**Cirencester Kingshill English**

***A Christmas Carol***

Revision Guide



**Your Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Plot Summary**

**Stave One: 'Marley's Ghost'**

We meet Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly old businessman, whose partner Jacob Marley died seven years previously. Scrooge hates Christmas, and expresses his views to his nephew Fred, refusing his invitation to dine; to his clerk Bob Cratchit, who shivers beside a miniscule fire; and to two gentleman who unsuccessfully request a charitable donation from him. Upon returning home, he is visited by the ghost of his dead business partner Marley, who describes the punishment he suffers for his miserly and uncharitable life. Marley's ghost announces that Scrooge will be visited by three spirits who will seek to convince him of the error of his ways.

**Stave Two: 'The First of the Three Spirits'**

Scrooge is woken by a strange looking phantom who takes him on a trip into his past: the Ghost of Christmas Past. First he sees himself alone at boarding school, not returning home for the holidays as the other boys are, and wishes that he had been kinder to a young boy singing carols. Then he sees himself returning home as an older youth, with his beloved sister Fan, and reflects on his treatment of her son Fred. He witnesses the jovial generosity of his master Fezziwig during his apprentice days, and reflects on the contrast with his treatment of his own employee, Bob Cratchit. Finally, he sees his sweetheart parting from him, convinced that he loves money more, and is tortured by the sight of her loving, happy family, which could have been his had he not been gripped by avarice.

**Stave Three: 'The Second of the Three Spirits'**

Scrooge finds a hearty looking ghost in his apartments, surrounded by bounteous food and sitting in front of a roaring fire. It is the Ghost of Christmas Present. They travel swiftly through the London streets, witnessing the cheerfulness of all the people as the Christmas spirit touches them. Scrooge is taken to the Cratchits' house and witnesses their festivities, which are very joyful despite the small quantities of food they can afford. The only gloomy moment comes when Bob, with great magnanimity, insists on toasting his employer, to the disgust of his wife. Scrooge learns that Tiny Tim will die within a year if he is not nourished better, and is filled with penitence and grief. The Ghost then takes Scrooge to see a huge variety of people celebrating Christmas with great cheer, however humble and poor they may be. Towards the end of their travels, they visit Fred's house, where Fred and his wife and friends are enjoying a merry evening together. Fred insists that he is not angry with Scrooge. He pities him, and insists on toasting him, whatever his wife's objections. The Ghost ends with a warning, showing Scrooge two impoverished children who embody ignorance and want. Ignorance, proclaims the Ghost, is the greatest danger if it is not addressed.

**Stave Four: 'The Last of the Spirits'**

The last spirit is dark and mute, only communicating by gesture. It is the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. This Ghost shows Scrooge various businessmen who are not moved by the death of one of their number. The only emotions inspired by his death are happy ones: the greedy delight of the servants who have plundered his house, and even the shirt from his corpse, and the relief of a family that owed him money. When Scrooge asks to be shown tenderness following a death, he is shown the manner in which the Cratchits treasure the memory of Tiny Tim, and are inspired by the patience he once showed in his sufferings. Finally, Scrooge is shown the grave of the dead man, and his own name is written upon it. He begs for the opportunity to reform, but the Ghost still does not speak. It disappears, and Scrooge is back once again in his apartments.

**Stave Five: 'The End of It'**

Scrooge is determined to make amends for his former miserliness and is delighted to discover that it is Christmas Day, and the Spirits did all their work in one night. He sends a boy to buy the largest turkey from the poulterers and has it sent to the Cratchits. He strides out on to the streets to go to church, wishing everyone a merry Christmas, and upon encountering one of the gentlemen who was collecting for charity the previous day, he donates a large sum. He goes to his nephew's for Christmas dinner, receiving a hearty welcome. The next day, he gives Bob Cratchit a pay rise. The story ends with an overview of Scrooge's reformed character: generous and charitable, and well known as someone who knows how to celebrate Christmas.



**In the boxes, describe what’s happening in the story**

**Image from BBC Bitesize**

**Extension:** Explain the plot of ‘A Christmas Carol’ to a 6th Form (Year 12) student who has never read the book or seen the film. Include ideas on character, theme, symbols and writer’s intentions.

**Setting**

**Victorian London**

Serious poverty was a very obvious and widespread problem in Victorian London, as can be seen from the presence of beggars on the street, and from the symbolic children Ignorance and Want, who represent the unmet needs of the poorest in society. Scrooge walks through this city oblivious to the sufferings of those around him.

**The Countryside**

Although he has lived his adult life in London, it is clear in Stave Two that Scrooge grew up in the countryside. In contrast to the moral corruption of the city, the countryside represents innocence and joy, which Scrooge begins to rediscover when he returns there.

**The Weather**

At the start of the novel, the weather is foggy, which symbolises Scrooge’s moral blindness. But when he returns to the countryside of his youth, it is sunny, showing that the light of truth is dawning upon him. At the end of the novel, Christmas Day dawns bright and sunny too, symbolising Scrooge’s bright new start upon a life of generosity

**Scrooge’s Office**

Scrooge’s office is small and cramped, which represents his narrow view of life as consisting of nothing but making money. The office is also extremely cold at the start of the novel, because Scrooge does not want to spend money on coal to heat it sufficiently. However, at the end of the novel, the office is warmed by Scrooge’s newfound generosity, as he tells Bob to buy more coal for the fire.

**Fezziwig’s Warehouse**

In contrast to Scrooge’s cramped, cold office, Fezziwig’s warehouse is spacious, warm and welcoming, especially when he prepares it for a Christmas party in Stave Two.

**The Cratchit House**

The Cratchit house is small but full of life, as the Cratchits have six children. It is lovingly tended by Mrs Cratchit, who always makes the best out of what she has. It is the scene of the Cratchit’s meagre Christmas Dinner, which they nevertheless enjoy, determined as they all are to have a happy Christmas together as a family.

**Scrooge’s House**

In contrast to the Cratchit house, Scrooge’s house is dark and empty. He lives there alone, and does not even light any more candles than is strictly necessary, preferring darkness, because it is cheap. The lonely, dark and empty house makes clear that Scrooge gains no enjoyment from his wealth.

**Context – the influences on Dickens**

When the novel was written, in the 1840s, it was a time of rapid social change and unrest. Listed below are key issues from the time which may have influenced Dickens and his readers.

Read each statement and explain how this links to the novel. Add a quotation or reference from the text to support your point. There are some extra quotes dotted around the pages which may help.

Without the vote, ordinary men and women had very little power to influence the government. This meant it was difficult for people to change their lives for the better**. ‘This boy is ignorance and this girl is want’**. Society has neglected the poor and nobody is really addressing the problem.

Only about one in five men and no women had the vote in 1843.

Parts of London are ‘foul and narrow’ with alleys like ‘cesspools’

Fred and Fezziwig embrace the spirit of Christmas. Fred calls it a ‘kind, forgiving, charitable time’.

There was no social security system in place for people unable to find work. Those in absolute poverty had to rely on workhouses. In workhouses people had to work for no wages in terrible conditions in exchange for bed and board.

The 1840s were a time of economic uncertainty, which led to poverty and hardship. The decade is sometimes referred to as the ‘hungry 40s’.

Scrooge’s selfish attitude: ‘decrease the surplus population’

There was lots of debate about how poverty could be dealt with. Some felt that the poor should not be helped and were just an inevitable part of society; others felt that society should be changed in order to improve the lives of those living in poverty. The debate was often conducted by the better off, with ideas around how they could help rather than how those in poverty could help themselves.

The fate of Tiny Tim, shown by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come’ highlights the link between poverty and early death. Who saves him? What is Dickens telling us?

Technological innovations, such as the development of the railways and the industrial revolution meant that a small but significant number of people became very wealthy.

Scrooge doesn’t feel the need to donate to charity as there are workhouses and prisons.

Cratchit’s Christmas dinner has to be ‘eked out’. And a ‘small pudding’ suggests they don’t have much to eat normally.

This was a period in which scientific belief was beginning to replace religious belief in people’s view of the world.

Cities expanded rapidly during this period. This was partly to do with the development of new factories in cities and fewer jobs available in the country.

**Themes**

**Charity**

The virtue of self-sacrificial giving is at the heart of the novel. Scrooge must learn to give without any expectation of return, which goes against his principles of ‘business’.

**Forgiveness**

Grudges and resentment poison lives, and those who can forgive are able to be cheerful even in adversity. Fred and Bob Cratchit both exemplify this virtue, forgiving Scrooge for his harsh and cold actions towards them. They wish him well, however poorly he treats them. In both cases, their wives appear to be less magnanimous.

**Avarice**

Traditionally considered one of the seven deadly sins, avarice is the lust for wealth and possessions. It destroys charity and brings no joy to the evildoer, as can be clearly seen from Scrooge's miserable, lonely existence at the start of the novel, and the lonely death the future holds if he does not repent.

**Repentance and Conversion**

Scrooge's transformation shows Dickens' strong belief in human freedom, and the possibility of change and growth leading to renewal. Dickens clearly depicts the Christian idea that even the most hardened sinner can repent and change his ways, and be redeemed at the last.

**Business**

Scrooge is purely a man of business, which means that he looks after his own private interests and ignores the needs of others. Dickens does not attack business *per se*, however. There is no indication that Scrooge is planning to give it up at the end of the novel; he is merely planning to conduct his business with an eye to the public good, and use the proceeds for private philanthropy. Dickens does not present socialist views.

**Public Provision**

There are many references to public institutions such as the workhouses. They are portrayed as miserably inadequate. Based on the actions of the more virtuous characters, including the reformed Scrooge, the answer appears to lie in private philanthropy.

**Characters**

**Ebenezer Scrooge**

Ebenezer Scrooge is the hero of the novel. When we first meet Scrooge, he is completely cold, hard and uncharitable. But we learn during the novel how he once enjoyed life and even loved a woman. All of his better characteristics have been submerged under his passion for making money, however, to the point where he cares nothing for any other human being. When reminded of his former life, and shown the present and future consequences of his avarice, Scrooge seizes the opportunity to reform, and embraces generosity as the novel closes.

**Fred [surname never given]**

Fred is Scrooge's nephew and the son of his beloved sister Fan. Fred is a kind-hearted young man who endeavours to persuade his uncle to change his ways and enter into the Christmas spirit. He married for love, something of which Scrooge is particularly scornful at the opening of the novel. He remains magnanimous towards his uncle, and he welcomes Scrooge joyfully after his conversion.

**Jacob Marley**

Jacob Marley is Scrooge's former business partner, who died seven years prior to the novel's opening. In life, he shared Scrooge's avaricious attitude, but he suffers in the afterlife, and comes to warn Scrooge and persuade him to change his ways.

**Bob Cratchit**

Bob Cratchit is Scrooge's clerk, who works for low wages and in poor conditions, struggling to make enough money to feed his children adequately. Nevertheless, he insists on toasting his employer on Christmas day, thus exemplifying a charitable, forgiving attitude.

**Mrs Cratchit**

Mrs Cratchit is Bob Cratchit's wife. She works hard to make the home cheerful with Bob's meagre wages. She is less inclined to toast Bob's employer, perhaps because she cannot overlook the consequences of Scrooge's avarice for her own family, particularly Tiny Tim.

**'Tiny' Tim Cratchit**

Tiny Tim is Bob Cratchit's crippled son. Scrooge learns that Tim will die within a year if the Cratchits do not soon have a larger income so that he can be better nourished. This is a key moment in Scrooge's conversion to generosity.

**Mr Fezziwig**

Mr Fezziwig is a kind-hearted, jovial old merchant, to whom Scrooge was apprenticed as a young man. He is generous towards his apprentices, throwing a ball for them at Christmas time. Witnessing his generosity reminds Scrooge of the joys and benefits of open-heartedness.

**Fan**

Fan is Scrooge's sister, Fred's mother, whom he loved dearly when she was alive.

**Belle**

Belle is Scrooge's sweetheart in younger days, who parts from him when she sees that he loves money more than he loves her. She later marries happily and has a large family, a fact which fills Scrooge with regret for what might have been.

**Read this extract from Stave 1 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.**

**In this extract, Dickens gives the reader our first description of the character of Scrooge**

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

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

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

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the character of Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

* How Dickens presents Scrooge in this extract
* How Dickens presents Scrooge in the novel as a whole

**TOP TIP**

**Aim to talk about three pivotal points in the story when answering the second bullet point**

**MODEL PEE(E)**

Scrooge is presented by Dickens as an outsider in this extract. Dickens uses the weather in the first paragraph to show how Scrooge is colder than other people and ‘no wind that blew was bitterer than he’. The use of pathetic fallacy gives a description of Scrooge which makes him sound harsh and unfriendly. Dickens tells the reader that people avoid Scrooge like they avoid bad weather and will give the impression he is isolated from others. Furthermore, ….

Extend your PEE to PEEE by:

* Zooming into a key word: the word ‘bitterer’ suggests …
* Giving an alternative interpretation: the wind could also symbolise …
* Referencing context: In Victorian times …
* Linking to another part of the novel: Dickens uses pathetic fallacy again when …

**Example Response**

Dickens presents Scrooge as an outsider in this extract by the way he is described. He uses the weather in the first paragraph to show how Scrooge is “colder” than anything the weather can throw at him: “heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet”. The use of pathetic fallacy exaggerates the description of Scrooge being naturally isolated and cold, as if he is, like bad weather, naturally cold. Dickens then goes on to give examples of normal social behaviour in order to show that Scrooge is outside of society. He uses examples of direct address: “My dear Scrooge, how are you?” in order to highlight how unusual it would be for anyone to address Scrooge like this. This is then summarised by stating that Scrooge doesn’t want to be sociable and in fact regarding his isolation: “it was the very thing he liked”.

This attitude is shown later when Scrooge is visited by the charitable gentlemen. Even though it is Christmas, the season of goodwill, Scrooge sends them away very rudely and shows no concern for the fact that some people could really benefit from just a little bit of charity. Furthermore, his nephew cannot get him to come to dinner, even though it would mean he is on his own at Christmas. It is as if Scrooge cares nothing for the whole idea of Christmas; he is like the “external cold” but on the inside.

Good responses will refer to three pivotal points elsewhere in the text

It is only when the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come shows Scrooge his lonely, cold grave, that Scrooge finally realises that his loneliness and isolation from society will lead to nothing but misery. He has been shown lots of examples of the warmth and happiness of social people such as the Cratchits and also been reminded of how happy he used to be as a member of society, before greed and loneliness made him “cold”.

**Commentary:**This is a clear, relevant response to task, showing understanding of the ideas and of Scrooge as an outsider to society. Evidence, both direct and reference, is used to demonstrate this understanding. There is also a clear explanation of writer’s use of language/structure and its effect on meanings.

**Next Steps**

Analyse the effect of the two similes Dickens uses in the first paragraph:

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**Read this extract from Stave 1 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.**

**In this extract, Dickens describes Scrooge’s office.**

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

The door of Scrooge’s counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk’s fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn’t replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the character of Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

* How Dickens presents Scrooge in this extract
* How Dickens presents Scrooge in the novel as a whole

**Read this extract from Stave 1 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.**

**In this extract, Scrooge refuses to give any money to the two charity collectors.**

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

“Are there no prisons?” asked Scrooge.

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

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

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

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

“Both very busy, sir.”

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

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

“Nothing!” Scrooge replied.

“You wish to be anonymous?”

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

“Many can’t go there; and many would rather die.”

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

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the theme of charity and helping others in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

* How Dickens presents charity and helping others in this extract
* How Dickens presents charity and helping others in the novel as a whole



**LANGUAGE FOCUS**

**Read this extract from Stave 1 of *A Christmas Carol* and consider what Marley’s Ghost represents in the novel.**

The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which wrapper he had not observed before; he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

“How now!” said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. “What do you want with me?”

“Much!”—Marley’s voice, no doubt about it.

“Who are you?”

“Ask me who I *was*.”

“Who *were* you then?” said Scrooge, raising his voice. “You’re particular, for a shade.” He was going to say “*to* a shade,” but substituted this, as more appropriate.

“In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.”

How does Dickens use language to present Marley’s Ghost?

List the techniques you’ve spotted and **analyse** the effect on the reader

**Read this extract from Stave 2 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.**

**In this extract, Dickens describes the celebrations at Fezziwig’s ball.**

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and women employed in the business. In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker. In came the cook, with her brother’s particular friend, the milkman. In came the boy from over the way, who was suspected of not having board enough from his master; trying to hide himself behind the girl from next door but one, who was proved to have had her ears pulled by her mistress. 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 everyhow. Away they all went, twenty couple at once; hands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various stages of affectionate grouping; old top couple always turning up in the wrong place; new top couple starting off again, as soon as they got there; all top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them! When this result was brought about, old Fezziwig, clapping his hands to stop the dance, cried out, “Well done!” and the fiddler plunged his hot face into a pot of porter, especially provided for that purpose. But scorning rest, upon his reappearance, he instantly began again, though there were no dancers yet, as if the other fiddler had been carried home, exhausted, on a shutter, and he were a bran-new man resolved to beat him out of sight, or perish.

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the importance of family and celebration in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

* How Dickens presents family and celebration in this extract
* How Dickens presents family and celebration in the novel as a whole

**Read this extract from Stave 3 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.**

**In this extract, Dickens describes the character of the Ghost of Christmas Present**

The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in Scrooge’s time, or Marley’s, or for many and many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see; who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty’s horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

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

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

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Present,” said the Spirit. “Look upon me!”

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

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the theme of Christmas in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

* How Dickens presents Christmas in this extract
* How Dickens presents Christmas in the novel as a whole

**Read this extract from Stave 3 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.**

**In this extract, Dickens describes what Scrooge sees when he is with the Ghost of Christmas Present.**

For, the people who were shovelling away on the housetops were jovial and full of glee; calling out to one another from the parapets, and now and then exchanging a facetious snowball—better-natured missile far than many a wordy jest—laughing heartily if it went right and not less heartily if it went wrong. The poulterers’ shops were still half open, and the fruiterers’ were radiant in their glory. There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shopkeepers’ benevolence to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people’s mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins, squat and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner. The very gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present theme of abundance in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

* How Dickens presents the theme of abundance in this extract
* How Dickens presents the theme of abundance in the novel as a whole



**COMPARISON POINT**

Now read about how the Cratchits celebrate Christmas together (p29-32)

* How is their feast described?
* What is Dickens suggesting to the reader about family?
* Compare this to Fred’s celebrations on p35-37

**Read this extract from Stave 3 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.**

**In this extract, Dickens describes two figures that emerge from the clothes of the Ghost of Christmas Present.**

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The bell struck twelve.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the theme of poverty and social responsibility in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

* How Dickens presents poverty and social responsibility in this extract
* How Dickens presents poverty and social responsibility in the novel as a whole

**Read this extract from Stave 4 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.**

**In this extract, Dickens describes a part of London that Scrooge visits with the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.**

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.

Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a grey-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frousy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement.

Scrooge and the Phantom came into the presence of this man, just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another woman, similarly laden, came in too; and she was closely followed by a man in faded black, who was no less startled by the sight of them, than they had been upon the recognition of each other. After a short period of blank astonishment, in which the old man with the pipe had joined them, they all three burst into a laugh.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present poverty in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

* How Dickens presents poverty in this extract
* How Dickens presents poverty in the novel as a whole

**Read this extract from Stave 1 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.**

**In this extract, Dickens describes the moment Scrooge wakes on Christmas Day.**

Yes! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

“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!”

He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears.

“They are not torn down,” cried Scrooge, folding one of his bed-curtains in his arms, “they are not torn down, rings and all. They are here—I am here—the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will!”

His hands were busy with his garments all this time; turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance.

“I don’t know what to do!” cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocoön of himself with his stockings. “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!”

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the theme of redemption in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

* How Dickens presents the theme of redemption in this extract
* How Dickens presents the theme of redemption in the novel as a whole

Charity Collectors

Christmas involves generosity and kindness

Cratchits

Christmas brings out the best in people

Fred

Fred

Scrooge’s initial feelings about Xmas.

How he responds to Xmas at the end

The Christmas spirit transforms Scrooge

The influence of Marley’s Ghost

Ghost of Christmas Past

Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

Ghost of Christmas Present

**YOUR TURN**

Now create mind-maps for the following themes:

* Poverty and Social Responsibility
* Family

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Quotation** | **Character** | **Theme / Setting** |
| **Stave One:** |  |  |
| **1.** p3 'Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner!  | Scrooge | Avarice |
| **2.** p3 ‘Hard and sharp as flint … ‘solitary as an oyster.' | Scrooge | Avarice |
| **3.** p3 ‘External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge.’ | Scrooge | Outsider |
| **4.** p4 'Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal.' | Scrooge | AvariceScrooge’s Office |
| **5.** p4 '"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug!"' | Scrooge | Christmas |
| **6.** p9 ' "every idiot who goes around with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart." ' | Scrooge | Christmas |
| **7.** p6 '"I wish to be left alone [ . . . ] I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry."' | Scrooge | AvariceBusiness |
| **8.** p6 '"If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."' | Scrooge | Charity |
| **9.** p12 '"I wear the chain I forged in life [ . . . ] I made it link by link’ | Marley | AvariceRepentance |
| **10.** p12 ' "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business” ’ | Marley | CharityBusiness |
| **Stave Two: ‘The First of the Three Spirits’** |  |  |
| **11.** p22 Belle's parting with Scrooge: '"another idol has displaced me [ . . . ] a golden one."' | ScroogeBelle | Avarice |
| **Stave Three: ‘The Second of the Three Spirits’** |  |  |
| **12.** p32 ' "I see a vacant seat," replied the ghost… “If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die." ' | Tiny Tim | Avarice |
| **13.** p32 The Ghost of Christmas Present uses Scrooge's words against him: '"What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population." // Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.' | Scrooge | Repentance |
| **14.** p32 ' "Mr Scrooge!" said Bob. "I'll give you Mr Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!" ' | Bob Cratchit | Charity |
| **15.** p38 ‘This boy is ignorance. This girl is want. Beware them both.’ | Scrooge | AvariceCharity |
| **Stave Four: ‘The Last of the Spirits’** |  |  |
| **16.** p72 '"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year [ . . . ] Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!"' | Scrooge | Repentance |
| **Stave Five: ‘The End of It’** |  |  |
| **17.** p49 '"I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby."' | Scrooge | Repentance |
| **18.** p52 'it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge.' | Scrooge | Repentance |