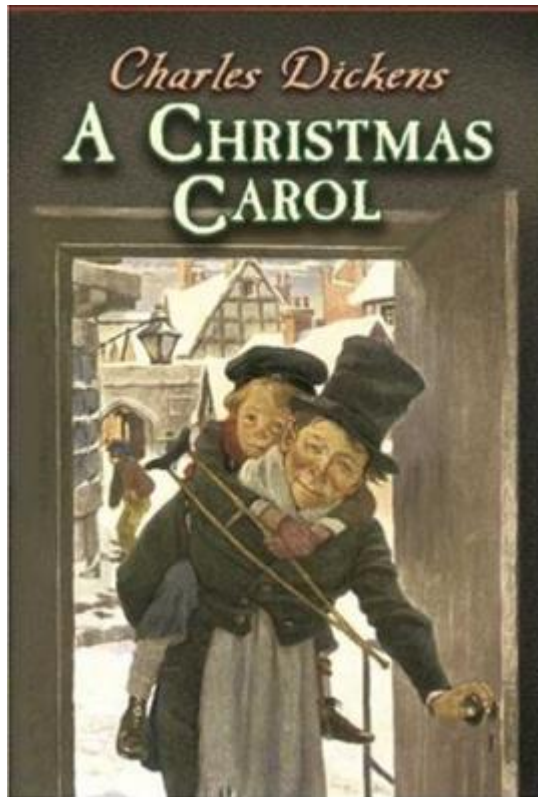


A Christmas Carol



A Christmas Carol

GCSE

Revision Guide

# A Christmas Carol

## Themes in the novel

**Change** – powerful message that everyone can change... this is demonstrated by emphasising Scrooge's attitudes of rejection at the start.

**Responsibility** – Dickens believes everyone has a responsibility for those around them.

Fred states this idea by calling poorer people 'fellow-passengers' and 'not another race'

Marley realises this after his death 'Mankind was my business'

Fezziwig's small contribution can make a significant difference to the lives of individuals

Scrooge learns this throughout the visits

Tiny Tim will die if Scrooge doesn't change

Ghost of Christmas Present warns us of the metaphorical symbol of Ignorance and Want

Dickens didn't believe political Poor Laws were good enough

**Education** – Dickens sees education as the powerful tool to everything. He uses emotive language when talking about Ignorance and Want to show this

# A Christmas Carol

**Poverty** – The Cratchits are Dickens' face of poverty in the novella

The Cratchits are full after their 'small' Christmas dinner because it implies that they don't have enough to eat for the rest of the year.

The charity collectors highlight this too 'want of common necessities' & 'many would rather die than go there' (workhouses)

Old Joe's shop was in a place ridden with crime = poverty is corrupting as it's a fight for survival

**Supernatural** – The ordinary location helps the audience to accept the events that happen and helps contrast the normality of life.

Dickens enforces the notion that Marley is dead from the start so that there can't be any other explanation of the haunting.

There is the manipulation of time as well as Ghosts visiting  
Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come creates the most mystery

# A Christmas Carol

**Isolation** – Dickens demonstrates the need for companionship (company)

Scrooge was left at school as a child and he had to invent fictional friends (ironically who were shipwrecked)

Scrooge focuses on money, more than people, as an adult

Scrooge goes to Fred for Christmas at the end

Scrooge becomes a second father to Tiny Tim

**Family** – Dickens establishes traditions that we still have today.

Scrooge's sister rescues him as a child

Extended family idea is seen by Fezziwig's party and who he invites 'the boy from over the way'

The Cratchits show the family unit the most. Bob is angry when he thinks Martha can't come for Christmas dinner.

Fred highlights Christmas as we still know it today... with games and fun.

Don't forget also there's **Christmas spirit & redemption**.

# A Christmas Carol

## Settings in the novel

**London** – a city which is cold and bleak. Business orientated place.

Changes its description once Scrooge has changed

**Isolated places** – the Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge random places (miners, lighthouse, sailors) they all get comfort from having company. Music shows their optimism.

**Happy Homes** – Belle's, The Cratchits, Fred all show happiness. Dickens' message that it's not location, it's what you do that is more important.

# A Christmas Carol

## Form in the novel

This is a novella (longer than a short story but not long enough to be a novel).

Stave instead of chapter = a stave is the 5 lines of music & there's 5 staves in the novella.

Dickens enforces it's a Christmas story with a message of new life/possibilities and is to be read aloud like a song being sung.

The omniscient narrator adds casual and humorous phrases into the novel and puts the reader at ease so they trust him.

The narrator gives negative opinions of Scrooge = encourages the reader to feel the same.

## Structure in the novel

Typical structure of a novella... only one reversal of a character (this is different from a novel)

Setting and characters are set very quickly

Ghosts develop the action

Scrooge's gravestone leads to the climax of tension & this causes the permanent change

# A Christmas Carol

Stave 5 follows the pattern of falling action (reduction of tension) because Scrooge has changed.

Doesn't follow a chronological time scale – visions jump from time to time but all go back to Scrooge's present day.

## Language in the novel

**Narrator** – engaging tone but also sarcastic about Scrooge.

**Personification** – brings novel's setting to life = exciting which contrasts Scrooge at the start of the novel.

**Description** – similes, adverbs, adjectives

**Pathetic fallacy** – weather reflects mood

**Dialogue** between speakers creates mood

**Questions** help engage the reader & reflect on social message

## Mood in the novel

Mood = jolly and festive because of Christmas. However, social responsibility to care = darker mood.



# A Christmas Carol

## Symbols in the novel

**The Bell** = religion and knell (warning of death)

Chain of Marley's Ghost = greed of money

**Ignorance & Want** = personifies the neglect of the poor in society

**Light** = warmth, joy, hope

**Music** = happiness, celebration

## Context in the novel

Victorian England

London – city

Poverty / class divide was an issue

Industrial revolution = jobs in factories rather than farming.  
People moved to city for work = overcrowding

Thomas Malthus – always said population would increase more than food supply. He thought the original 'poor law' was too charitable and made the poor lazy.

1834 Poor Law – made workhouses for the poor to earn food. Conditions were very bad and people would rather die than go there.

Dickens attacks Malthus and the poor law in this novel.

# A Christmas Carol

## The exam

Intro – that briefly answers the question. Use the phrase in the Q.

Main 1 – PEEL that answers the Q. Point, evidence, what it shows, key word, reader feel, link to society

Main 2 – Is there another part that shows what you have just written about in para 1? If not, PEEL that answers the Q. Point, evidence, what it shows, key word, reader feel, link to society.

Main 3 – Is there another part that shows what you have just written about in para 1 or 2? If not, PEEL that answers the Q. Point, evidence, what it shows, key word, reader feel, link to society.

Conclusion – Answer the Q by summing up your main paragraphs and add any other examples you didn't write about.

## A Christmas Carol

Charity:

Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere

Mankind was my business

It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven  
Christmas Eves ago.

Come! Dine with us tomorrow.

...we should make some slight provision for the  
poor and destitute

They sought to interfere, for good

I mean to give him the same chance every year,  
whether he likes it or not.

'back-payments'

Greed:

Solitary as an oyster

Are there no prisons?

## A Christmas Carol

Decrease the surplus population.

'weigh everything by Gain'

May you be happy in the life you have chosen!

His wealth is no use to him. He doesn't do any good with it. He doesn't make himself comfortable with it.

Ignorance and Want

Regret:

Doomed to wander through the world

I cannot rest

No rest, no peace

Every one of them wore chains like Marley's

Ghost

None were free

They sought to interfere, for good

## A Christmas Carol

There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something:

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

Show me know more!

I learnt a lesson which is working.

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

Have they no refuge or resource? Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

'sponge away the writing on this stone'

'pang across his heart' – when he sees charity workers on Christmas Day.