

“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.”- Stave 3

“Have they no refuge or resource?” cried Scrooge. - Stave 3

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.- Stave 3

“Ghost of the Future!” he exclaimed, “I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Stave 4

“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!” - Stave 4

and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man. - Stave 4

## Character of Ebenezer Scrooge

"I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!" Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. "The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees!" - Stave 5

"If you please," said Scrooge. "Not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour?" .. - Stave 5

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. - Stave 5

"I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!" Stave 5



I'd rather be a baby. - Stave 5

Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness!.. - Stave 5

He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! Stave 5

## Key evidence – Stave 5

The people were by this time pouring forth, as he had seen them with the Ghost of Christmas Present; and walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile.. - Stave 5

"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! - Stave 5

# Character of Jacob Marley



## Key points (AO1)

- The opening line of the novella announces that Scrooge's business partner has been dead for seven years. We learn immediately that Scrooge and Marley are mirror characters; both avaricious, greedy middle class money-lenders who care more about profit than any other aspect of human life. In fact, some people confuse Scrooge and Marley in the novella, highlighting how similar they are.
- In **Stave 1**, Marley appears to Scrooge as a supernatural spectre, who has come to warn him that if he does not change his ways, he will be condemned to an afterlife of torture and regret. Marley is a catalyst to Scrooge's transformation, as he tells him that he will be visited by 3 spirits.
- Marley is grotesque and terrifying in appearance. His body is partially decomposed and he wears a chain around him made from items associated with money, such as cashboxes and locks. The chain is symbolic of Marley's sins and wrongdoings. He is reminiscent of a Victorian prisoner, fettered in chains. It is as though, after death, Marley is being imprisoned, punished and tortured for his greed in his lifetime.
- Marley is in intense pain and is emotionally tormented. He expresses how he *cannot rest* and is doomed to wander the earth, in a purgatorial afterlife where he is being forced to witness the suffering of poor people without being able to help. He has learnt the lesson, too late, that *mankind [is his] business* rather than money. He wants Scrooge to learn this lesson to escape his fate.
- Despite Marley being terrifying, he acts almost as a friendly guide to Scrooge; he shows kindness and empathy towards Scrooge, trying to help him and warn him before it is too late.
- Scrooge does not believe Marley at first and cannot see his own chain that Marley says is around him. This highlights Scrooge's ignorance and makes Marley's message even more necessary.
- After Marley frightens Scrooge, Scrooge takes his message more seriously and begins to believe in him. This is the first indication that Scrooge is listening to Marley and is changing.
- Before he leaves in **Stave 1**, Marley takes Scrooge to the window of his room and shows him a scene of hundreds of other phantoms flying through the air, all moaning and tortured in the same way that he is. These other phantoms indicate that it is not only Scrooge and Marley who are greedy and need to change, but many others in society too.
- Marley's character has been interpreted in a Christian sense. In the bible, there are many stories of supernatural beings such as angels who visit humans to warn them. Marley can be interpreted as a godly messenger who has come to teach Scrooge about the importance of Christian values.
- Marley's name is also important – Jacob was seen as the father of the Israelites, so in some sense acts as a wise leader to Scrooge.

## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Avaricious, greedily, middle-class, money-lender, supernatural, condemned, tortured, catalyst, grotesque, terrifying, burdened, fettered, chained, imprisoned, punished, tormented, doomed, purgatorial, kind, empathetic, powerful, messenger, teacher, guide

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- Many Victorians **enjoyed ghost stories**, and they were a popular form of entertainment, particularly at Christmas time. Marley's description would have **frightened and entertained the Victorian reader**, and they would have **enjoyed reading this part of the novella**. Dickens wanted his readers to **enjoy the novella** so that they would take its message to heart.
- Marley is **symbolic of a Victorian prisoner**. In the Victorian era, it was a common sight to see prisoners in chains. This symbolises that Marley is **punished for his sins**.
- The Victorians had strong **Christian beliefs**, believing that people who did wrong were tormented in hell or purgatory once they died. Marley **echoes this belief**, demonstrating that those who do wrong are **committing sin** and will be **punished for their behaviour**.

## Character of Jacob Marley

## Key evidence

Marley was dead to begin with - Stave 1

Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail - Stave 1

Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner - Stave 1

Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names - Stave 1

they had been two kindred spirits - Stave 1

not a knocker, but Marley's face.- Stave 1

it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel.- Stave 1

"You don't believe in me," observed the Ghost. "I don't," said Scrooge. - Stave 1

There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!" - Scrooge, Stave 1

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!"— Marley, Stave 1



"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it!"— Marley, Stave 1

"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!" - Marley, Stave 1

"Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"- Marley, Stave 1

"I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate - Marley, Stave 1

The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever. - Stave 1

"I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!" Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. "The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees!" - Marley, Stave 1

# Character of Fred

## Key points (AO1)

- Fred is Scrooge's nephew and sole relative. He is the son of Scrooge's sister, Fan, who died.
- Fred is Scrooge's foil and juxtaposes Scrooge in every way. In Stave 1, he is presented as cheerful, jovial and festive, with a warm appearance in contrast to Scrooge's coldness. He is married and confesses that he fell in love. He has a strong liking for Christmas and believes in the Christmas spirit.
- In **Stave 1**, we see Fred behave in a kind way towards Bob Cratchit. Fred treats the poor with kindness and respect, in contrast to Scrooge's harsh treatment of them.
- Fred is a symbol of family and Christmas spirit in the novella.
- In **Stave 1**, Fred visits Scrooge and invites him to his Christmas party. Although Scrooge does not accept his invitation, his determination symbolises the power of the Christmas spirit.
- Fred believes in the power of Christmas
- In **Stave 2**, Scrooge is reminded of the importance of family as he sees Fred's mother, Fan, as a child. Scrooge feels regretful when he remembers his rejection of Fred.
- In **Stave 3**, the ghost of Christmas present takes Scrooge to see Fred's Christmas party. The party is celebratory, warm and jovial. Fred mocks Scrooge in a game of *yes and no*, and the reader is reminded of how much the two characters contradict one another. When he sees the vision of the party, however, Scrooge softens and joins in silently, showing his transformation.
- At the end of the novella, Scrooge **attends Fred's real Christmas party** and has a wonderful time, showing his transformation and acceptance of the Christmas spirit.
- By the end of the novella, Fred and Scrooge are no longer opposites, but in fact very similar, highlighting the transformative power the ghosts' visions have had on Scrooge.



## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Nephew, foil, juxtaposed, cheerful, jovial, festive, warm, loving, Christmas spirit, believer, festive, familial, determined, celebratory, accepting, forgiving, family, similar

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- **Throughout the novella, Fred is a likeable and warm character who the Victorian reader would sympathise with.**
- Fred is a **role model to the Victorian reader**, showing them how they should behave to one another, particularly family, at Christmas time.
- Some readers say that **Fred is the voice of Dickens in the novella**. He expresses Dickens' strong belief in the power of the Christmas spirit (that Dickens called the *Carol Philosophy*) and teaches the reader the important lesson of festivity and celebration at Christmas time.
- Fred **reminds Victorian readers** about the importance of family and togetherness at Christmas.
- Dickens did this in order to **influence the reader's views** and teach them to behave in a more loving and generous manner at Christmas time.

## Character of Fred

## Key evidence

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice."  
Stave 1

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. - Stave 1

"Why did you get married?" said Scrooge.

"Because I fell in love."  
Stave 1

He stopped at the outer door to bestow the greetings of the season on the clerk, - Stave 1



"She died a woman," said the Ghost, "and had, as I think, children."

"One child," Scrooge returned.

"True," said the Ghost. "Your nephew!"

Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, "Yes.," - Stave 2

"Ha, ha!" laughed Scrooge's nephew. "Ha, ha, ha!" 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. Introduce him to me, and I'll cultivate his acquaintance. - Stave 3

I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it—I defy him—if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying Uncle Scrooge, how are you? - Stave 3

But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round ... 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!" - Stave 1

Let him in! It is a mercy he didn't shake his arm off. He was at home in five minutes. Nothing could be heartier. His niece looked just the same. So did Topper when he came. So did the plump sister when she came. So did every one when they came. Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness! - Stave 5



# Character of The Cratchit Family



## Key points (AO1)

- The Cratchit family symbolise the suffering and impoverished Victorian society.
- They live in a small, cramped house in a poor part of the city, and it is clear from the description of the house that they do not have sufficient room for their large family.
- Mrs Cratchit, the mother of the house, works tirelessly for the family, as does Bob, their father. They are presented as extremely hard-working, and contradict the stereotypical view of the poor as lazy and idle.
- The father of the family, Bob Cratchit, is Scrooge's clerk. Bob is treated poorly by Scrooge, who pays him a meagre salary and has unfair and cruel expectations of him, such as not allowing him paid time off at Christmas to spend time with his family. Bob juxtaposes Scrooge and could be said to be his foil; he is joyful and childlike in his celebration of Christmas, for example when we see him ice skating in Stave 1.
- The elder children in the family, Martha and Peter, have been forced to go to work in order to support the family. They complain in **Stave 2** of how brutal the working conditions they face are.
- Despite their poverty, the Cratchit family are happy and grateful, and are presented as an idealised family that the readers sympathise with, and as a real family who are bonded by shared affection and strengthened with love, as opposed to money, status and wealth.
- They have a close, loving relationship with one another and celebrate Christmas together in a merry fashion, making an effort to commemorate the Christmas tradition. They are grateful for what they have and, despite only being able to afford a small Christmas dinner, feel blessed for what they have. This juxtaposes Scrooge's greed and avarice.
- In **Stave 4**, Scrooge is presented with a nightmarish view of the future where he sees the Cratchit family bereaved by the death of their youngest son, Tiny Tim. The family's joy and laughter is replaced by their silence and grief, highlighting the terrible effects of Tiny Tim's death on the family.
- In **Stave 5**, Scrooge redeems himself by making amends for his poor treatment of the Cratchits, showing how his attitude to the poor has changed, and he has become more charitable and kind. He buys the Cratchits a large turkey, raises Bob's salary and becomes a second father to Tiny Tim. This symbolises how his attitude to the poor has transformed.

## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Suffering, impoverished, poor, cramped, hard-working, tired, determined, downtrodden, victimised, joyful, childlike, juxtaposed, exploited, happy, grateful, idealised, sympathetic, bonded, affectionate, strong, loving, celebratory, merry, blessed, bereaved, grieving, silent, supported, cared for, redeemed

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- From the outset, the Cratchits are presented as **loveable, sympathetic characters** whom readers immediately warm to
- In contrast to our hatred for Scrooge, we **love the Cratchits**, finding their warm relationship and jolly nature **amusing and heartening.** This makes us immediately **like them as characters.** Dickens did this in order to make us feel **sympathetic towards the poor**, and to prove the commonly held belief that the poor are lazy and idle as **wrong**
- Unlike Thomas Malthus' claim that the poor are simply **surplus population**, the Cratchits are characterised fully, making us as readers see them as **individual people** who we develop a sympathetic relationship with. This again makes the Victorian readers realise that the **poor are individual people with individual struggles, who should not be seen as a homogenous group, but treated like the people that they are**
- The Cratchits **symbolise the Christmas spirit**, and Dickens, who was a huge celebrant of Christmas himself, **wants us to feel part of the Cratchit's Christmas celebrations**, so describes their party in immense detail. This again makes us **warm to them, and learn the importance of the Christmas spirit**
- When Scrooge redeems himself at the end of the novella, we feel **joyful for the Cratchits** as their harsh treatment has ended and they are going to be treated **fairly and with generosity**, which is the book's central message.

## Character of The Cratchit Family

## Key evidence

Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal.  
Stave 1

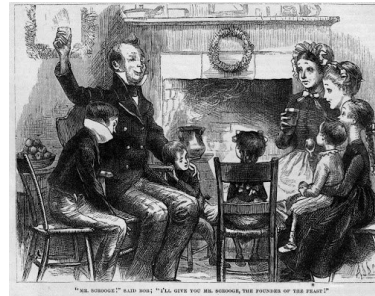
the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's-buff - Stave 1

Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons – Stave 3

*the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled. – Stave 3*

"We'd a deal of work to finish up last night," replied the girl, "and had to clear away this morning, mother!" – Martha, Stave 2

but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. Stave 3



There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family – Stave 3

Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle. Stave 3

"A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!"  
– Bob, Stave 3

Scrooge was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party, which was not dispelled for full five minutes. – Stave 3

They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed;... But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time.  
– Stave 3

Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues in one corner - Stave 4

"A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you, for many a year! I'll raise your salary" - Scrooge, Stave 5

"I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's!" whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands, and splitting with a laugh. "He sha'n't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim." Scrooge, Stave 5

# Character of Tiny Tim



## Key points (AO1)

- Tiny Tim is the youngest member of the Cratchit family. He is gravely illm suffering from an unknown illness that makes him weak and vulnerable
- When the reader first meet him, he rests upon his father's shoulder, symbolising the fact that while the family love him, his illness is a heavy burden on them, due to their poverty
- The fact that he is a child symbolises the harsh treatment of children in the Victorian era
- Tiny Tim's crippled condition is also symbolic; the fact that he cannot walk symbolises the difficulties the poor had in holding themselves up; due to the unfair treatment of the poor in Victorian society, they struggle to keep themselves afloat financially. Tim symbolically holds himself up with a crutch, which symbolises the financial support that the poor need in order to survive. Tim therefore, is a microcosm of the impoverished population: without support or charity, the poor will suffer and die.
- Tiny Tim is completely innocent, god-like and good. He is almost Christ-like in character as he is portrayed as an innocent, sinless human who will die due to the sins of others. The name Timothy is an ancient biblical name that means *honoured by God*, and Timothy was one of the first saints in the Christian religion.
- The relationship between Scrooge and Tiny Tim symbolises the relationship between the rich and the poor. Just as if Scrooge does not change his ways, Tiny Tim will die, then the poor will struggle and die if the rich do not change their ways.
- Tim represents the threat of time, and his rapidly waning health symbolises the limited time that the rich have to change their ways.
- His death in the nightmarish vision of the future that the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come shows Scrooge, is a terribly tragic moment that causes the reader to feel great sympathy towards the poor, and hatred towards Scrooge and those like him in society
- At the end of the novella, Scrooge becomes a *second father* to Tiny Tim, which symbolises how the rich must adopt the poor as part of their family or society, in order to save them. Just as Scrooge sees Tim as part of his own family, the rich must realise that the poor are part of the family of human society, and are the brethren of the rich.

## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Young, ill, suffering, weak, vulnerable, burdensome, loving, crippled, struggling, microcosm, poor, impoverished, sympathetic, innocent, good, god-like, Christian, Christ-like, sinless, victim, doom, tragic, adopted, family, in need, supported

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- The reader is **sympathetic towards Tim throughout the novella**. Dickens did this in order to make Victorian readers see the poor as **human beings** who need support, and to view them as **innocent victims of poverty** rather than **lazy, idle criminals**.
- By highlighting the suffering of Tiny Tim, **Dickens makes the Victorian system of workhouses seem particularly cruel and harsh**; Tim would not survive in a workhouse, and it is plainly clear that what he needs is love and support, rather than punishment. **Dickens did this in order to challenge society's view that the poor law and workhouse system are good solutions to poverty; instead, the workhouse system is exposed as cruel and ruthless.**
- Dickens **cared deeply about the exploitation of children in the Victorian era**, as he himself had been exploited when in poverty as a child. By presenting Tim as an **innocent and vulnerable child**, Dickens suggests that the **poor children in society** need protection and care.
- Tim's death is **one of the most tragic deaths in all of Dickens' works**, and many early readers found this very upsetting. The killing off of Tim in the future **would have scared many Victorian readers** and made them **examine their own behaviour** in order to **change their ways** and support the poor more.
- Tim's words are the **last words of the novella**, which highlights to the reader how **significant** he is as a character

## Character of Tiny Tim

## Key evidence

Tiny Tim upon his shoulder - Stave 2

Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame! - Stave 2

He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see."- Bob, Stave 2

"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all. - Stave 2

He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.. - Stave 2



"I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost, "in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die." .. - Ghost of Christmas Present, Stave 2

If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race," returned the Ghost, "will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."- Ghost of Christmas Present, Stave 2

My little, little child!" cried Bob. "My little child!"- Stave 4

" 'And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them.' - Stave 4

I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it."Stave 4

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. - Stave 5

Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God! - Stave 4

And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless Us, Every One! - Stave 5

# Character of Belle

## Key points (AO1)

- Belle is a beautiful woman who Scrooge loved deeply when he was a young man. Belle broke off their engagement after Scrooge became consumed with greed and the lust for wealth. She later married another man.
- Belle symbolises love and family. She is a representation of family values and togetherness.
- We learn that Scrooge and Belle were poor, but happy in their youth. This changed as Scrooge became more money-obsessed.
- Scrooge's rejection of Belle symbolizes the rich's rejection of goodness, simple beauty and love in exchange for greed and riches.
- Belle and her new husband's family home juxtaposes the dark, lonely home that Scrooge has. We see the future that Scrooge could have had, but rejected when in **Stave 2** we see Belle and her husband joyfully playing with their many lively children.
- Belle's inclusion in the novella also makes us warm to Scrooge, however, as we realise that he once had the capacity for love.
- Belle mirrors the character of Fan, Scrooge's sister, another woman who showed Scrooge love.
- Scrooge feels saddened and mournful when he sees her. He cannot bear to see the vision of her, and tries to fight the ghost of Christmas past and extinguish its light. This makes the reader realise that he is changing and softening as he is reminded of the love that he has lost.



## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Beautiful, loving, family, kind, happy, poor, wholesome, family, familial, rejected, juxtaposition

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- Belle is presented as a **loving, sympathetic character** whom the audience **warm to** in contrast to our **view of Scrooge as a cruel and heartless man**
- She represents the **idealised wife or family** that Scrooge could have had; his rejection of her makes us realise his **deep greed and cruelty**
- **The lack of women in A Christmas Carol is interesting**. Dickens may be suggesting that Scrooge's rejection of **Belle and Fan** is a rejection of **love and family, symbolised by female characters**. Dickens may be suggesting that the **male-dominated world** is **cruel and heartless** in comparison to a world with women in it. We know that **Dickens had a large family** and **also enjoyed the company of women**, including his wife and a young actress with whom he had an affair. This highlights **Dickens' love for women** and his belief that **women are gentle, loving creatures** who should be valued in society.

## Character of Belle

## Key evidence

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.- Stave 2

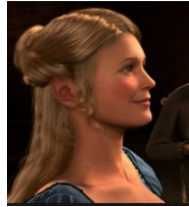
Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve."

"What Idol has displaced you?" he rejoined.

"A golden one." Stave 2

"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." - Stave 2

"Spirit!" said Scrooge, "show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?" - Scrooge, Stave 2



Near to the winter fire sat a beautiful young girl, so like that last that Scrooge believed it was the same, until he saw her, now a comely matron, sitting opposite her daughter -, Stave 2

"Belle," said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile, "I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon."

"Who was it?"

"Guess!"

"How can I? Tut, don't I know?" she added in the same breath, laughing as he laughed. "Mr. Scrooge."

"Mr. Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe." Stave 2

"Remove me!" Scrooge exclaimed, "I cannot bear it!" - Scrooge, Stave 2

# Character of Fan



## Key points (AO1)

- Fan is Scrooge's sister who died. She has one surviving son, Scrooge's nephew Fred.
- Fan symbolises family love and represents the family relationships that Scrooge has rejected for money and wealth.
- We meet Fan in **Stave 2** when she comes to visit the boy Scrooge at school, and bring him home for the holidays. She is overjoyed to see him and behaves lovingly and kindly towards him, and makes the reader realise that Scrooge was once loved, and has the capacity to love within him. We also realise that Scrooge has the potential for family, and he has chosen to reject her.
- Fan is an innocent, young girl who presents a perfect, idealised image of family.
- She mirrors the character of Belle, who Scrooge also rejected in the face of money.
- Scrooge feels saddened and mournful when he sees her. He hangs his head regretfully, and goes quiet when her name is mentioned. This makes the reader realise that he is changing and softening as he is reminded of the love that he has lost.
- Fan also hints that Scrooge had a difficult childhood relationship with his father. She remarks that *father is much kinder now* which hints that Scrooge may have been treated poorly by him. This may give the reader clues as to why Scrooge, as an adult, shuns family relationships. Is it because he was treated badly as a child himself that he turned to money and isolation?

## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Sister, family, love, loving, relationships, rejected, dead, overjoyed, child-like, innocent, perfect, idealised, mirrors, tragic, soft, damaged

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- Fan is presented as a **loving, sympathetic character** whom the audience **warm to** in contrast to our **view of Scrooge as a cruel and heartless man**
- She represents the **idealised family** that Scrooge could have had; his rejection of her makes us realise his **deep greed and cruelty**
- **The lack of women in A Christmas Carol is interesting.** Dickens may be suggesting that Scrooge's rejection of **Belle and Fan** is a rejection of **love and family, symbolised by female characters**. Dickens may be suggesting that the **male-dominated world** is **cruel and heartless** in comparison to a world with women in it.
- We know that **Dickens had a large family** and **also enjoyed the company of women**, including his wife and a young actress with whom he had an affair. This highlights **Dickens' love for women** and his belief that **women are gentle, loving creatures** who should be valued in society.

## Character of Fan

a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her "Dear, dear brother."

Stave 2

I have come to bring you home, dear brother!" said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. "To bring you home, home, home!" Stave 2

"Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven!

Stave 2

we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world."

Stave 2

"Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered," said the Ghost. "But she had a large heart!"

Ghost of Xmas past  
Stave 2



"She died a woman," said the Ghost, "and had, as I think, children."

"One child," Scrooge returned.

"True," said the Ghost. "Your nephew!"

Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, "Yes."

Stave 2

## Key evidence



# Character of Fezziwig



## Key points (AO1)

- Fezziwig is Scrooge's old boss whom he was apprenticed to as a young man. We don't know what type of business Fezziwig owns, but we can guess that it is in some sort of industry, as the workers work in a warehouse
- Despite being a man of business, Fezziwig is the juxtaposition of Scrooge in every way, and highlights to Scrooge that it is possible to be a businessman but still show empathy, generosity and kindness to one's employees. Fezziwig represents an idealised picture of how businesses should be run: as ethical places where workers are valued and treated with respect.
- We see Fezziwig, along with his wife Mrs Fezziwig, in **Stave 2**, where the Ghost of Christmas Past takes us to see a Christmas party hosted by them. Fezziwig and Mrs Fezziwig are intensely generous and kind to their employees, and contrast the harsh treatment that Scrooge showed Bob Cratchit.
- They are festive and jovial and have a strong Christmas spirit, celebrating the festive time of year with music, dancing and feasting. Their celebration is the idealised vision of Christmas.
- While watching the party, Scrooge is enraptured and joins in with the music. It is clear that the party softens him and reminds him of the lost joys of his youth, where he celebrated Christmas and the company of others before he turned to money and greed.
- Seeing the party teaches Scrooge the importance of treating ones workers with respect and care. It makes him realise that one's actions have a direct impact on the happiness of others, and he learns that actions have consequences.

## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Jolly, kind, juxtaposition, empathetic, generous, kind, leader, ethical, respectful, joyful, festive, caring

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- Fezziwig is **extremely likeable**, and the reader **warms immediately to his generosity and good humour**. The reader becomes almost **involved in the party themselves** due to the extravagant and detailed description of the party scene. It is almost as if **the reader is at the party themselves, enjoying the Christmas festivities**.
- As a young child, Dickens experienced the **harsh world of work** where he was treated **appallingly by his bosses in the blacking factory**. Dickens **despised the exploitation of workers** and believed strongly that **workplaces and working practices should be made more ethical**. Therefore, by making **Fezziwig a likeable character and role model** for workers, Dickens **highlights to the reader how workplaces should be**, and how **workers should be treated with care and respect, despite their social class**.

## Character of Fezziwig

Scrooge cried in great excitement:

“Why, it’s old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it’s Fezziwig alive again!”

Stave 2

He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice...

Stave 2

the floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room, as you would desire to see upon a winter’s night.

Stave 2

In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and anyhow..

Stave 2



A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig’s calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons.

Stave 2

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

Stave 2

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.

Stave 2

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.”

Stave 2

I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That’s all.

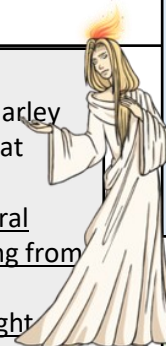
Stave 2

## Key evidence

# Character of The Ghost of Christmas Past

## Key points (AO1)

- The Ghost of Christmas Past is the first spirit to visit Scrooge after the ghost of Marley in **Stave 2**. It takes Scrooge to see scenes from his past life – first as a young boy at school, then as an apprentice at Fezziwig’s company, and then the ending of his relationship with Belle, followed by Belle with her new husband. It is an ephemeral spirit that appears to be both old and young at the same time with light streaming from the top of its head.
- The ghost looks like a candle, or a symbol of light. This suggests that it shines a light on Scrooge’s past, exposing the elements of himself that have been hidden in darkness over time. The elements that it exposes are Scrooge’s capacity for love, his close family relationships and the importance of generosity.
- The ghost is dressed in white, reminiscent of a heavenly being with white also having connotations of innocence. This highlights how the ghost takes Scrooge to a more innocent, good time of his life. Its purpose is to awaken the goodness within Scrooge by showing him the person that he once was.
- The spirit is both childlike and old at the same time, suggesting that it comes from a different time that is not the present. Its changing appearance also hints that Scrooge can change his ways, and that the truth is not fixed but can be transformed.
- Despite being a spirit, the ghost is calm and gentle. It speaks in a mild tone and is kind to Scrooge. This highlights the ghost’s well-meaning and benevolent nature. It is there to help Scrooge rather than frighten him.
- As well as being kind, the ghost is also powerful and firm. It is commanding with Scrooge and has the power to transport him and fly through the air. It is in control of the situation and demands to be obeyed. This symbolizes the power of the past – despite being something that we try to escape from, we can never truly escape the people that we once were, just as Scrooge cannot escape from his childhood innocence and love.
- Scrooge tries to wrestle with the ghost when he cannot bear to see Belle with her family and husband. This indicates that Scrooge cannot bear to see the reality of his past self and be reminded of painful times in his life. However, the ghost’s light is strong and cannot be extinguished. This indicates how strong the power of the past is and that one’s true self cannot be escaped forever.



## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Ephemeral, spirit, ageless, light, candle-like, exposes, reminds, sparks, heavenly, innocent, goodness, angelic, childlike, fluctuating, calm, gentle, benevolent, helper, powerful, firm, commanding, in control, controlling, inextinguishable, strong

## Victorian reader’s response (AO3)

- Despite being a ghost, the **Victorian readers warm to the strange spirit**, and feel **intrigued about the lessons that Scrooge will learn from it**.
- Victorians **loved ghost stories**, so would have been **entertained by the spirit, especially due to its enigmatic nature**. Dickens did this so that his readers **enjoyed the novella; he wanted his readers to learn from the book**, so including enjoyable characters would have made them likely to enjoy and respond to the book more readily.
- The **reader is impressed by the Spirit’s strength and kindness**; we learn that the power of the past is important and cannot be escaped from
- The **journey into the past that Scrooge undergoes** forces us, as readers, to explore **our own past** and consider **whether we have become hardened or cruel** over time. **Dickens wanted his readers to understand how society had become corrupt and cruel** over time. By showing how **we all come from innocent, childish pasts**, Dickens forces us to consider how **we can return to a more innocent way of life too**, and be kinder and more loving to one another, just as we wish Scrooge to do the same.

# Character of Ghost of Christmas Past

## Key evidence

It was a strange figure—  
like a child: yet not so  
like a child as like an old  
man,

Stave 2

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.,

Stave 2

The arms were very long and  
muscular; the hands the same,  
as if its hold were of  
uncommon strength.

Stave 2

It wore a tunic of the  
purest white

Stave 2

from the crown of its  
head there sprung a  
bright clear jet of light

Stave 2

The voice was soft  
and gentle

Stave 2

Perhaps, Scrooge could not  
have told anybody why, if  
anybody could have asked him;  
but he had a special desire to  
see the Spirit in his cap; and  
begged him to be covered.

Stave 2



He then made bold to inquire  
what business brought him  
there.

“Your welfare!” said the Ghost

Stave 2

The grasp, though gentle as a  
woman’s hand, was not to be  
resisted.

Stave 2

The grasp, though gentle as a  
woman’s hand, was not to be  
resisted.

Stave 2

Spirit!” said Scrooge, “show me no more! Conduct  
me home. Why do you delight to torture me?”

“One shadow more!” exclaimed the Ghost.

“No more!” cried Scrooge. “No more. I don’t wish  
to see it. Show me no more!”

But the relentless Ghost pinioned him in both his  
arms, and forced him to observe what happened  
next.

Stave 2

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.

Stave 2

# Character of The Ghost of Christmas Present



## Key points (AO1)

- The ghost of Christmas present is the second spirit to visit Scrooge. He transports Scrooge to present day Christmas, allowing Scrooge to see how others spend their Christmas time, making Scrooge more enlightened about others.
- Through his visions, the ghost teaches Scrooge the importance of Christmas spirit, festivity and generosity to the poor. He exposes Scrooge to the suffering of the poor and makes him realise his own ignorance towards the poor.
- The Ghost of Christmas Present is the archetypal Father Christmas figure. He sits amid a festive scene like a Christmas card, full of plenty. He is bedecked in Christmassy items such as holly, mistletoe and a cornucopia or horn of plenty, which symbolizes Christmas festivity and abundance. Unlike common Victorian depictions of religious Christmas, this ghost seems more pagan in his appearance, like the green man of English folklore. He seems to represent the English pre-religious origins of Christmas, before it became associated with Christianity and was more about feasting and family.
- His joyful, plentiful and festive character directly juxtaposes Scrooge's meanness, thinness and darkness.
- Despite being a spirit, the ghost is kind to Scrooge and Scrooge is more receptive to him than he was to Marley or the Ghost of Christmas Past. Scrooge realizes that the ghosts are there to help him.
- The ghost takes Scrooge out to the streets to see how others spend Christmas day, celebrating, shopping and feasting on the sensual smells and sounds of Christmas. The ghost is benevolent, his torch sprinkles incense onto people that stops them arguing. The ghost is a personification of the Christmas spirit, where Christmas reminds people of togetherness and family.
- The ghost has a magical ability to fit into any space, despite its giant size. This symbolizes how Christmas can be found in any situation – rich or poor, big or small. This suggests that Christmas is a universal concept and can be enjoyed by all.
- The ghost shows Scrooge the Cratchit family Christmas, and highlights to Scrooge how the poor are suffering and are not lazy or idle, but hardworking people.
- The ghost shames Scrooge by repeating his ignorant words about prisons and workhouses back to him. This makes Scrooge penitent and remorseful.
- The ghost finally reveals the characters of Ignorance and Want to Scrooge. The children are poor and ragged, showing how the vice that Scrooge has indulged in—Ignorance - has a real effect on the children in the workhouses and on the streets.

## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Festive, generous, exposes, archetypal. Christmassy, bedecked, glorious, abundant, large, powerful, pagan, folklorish, jovial, plentiful, juxtaposes, kind, strong, benevolent, magical, universal, candid, truthful, shaming

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- Despite being a ghost, the jolly and lively character of the ghost would have made the **Victorian reader** feel **festive and jolly**. Dickens wanted his readers to enjoy the novella and learn from it in a light-hearted way. By making the ghost seem **kind and jolly** and the Christmassy scene seem exciting, the readers would have **warmed to the novella's message**.
- **Dickens adored Christmas time** and believed strongly that all people should **adopt the Christmas spirit**, which he called the *Carol philosophy*. The ghost **personifies this attitude**, and makes **Christmas seem appealing and joyful**.
- The ghost's attitude **teaches the reader to be more aware of the suffering of the poor** by highlighting to us the struggles of the Cratchits and Ignorance and Want. This makes **readers examine their own behaviour** to consider how they might better help the poor. **Dickens, as a philanthropist**, cared deeply about the poor and wanted the rich to be more benevolent and charitable towards them.

# Character of The Ghost of Christmas Present

# Key evidence

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

Stave 3

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.

Stave 3

a jolly Giant, glorious to see; who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn.

Stave 3

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

Stave 3

or once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God love it, so it was! Stave 3



its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air

Stave 3

"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."

Stave 3

Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh God! to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!

Stave 3

"If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race," returned the Ghost, "will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."

Stave 3

The Spirit stood beside sick beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by struggling men, and they were patient in their greater hope; by poverty, and it was rich.

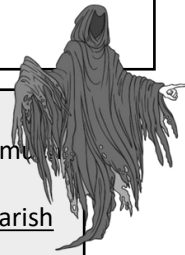
Stave 3

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

"They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them.

Stave 3

# Character of The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come



## Key points (AO1)

- In comparison to the other ghosts, the third spirit (which Scrooge calls a phantom) is much more ominous and nightmarish than the other more innocent, glowing and childlike previous ghosts. The ghost's purpose is to highlight to Scrooge the dystopian, nightmarish consequences that his actions will have if he does not change his ways. It is more frightening in order to emphasise how morally wrong Scrooge's actions are, and shows Scrooge that the unknown, unseen fate that he is heading for is really something to fear deeply.
- The ghost is reminiscent of the grim reaper, symbolic of death. He does not speak, in comparison to the other ghosts, which makes his presence more foreboding. The silence suggests that Scrooge must now make his own decisions rather than being told what to do. Only Scrooge can change the future, and the power is in his hands to avoid the disastrous future he is shown.
- The ghost highlights to Scrooge how unaffected and even relieved the world will be if Scrooge were to die; this evokes shock and misery in Scrooge as he realizes how truly alone he is, and how little others care for him.
- At first, Scrooge is unaware that the dead man the people are mourning for is him. This highlights his ignorance; he is still partially blind to his own evil nature.
- The ghost shows Scrooge the body of the dead man, alone and plundered with no one to mourn for him. Through the story of this dead man, Scrooge finally realises how his own lifestyle has set him up for a fate worse than death. There is a mere thin cloth between him and the sight of the dead body, and it causes him to remember the moral lesson that he has been denying for so long. But he is still thinking of himself, feeling sorry for himself, instead of feeling remorse for his cruelty to others.
- The spirit takes Scrooge to the Cratchit house, where we realise that Tiny Tim has died. There is a huge juxtaposition between the body lying alone in the dark house and the body of Tiny Tim, kissed and adored in the Cratchit house.
- 

## Key vocabulary (AO1)

Phantom, ominous, nightmarish, dystopian, frightening, moral, unknown, unseen, silent, grim reaper, deathly, foreboding, exposing, powerful

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- **Victorian readers** would have been much more **frightened by this ghost; it is much more stereotypical horrific and akin to the ghosts seen in horror stories and ghostly tales. It is also much more obviously symbolic, reminiscent of the grim reaper.**
- Despite being a fairly happy and light-hearted tale, the story does have a serious message, which this third phantom evokes most strongly. **Dickens wanted the readers to understand the importance of generosity and kindness, and by scaring the readers with a strong moral message** at the end of the story, they would be more likely to **take its message seriously** and, like Scrooge, examine their own behaviour in order to **change their ways**.

## Character of *The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come*

## Key evidence

The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently, approached.

Stave 4

When it came near him, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.

Stave 4

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.

Stave 4

"Ghost of the Future!" he exclaimed, "I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart.

Scrooge, Stave 4

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.

Stave 4



"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.

Stave 4



## Character of Ignorance and Want



### Key points (AO1)

- Ignorance and Want are two children that hide under the cloak of the Ghost of Christmas Present. The ghost reveals them to Scrooge in **Stave 3**.
- The children are ragged, hungry, almost animalistic and clearly impoverished. They are symbolic of the poor, and in particular, the exploited, poor children of Victorian society who were victims of the system, forced to labour when they were young.
- Want represents poverty, in particular, the poverty faced by children
- Ignorance, whom the ghost says is the *more important child for Scrooge to pay attention to*, represents the ignorance that society has about the suffering of the poor. It is suggested that a cure for the suffering of the poor in society would be for mankind to rid itself of the evil vice of ignorance in order to become more socially aware and educated.
- The ghost tells Scrooge that the children are Man's. This highlights to Scrooge how society is responsible for its poorest, and that the welfare of the poor lies in the responsibility of the rich.
- Scrooge asks if there is no refuge for these poor children, but the spirit answers with Scrooge's own words, "Are there no workhouses?" This repetition of Scrooge's words makes Scrooge reflect on his own callous attitude, and highlights his own ignorance. Scrooge hangs his head in shame at the ghost's reminder of his callous words
- The fact that the children hide in the robe of the Christmas spirit suggest that Christmas time or the Christmas spirit is something that protects and supports them. Dickens may be suggesting that the Christmas spirit is something that can solve the problem of poverty in society

### Key vocabulary (AO1)

Children, impoverished, vulnerable, animalistic, frightening, symbolic, exploited, reminder, victimised, suffering

### Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- The reader is **frightened and appalled** by the grim sight of the children. Dickens wanted this **image to be a shocking reminder of the desperate state of the poor in society**. By making this image so **brutal and extreme, the reader is forced to reflect on their own behaviour and attitudes towards the poor** and explore their own **ignorance**.
- Dickens cared **deeply about the transformative power of education, believing that if society educated itself** then many of its problems such as poverty, harsh treatment of the poor and cruelty to children would be prevented. By **exposing Ignorance as a evil problem in society**, Dickens calls on readers to behave in a more enlightened and empathetic way in order to make society a better place.

## Character of Ignorance and Want

## Key evidence

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

Stave 3

They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility.

Stave 3

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..

Stave 3

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.

Stave 3



Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing.

Stave 3

Scrooge started back, appalled. .

Stave 3

“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.”

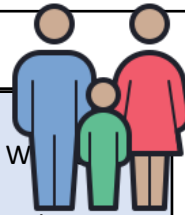
Stave 3

“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?”

Stave 3

# Theme of Family



## Key points (AO1)

- Throughout the novella, family is associated with happiness, joy and comfort. We learn that loving family bonds are as valuable an asset to life as money is.
- Scrooge rejects the idea of family in exchange for money and isolation. He considers family ties to be a weakness.
- In **Stave 1**, Scrooge's rejection of family is symbolised by his refusal to take up his nephew Fred's invitation to dinner. Fred is Scrooge's only living family member, and rather than accepting the invite, he scoffs at family time, considering Fred's decision to fall in love as foolish and idiotic.
- We learn in **Stave 2**, however, that Scrooge has not always been this way. He was loved by his sister, Fan and despite his father being cruel, was also shown kindness by his family when they called him home from school at Christmas time.
- However, as Scrooge turned towards money, he rejected the idea of family. This is symbolised by the breakdown of his relationship with Belle, who in an alternative life could have provided him with an idealised, perfect family. In **Stave 2**, he begins to soften as he regrets his rejection of family and yearns for it.
- In **Stave 3**, we see how joyful and happy the Cratchit family are. Their relationship with one another is strong and they love one another dearly. Their happiness comes from their strong family ties and their family is a comfort to them in their time of hardship and poverty. Therefore, it is suggested that family is essential as it can support people in times of suffering, and can bring happiness to sorrow.
- We also see **other families in Stave 3**, those who are celebrating Christmas such as the miners and the people on the ship, even though they are not with their relatives, they are still with family. Family, it is suggested can be found anywhere if you look for it.
- In **Stave 4**, the body of Scrooge is left plundered, isolated and unmourned. There are no family members mourning his death. This lack of family is seen as truly unnatural and distressing. It is highlighted here that family means more than money or wealth.
- In **Stave 5**, following his transformation, Scrooge finds joy in family once again as he rejects his greed. He visits his nephew Fred and becomes a *second father* to Tiny Tim. Family, it is suggested, is synonymous with happiness and a good life.

## Key quotes (AO1)

- '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!' **Stave 1**
- "Because you fell in love!" growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. "Good afternoon!" **Stave 1**
- "I have come to bring you home, dear brother!" said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. "To bring you home, home, home!" **Stave 2**
- "A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!" **Stave 3**
- and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man. **Stave 4**
- He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father **Stave 5**

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- Scrooge's **lack of family and isolation** seems unnatural to the reader, and makes them **pity him**, and **emphasises his ignorance**.
- Dickens had a **large family** and believed **family was incredibly important** in making people happy and society more peaceful, so sends a strong message about the importance of family in the novella.
- The reader feels **sympathetic and joyful** when they see the idealised visions of family represented by the Cratchits. These scenes **remind the reader about the importance of family** and cause them to reflect on **what is truly important in life**, perhaps causing them to **turn away from their own greed** to adopt a more **simple and loving lifestyle**.
- Scrooge's **transformation in Stave 5** makes the reader feel **joyful** as Scrooge has found a family and is happy.

# Theme of Christmas



## Key points (AO1)

- Throughout the novella, Christmas is depicted as a happy and joyful time that can bring joy to people, even in times of hardship or suffering. It is depicted as a time when people come together and behave in a generous and charitable manner towards one another, putting aside their differences and behaving peacefully and generously.
- It is suggested throughout the novella that the Christmas spirit is the antidote to misery, isolation and greed.
- The characters that adopt the Christmas spirit the most, such as the Cratchit family and Scrooge's nephew Fred, are amongst the happiest in the novella.
- Scrooge lacks the Christmas spirit, which makes him unhappy, lonely and cruel. It is suggested that if he were to adopt the Christmas spirit he would have a better life.
- It is suggested in the novella that the Christmas spirit is something that should not just last at Christmas time, but should be followed as a lifestyle throughout the year.
- Christmas time is also used in the novella to highlight the suffering of the poor. We see how, at Christmas time, the weather is extremely cold, exacerbating the poverty and suffering that people felt. We also see how Christmas is a time of great contrast: while some people such as the mayor in Stave 1 enjoys a rich feast, people such as the Cratchit family starve and struggle. In this way, Dickens uses the harshness of winter to portray the terrible difficulties faced by the poor, teaching readers more about the suffering they faced.
- The Christmas spirit is linked closely to Christian beliefs. The people that enjoy Christmas the most in the novella live humbly, charitably and are grateful. It is suggested therefore that Christmas is a time to exercise Christian values, but ultimately, these values should be lived out all year long.

## Key quotes (AO1)

- "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!" **Stave 1**
- 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. **Fred, Stave 1**
- do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should **Stave 1**
- For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God love it, so it was! **Stave 3**
- "A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!" **Stave 3**
- "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!" **Stave 4**
- it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! **Stave 5**

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- Dickens **loved Christmas** and wrote about spending Christmas with his large family frequently. He believed in what he called the *Carol philosophy*, where he saw Christmas as a time to be **more generous and kind to others, in order to support the poor and needy**.
- Dickens, throughout the novella, **urges readers to adopt the Christmas spirit and live by its values all the year round**, in the hope that society will become **more equal, kind and generous**.

# Theme of Poverty



## Key points (AO1)

- Throughout the novella, Dickens makes clear the intense suffering that many people in society face. We see how people struggle to eat, have adequate healthcare, live in poor housing and face prejudice due to being poor.
- Scrooge has a prejudiced attitude towards the poor, which symbolises much of society's attitude towards them. He believes them to be lazy and idle and considers the workhouse and the poor law a good solution to their poverty.
- The poor in society are symbolised predominantly by the Cratchit family, who we see live in a cramped house in a poor part of London. They survive on the inadequate wages of Bob Cratchit, who is exploited by his greedy employer, Scrooge. We see here how the poor had little option or way out of their poverty, and suffered due to the greed of the rich.
- Despite this, Dickens purposely portrays the Cratchits as sympathetic and likeable characters. They are almost the idealised family. This makes us realise that the poor are not idle or lazy criminals who should be punished in a workhouse, but are good people whose poverty is not their fault. Rather, they are victims of a corrupt system.
- The poor are also symbolised by Ignorance and Want, who shockingly appear hiding beneath the ghost of Christmas Present's robes. The image of these ragged children creates deep shock and sympathy for the poor.
- At the end of the novella, Scrooge realises his own ignorance and cruelty as he witnesses the nightmarish view of the future presented by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come in **Stave 4**, and is deeply moved by the death of Tiny Tim. Scrooge redeems himself by behaving in a generous way towards the poor, raising Bob's salary and buying the Cratchits a large turkey. This is the behaviour that Dickens wants the whole of society to engage in, in order to make society a happier and more equal place.

## Key quotes (AO1)

- Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! **Stave 1**
- "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?"

## Scrooge, Stave 1

- I can't afford to make idle people merry **Scrooge, Stave 1**
- Bob had but fifteen "Bob" a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house! **Stave 3**
- dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons **Stave 3**
- There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family **Stave 3**
- Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a milliner's, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch **Stave 3**
- 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. **Stave 4**
- 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. **Stave 4**

## Victorian reader's response (AO3)

- Dickens **was a philanthropist** who cared deeply about the poor, due to his own experiences a child where he faced **poverty himself**.
- Dickens wanted readers to **feel sympathy for the poor** and cared deeply about **removing society's prejudice and ignorance** towards the poor, so that the poor could be helped, rather than punished.
- Dickens **despised the workhouse system**, so wanted to portray it as a **cruel system**, showing that **charity and kindness** are the true solution to poverty

# Self-Quizzing Questions – Page 1

Stave 1	Stave 2
<p>What time of year is it at the start of the novella?            What is Scrooge doing at the beginning of the story?            What does Scrooge refuse to give Bob Cratchit?            What does Fred represent?            What is Scrooge's reaction to the gentleman asking for money for the poor? What does this tell us about Scrooge?            What is the weather like as Scrooge makes his way home?            What does Scrooge see on his door?            Why does Scrooge like darkness?            Who does Scrooge see the Ghost of?            What is Marley's Ghost carrying? Why is he carrying this?            What is Marley's chain made of? What does this tell us?            What does Scrooge see outside the window?</p>	<p>What time does Scrooge wake up? Why is this strange?            What happens at one o'clock?            What is coming from the spirit's cap? What might this show?            Where is Scrooge transported to? What does he see there?            Scrooge is alone at Christmas in school, how can we describe him?            Who comes to take Scrooge home from school?            What happened to Fan later in her life?            Who is Fezziwig and what is he like?            What does seeing Fezziwig make Scrooge realise?            Why does Belle break off her engagement to Scrooge?            What does Scrooge do to the spirit's cap? Why is this significant?</p>
Stave 3	Stave 4
<p>What does Scrooge plan to do to the next spirit?            What does the spirit look like, and what is it surrounded by?            Where does the Spirit take Scrooge? What does this show him?            How are the Cratchit family presented?            What does the Spirit tell Scrooge about Tiny Tim?            What are the names of the creatures underneath the Spirit's robes?            What do each of these creatures represent?</p>	<p>What does the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come look like?            How does Scrooge feel and react when he sees it?            Where does the Spirit take Scrooge?            What does Scrooge see there?            What is revealed on the gravestone?            How does Scrooge react to seeing the gravestone?            How does Scrooge feel about his second chance?</p>

# Self-Quizzing Questions – Page 2

<p>Stave 5</p>	<p>Key context – Victorian society’s treatment of the poor</p>
<p>How does Scrooge feel about his second chance? Who does he thank for this?          How does Scrooge react when he realises it is Christmas?          What does this show about Scrooge?          How does this contrast to Scrooge at the start of the novella?          What is the first thing Scrooge does? What does this tell us about him?          Where does Scrooge celebrate Christmas?          How does Scrooge treat Bob when he returns to work the next day?          How does Scrooge go on in his life?          What does Scrooge’s redemption symbolise?</p>	<p>What is the social divide?          Who were the upper classes? What kind of things could they afford?          How did the upper classes contrast the lower classes?          How was the city of London changing at this time?          What effect did this have on the poor?          What was the effect of increasing use of machinery in factories?          How were children treated at this time?          What were the hungry forties?          What was the 1834 Poor Law?          Why were some people against charity at this time?          What was society’s attitude to the poor?</p>
<p>Key context – Dickens view on Christmas</p>	<p>Dickens’s Life and Views</p>
<p>How was Christmas before the Victorian Christmas different to Christmas today?          How was Christmas changing in the Victorian Era?          What was Dickens’s experience of Christmas like?          What were Dickens’s views on Church?          How did he believe people could better express their Christian values?</p>	<p>Who is Dickens and when was he alive?          What happened to Dickens and his family when he was 9?          What were Dickens’s beliefs about charity and education?          How did Dickens’s views effect characters in his books?</p>

# Self-Quizzing Questions – Page 3

Ebenezer Scrooge	Jacob Marley
<p>How is Scrooge depicted at the beginning of the novella?            What does he represent?            Why is Scrooge's name important?            What does Scrooge believe about the poor at the beginning of the novel?            Who appears to Scrooge in Stave 1?            What does the Ghost of Christmas Past reveal to Scrooge?            What does Scrooge see under the Ghost of Christmas Present's robes? What do they symbolise?            What does the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come reveal to Scrooge?            What does Scrooge realise at the end of the novella?            How would the Victorian reader feel about Scrooge? How would it change throughout the novella?            What does Scrooge mean when he talks about 'surplus population'?            Give three key quotes about Scrooge's at the beginning            Give three key quotes about Scrooge's redemption</p>	<p>Who is Jacob Marley?            What does he appear as?            What is he carrying and what is it made of?            How does Marley help Scrooge?            What two things could Marley represent in terms of the Bible?            What does Marley symbolise?            Why would Victorian readers have enjoyed the character of Marley?            Give three key quotes about Marley's suffering</p>
Fred	The Cratchit Family
<p>How is Fred related to Scrooge?            What does Fred represent in comparison to Scrooge?            How does Fred behave towards those around him?            What are Fred's views on Christmas?            Why does Scrooge feel regretful about his relationship with Fred?            How does Scrooge and Fred's relationship change at the end of the novella?</p>	<p>What do the Cratchits symbolise?            Describe their living conditions            How is the family's Christmas celebration presented?            What do Peter and Martha have to do? What does this tell us?            How does Scrooge treat the family at the beginning and at the end of the novella?            Give a quote to show their enjoyment of Christmas despite hardship</p>



# Self-Quizzing Questions – Page 4

Tiny Tim	Belle
<p>Who is Tiny Tim?            Why is his illness difficult for his family?            What does Tiny Tim's condition symbolise?            How is Tiny Tim portrayed?            What does the relationship between Scrooge and Tiny Tim symbolise? How does this relationship change?            What does the change in relationship symbolise?            How would the Victorian public feel about Tiny Tim?            What might this make them realise?            Give three key quotes showing Tiny Tim's kind and generous character.</p>	<p>Who is Belle? What was her relationship to Scrooge?            Why did Belle call off her relationship with Scrooge?            How does Belle make us feel as a reader?            What does Belle symbolise?            What might female characters in the novella symbolise?            How is this relevant to Scrooge?            How does Belle illustrate that Scrooge has changed? Use quotes.</p>
Fan	Fezziwig
<p>Who is Fan?            Why might this shed some light on Scrooge's relationship with Fred?            What does Fan represent?            What does she reveal about Scrooge's childhood? Which quote shows this?            What happened to Fan later in her life?            Which quotes show that Fan is a symbol of idealised family life?</p>	<p>Who is Fezziwig?            How does Fezziwig juxtapose Scrooge and why is this important?            What kind of impact does Fezziwig have on his workers?            What does this remind Scrooge of?            What does Fezziwig's kindness illustrate about the maltreatment of workers?</p>

# Self-Quizzing Questions – Page 5

The Ghost of Christmas Past	The Ghost of Christmas Present
<p>What does the Ghost of Christmas Past look like? Why is this significant?</p> <p>What is the significance of the light coming from the Ghost's head?</p> <p>What does the Ghost expose about Scrooge?</p> <p>How is the Ghost's character presented?</p> <p>What does the Ghost's powerful nature symbolise?</p> <p>How do we know that the Ghost's revelations are difficult for Scrooge to take?</p> <p>How would the Victorian reader have responded to the Ghost?</p> <p>What does Scrooge's journey into the past force the reader to do?</p> <p>Give two quotes about the Ghost's appearance</p>	<p>What does this Ghost show Scrooge? What does this expose?</p> <p>What does he look like? What is he surrounded by? What does this symbolise?</p> <p>How does the Ghost juxtapose Scrooge?</p> <p>What does the Ghost reveal from under his robe? What does this symbolise?</p> <p>What is the Ghost's magical ability? What does this symbolise?</p> <p>What does Scrooge see at the Cratchit family household?</p> <p>What does the Ghost repeat back to Scrooge?</p> <p>How does Dickens describe the Ghost? Give two quotes. Give two quotes about what the Ghost shows Scrooge</p>
The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come	Ignorance and Want
<p>What does this Ghost look like? What impression does this give?</p> <p>What does the Ghost remind us of? What does this show?</p> <p>What is the effect of the Ghost's silence?</p> <p>What are people's reactions when Scrooge dies?</p> <p>How does Scrooge's body juxtaposes Tiny Tim's?</p> <p>How does Scrooge react to seeing Tiny Tim dead?</p> <p>How does Scrooge react to seeing his gravestone?</p> <p>How would the Victorian readers react to the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?</p> <p>Give two quotes that show how different this Ghost is to the others</p>	<p>Who are Ignorance and Want?</p> <p>What do they look like?</p> <p>Who do each of them represent?</p> <p>Who does Dickens suggest are responsible for Ignorance and Want?</p> <p>What words of Scrooge's does the Ghost of Christmas Present repeat back to him when he sees Ignorance and Want?</p> <p>Give two key quotes about Ignorance and Want</p>

# Self-Quizzing Questions – Page 6

Family	Christmas
<p>What is family associated with throughout the novella?            How does Scrooge react to family? Give some examples from the novella?            What is revealed about Scrooge's family relationships in the past?            Why did Scrooge reject family relationships?            Why is family important for the Cratchits?            How does a lack of family relationships impact Scrooge in death?            What does Scrooge become to Tiny Tim after his redemption? Why is this important?            Give three key quotes on the theme of family</p>	<p>How is Christmas represented in the novella?            Why would Dickens represent Christmas in this way?            How does Dickens represent people's different experiences of Christmas? How do they contrast? Is there anything that people share?            What is Christmas Spirit? Who has it and who doesn't?            How is Christmas used to highlight the suffering of the poor?            Give three quotes about the theme of Christmas and explore them</p>
Poverty	
<p>What is Dickens's message about poverty?            How were people in poverty treated in the Victorian era?            What was Scrooge's attitude to those in poverty at the beginning of the novella?            Which characters symbolise poverty? How does Dickens dispel Scrooge's opinions about those in poverty through these characters?            How does Dickens illustrate ignorance of poverty?            How does Dickens illustrate how the poor should be treated?            Give three quotes about poverty in the novel and explore them</p>	