

A Christmas  
Carol:  
Revision Guide

# MACBETH KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Plot	Characters	Themes
<b>Stave 1</b> - Scrooge's business partner Marley is dead, very dead in fact. Scrooge and Bob Crachit are working away on Christmas Eve, Bob wants Christmas Day off Scrooge is all like what?! The Fred, his nephew bursts in all very Merry Christmas. Scrooge is his typical grumpy self. Scrooge then goes home and up to bed but mot before being creeped out by the knocker on his door becoming Marley's face. THEN he see's Marley's ghost and they have a nice long chat,.	<b>Ebenezer Scrooge</b>	COMPASSION AND FORGIVENESS.
	<b>Bob Crachit</b>	ISOLATION
<b>Stave 2</b> - Scrooge is still all wiggged out from the chat with Marley, however trots off to bed to get a good night's sleep. THEN another ghost turns up - crazy or what?! This ghost is half granddad half kid with a million legs and a candle extinguisher... He's the ghost of Christmas Past who is taking Scrooge on a chilly stroll down memory lane. He's visits his miserable childhood, before breaking down into hysterical tears and sobs and snot. He admits he's a jerk and should be much nicer to everyone ever.	<b>Tiny Tim</b>	TRANSFORMATION
	<b>Jacob Marley</b>	RATIONALITY
<b>Stave 3</b> - So this is where it starts to get a bit repetitive, Scrooge wakes up again, and again it's nearly one o'clock. Hey guess what? Another ghost turns up, this time he looks like a jolly drunken uncle with a half open bathrobe and various other frankly weird stuff. Sop this ghost takes Scrooge off round his Christmas Present. The half naked ghost guy takes Scrooge over the city and hones in Tiny Tim, Bob Crachit's teeny tiny son who is a cripple. Scrooge gets all sad because TINY TIM is so very ill. Cue more crying.	<b>Fred Holywell</b>	CHOICES
	<b>Ghost of Christmas Past</b>	TIME
<b>Stave 4</b> -Okay so you're starting to get the idea here. Scrooge nods off and wakes up AGAIN at 1am to a Ghost. This guy doesn't speak, which is totally creepy and Scrooge is all like "You're here to make me a better person, I am so up for that!" then BAM over the city they float. They go to an old pawn shop where Scrooge's only servant is selling all the stuff she's stolen from him. Turns out he's dead. Bummer. She's got everything - even the stuff he was to be buried in. Turns out no one cared enough to even check on him. Then they hop to a couple who ar happy he's dead as they owe his big bucks then to the Crachit's where all the little children have to go out to work to earn pennies and Tiny Tim is dead.	<b>Ghost of Christmas Present</b>	FAMILY
	<b>Ghost of Christmas Future</b>	THE HOME
<b>Stave 5</b> - The latest ghost suddenly melts into a post which is actually Scrooge's bed post. Scrooge then wakes up and is all mega yay for christmas! He runs round like a looney before turning into a all round nice guy. He's pays a boy a load of pennies to get a turkey for the Crochets before totally gatecrashing Fred's Christmas Party where he has a blast. The next morning he gets all cheeky and pretends to be his old miserable self before surprise Bob with a massive raise and coal for the fire for heating. What a nice guy.	<b>Symbolism:</b> Marley's Chaims Scrooge's Gravestone Scrooge's Bed	MEMORY AND THE PAST
		GUILT AND BLAME

# Plot analysis...

## Initial Situation

### Bah! Humbug!

Scrooge lives an angry and miserly existence, hoarding his money and rejecting the positive emotions of the Christmas season. He's a big ol' bummer.

## Conflict

### Pesky Christmas Lovers

Scrooge's bitterness isolates him from anyone he ever comes across. On Christmas Eve, we see him get into a fight with his nephew Fred who just wants to invite him over for dinner, accuse his clerk Cratchit of theft because Christmas is a paid vacation day, and yell at a neighbor collecting money for the poor. Nice attitude, buddy.

## Complication

### The Intervention Escalates

Since none of the living can get through to him, the dead take over, and Scrooge gets a visit from the ghost of his partner Marley, who tells him to shape up or ship out.

## Climax

### The Undead Rear Their Ugly Heads

One by one, the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come show up to remind Scrooge that he was once a normal person, that his wealth could do a world of good to those suffering right near him—like the youngest son of the Cratchit family—and that if he doesn't mend his ways he's going to end up dead and totally unmourned.

## Suspense

### Things That Will Be, or Things That Only May Be?

Is Scrooge doomed to a life of being hated by everyone and then to a death without anyone shedding a tear or can he get his life in order in time? Are Tiny Tim and the rest of the Cratchit family doomed to poverty, illness, hunger, and death? Is it all fate, or does he have any power here? Seriously. We're asking.

## Denouement

### Baby Steps

After the ghosts leave, Scrooge takes some steps in the right direction. He gives Cratchit a raise and sends him and his family a giant turkey for Christmas dinner, he gives a bunch of money to the charity collector, and he shows up at Fred's party after all. Scrooge no more.

## Conclusion

### A Complete 180

Scrooge continues his self-reformation and becomes a completely upstanding, excellent, generous, and friendly fellow all around. Everyone who knows him says that he is the very definition of the Christmas spirit. Well that was fast.

# CHARACTER TABLE

Characters	QUOTE	DETAILS
<b>Ebenezer Scrooge</b>		A miserable, bitter old miser, Scrooge hates irrational things like happiness, generosity, and Christmas, until a trio of Ghosts shows him the error of his ways.
<b>Bob Cratchit</b>		The poor clerk that works for Scrooge's moneylending firm, Cratchit is the father of Tiny Tim, an angelic sickly boy.
<b>Tiny Tim</b>		The youngest member of the Cratchit family, Tiny Tim is a sickly and angelic small boy whose life hinges in the balance of Scrooge's transformation into a better man.
<b>Jacob Marley</b>		Scrooge's long-dead business partner is the first ghostly visitor who haunts him, warning him about the Christmas ghosts soon to come.
<b>Fred Holywell</b>		Scrooge's nephew, the son of his beloved but now dead sister, is his only living relative, and also the only person who wants to pull him out of isolation and back into the world.
<b>Ghost of Christmas Past</b>		An unsettling combination of a small child and an old man, this Ghost takes Scrooge on a tour of his past Christmases in order to reconnect him to his feelings.
<b>Ghost of Christmas Present</b>		A hale and hearty fellow, the Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge how the other half—or rather the 99%—spend their Christmas holidays.
<b>Ghost of Christmas Future</b>		This thing isn't even called a ghost any more—Dickens changes the terminology and starts referring to this super menacing cloaked figure as a "phantom."



## Ebenezer Scrooge

### Traits:

*miserly, lonesome, greedy, cheerless, heartless*

### Interests:

*Making Money and being left alone*

### Beliefs:

*That family and friendship are a waste of time and that people will only let him down.*

### Quote that Shows Personality:

*"Bah Humbug!"*

## Bob Cratchit

### Traits:

### Interests:

### Beliefs:

### Quote that Shows Personality:

## Tiny Tim

### Traits:

### Interests:

### Beliefs:

### Quote that Shows Personality:

## Jacob Marley

### Traits:

### Interests:

### Beliefs:

### Quote that Shows Personality:

## Fred Holywell

### Traits:

### Interests:

### Beliefs:

### Quote that Shows Personality:

## Ghost of Christmas Past

### Traits:

### Interests:

### Beliefs:

### Quote that Shows Personality:

## Ghost of Christmas Present

### Traits:

### Interests:

### Beliefs:

### Quote that Shows Personality:

## Ghost of Christmas Future

### Traits:

### Interests:

### Beliefs:

### Quote that Shows Personality:



Belle  
Scrooge's  
ex-girlfriend



Warm-hearted  
little girl



Jacob Marley  
(Dead)  
Partner of Scrooge



Joe  
Shop owner



Caroline  
Owes Scrooge  
money



Dick Wilkins  
Scrooge's  
ex-colleague



Ghost of  
Christmas  
Past



Ebenezer Scrooge  
Mean and unkind man



Ghost of Christmas  
Yet to Come



Mr. Fezziwig  
Scrooge's ex-boss



Bob Cratchit  
Clerk



Ghost of  
Christmas  
Present



Fred



Mrs. Cratchit



Martha



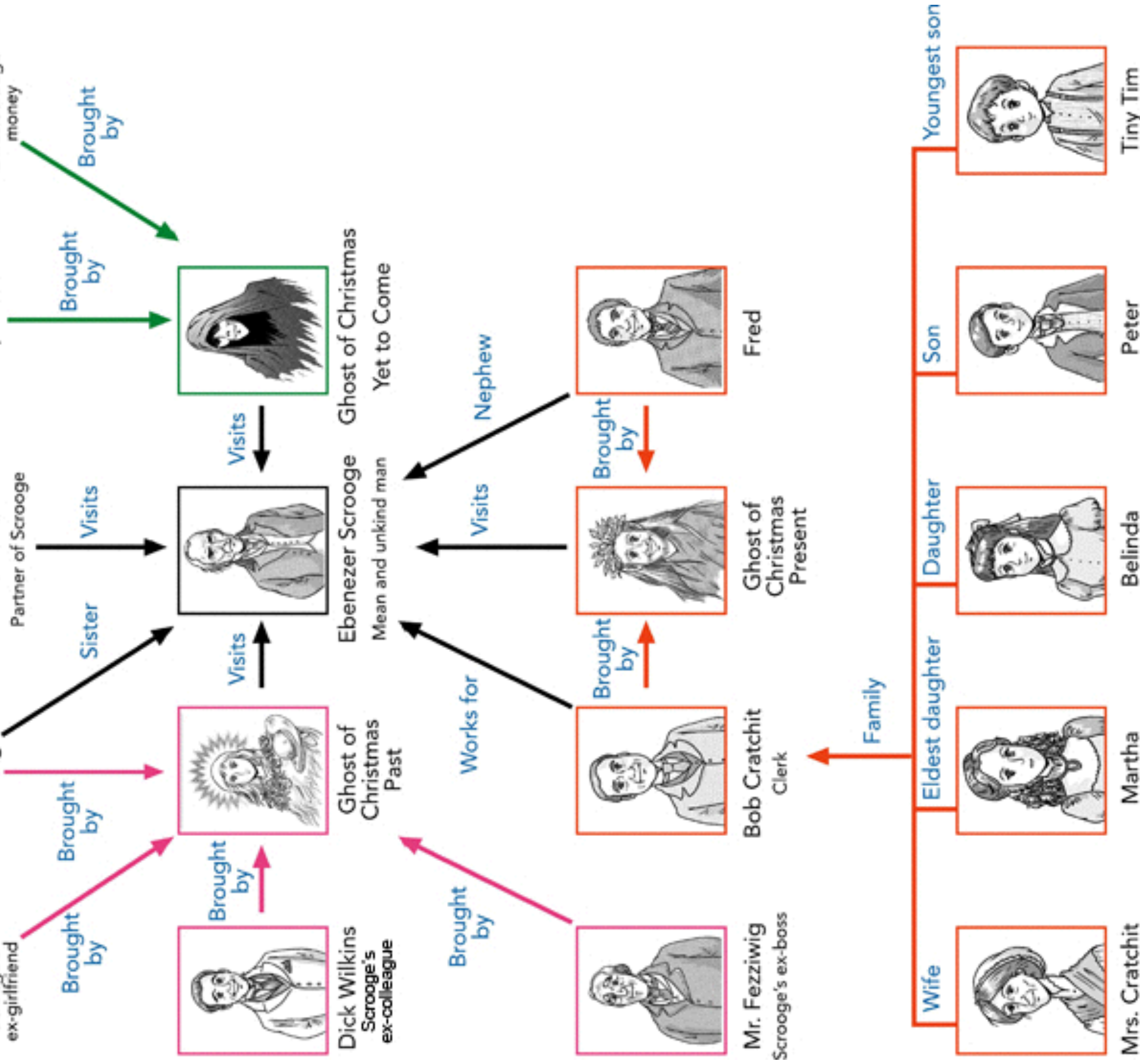
Belinda



Peter



Tiny Tim



# Stave 1 - Marley's Ghost

- Boom, we start just like that with the narrator busting out the fact that Marley is 100% dead. Dead, dead, dead, dead.
- His old business partner Scrooge is alive though, and still runs the same small company they used to run together. It's not really clear what this company actually does, but it doesn't really matter for the purposes of the story. Basically, it's some kind of middleman operation, where they don't make anything, and just sit around doing bookkeeping all day long. Or something. Dickens wasn't really up too much on the ins and outs of businesses.
- Anyway, Scrooge turns out to be the grumpiest grumper that ever grumped. And also, he's pretty greedy. And worst of all? He is all head, no heart. This is a big no-no in Dickens's world, so we're guessing someone's about to learn a lesson about feelings.
- On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is in his office, counting money and watching his clerk. Everything is as shoddy as possible, because Scrooge doesn't want to spend an extra cent even on heating the place if he doesn't have to.
- His nephew bursts in and is all, La-la-la, Merry Christmas!
- Scrooge throws out his famous catchphrase—say it with him now—"Bah! Humbug!" Okay, it's no "Leggo My Eggo," but still.
- The nephew wants Scrooge to come over for Christmas dinner, but Scrooge isn't having any of it. Scrooge doesn't get what the big deal about Christmas is, and calls everyone else a jerk and an idiot for not being depressed by being in debt and not using that day to work more to try to pay it off.
- The nephew is like, but what about the whole Jesus's birth thing? And the whole being nice to other people thing? Nice try, dude.
- Scrooge makes him leave, but not before insulting his marriage because it's based on love. (Hey, you know whom Shmoop would love to have over for family dinner? That crazy old uncle who hates us and insults our spouse. You kind of have to wonder why this nephew is so dead set on having this horrible man come by. Shmoop's going to go all cynical here and say the nephew wants to bank that inheritance! Okay, fine, he's totally not. We just don't really get why he's so fixated on Scrooge coming.)
- Right. Where were we?
- Oh, yes. A couple of guys show up asking for any donations for the poor. Scrooge tells them to go stuff it, and argues that anyone who is poor can either go to jail, go to the workhouse (basically, jail for poor people where you have to work), or die. He successfully harshes their mellow and they take off.
- Someone comes by to try to carol and Scrooge almost hits him in the face with a ruler.
- Scrooge then turns on the clerk and grudgingly gives him Christmas Day off with half pay—or as he calls it, the one day a year when the clerk is allowed to rob him.
- Finally, the day is done, and Scrooge goes home to his apartment. It's worth noting that he lives in a building that is otherwise all offices, so there's no one else around to hear him scream.
- Just as he is about to go in the door, the doorknocker... turns into the face of his dead partner Marley! Eek!
- But then it's okay, and Scrooge is only very mildly freaked out. He checks around the house, but everything seems hunky-dory.
- He sits down to eat his sad little dinner (and honestly, we do have to point out that he is so consistent in treating everyone like dirt that he treats himself the same way as well). Just then, all the bells in the house start to ring.
- Then, the door from the cellar bursts open and out of it comes... Marley's ghost! All wrapped up in chains that are a literal mockery of his business life, made out of keys and locks and money purses and cash-boxes.
- Scrooge is pretty impressive here. He is clearly really freaking out, but still manages to smart-mouth this ghostly horror for a while.
- Finally, the ghost gets a word in edge-wise, makes its jaw fall off its head to prove that stuff is about to get real, and reveals a couple of things:
  - 1 Ghosts of terrible people have to endlessly work to make the world a better place.
  - 2 Marley has gotten Scrooge a chance to reform himself.
  - 3 Three ghosts are coming.
- Then the ghost goes out the window and Scrooge sees it join a whole mishmash of miserable ghosts, all of whom are similarly chained with the physical manifestations of their misdeeds. Scrooge realizes that he knew a bunch of them when they were alive.
- The fog sets in and the ghosts fade from view.
- Scrooge tries to shake the whole experience off, finds that he can't, and instead just goes to sleep, 'cause, why not?



# Stave 2: The First of the Three Spirits

- Scrooge wakes up and starts freaking out because the clock makes it seem like he slept straight through the next day... but, you know, once you start messing around with ghosts and stuff, the clock is the least of your problems.
- Scrooge goes over the whole thing with Marley in his head and decides it was probably a crazy dream. Which—um, spoiler alert—not really.
- Suddenly, the clock strikes one, the curtains of his bed are pulled open, and he sees... a ghost that looks like a cross between a tiny old man and a child. (Oh, just a little Shmooptastic FYI here: back in the day, they had four-post beds for a reason—there were curtains going from post to post that you would pull closed to sleep. So those are the curtains that we're talking about here.)
- So. The kid/grandpa ghost is crazy looking, sometimes with twenty legs, sometimes with no head. It also is very, very bright, but carries with it a huge version of an old-timey metal candle-extinguisher (basically, a little cone-shaped thing that you would put over a candle to cut off the evaporated candle wax fumes that make the fire go in order to put it out).
- It claims to be the Ghost of Christmas Past, and takes Scrooge off for a walk through the wall. Scrooge is all, um, that's not going to fly for me, buddy, but the ghost magics him into being transmutable. Sweet.
- Off they go.
- First stop? Scrooge's totally depressing childhood, spent all alone in a school where every other kid is off for Christmas break with the family.
- (Before we go on, we have to point out something here. Scrooge starts to break down pretty much immediately from this point on. Like, there is almost no effort required on the part of the ghosts to get him to own up to being a jerk. Almost every modern adaptation of the whole Scrooge-and-the-three-ghosts archetype that follows this one—and there are many, so check Shmoop's "[Best of the Web](#)" section for some cool ones—tries to draw out this process a bit more. So it's always a little shocking to re-read the original and see that Scrooge gives in to the lesson-learning with no resistance at all.)
- Back to the story.
- Scrooge starts to sob hysterically at the sight of himself as a little boy reading a bunch of fantasy books. (Oh, and did you notice that he reads pretty much only adventure stories? That's pretty at odds with his hyper-rational self in the present. Dickens, by the way, was way against rationalism.)
- Not only does he cry, but also he immediately fesses up to the kid/grandpa ghost that he should really have shelled out some coin to that caroling kid from earlier in the evening.
- But it's time to get back on the [love train](#), oops we mean the ghost train. Stop number two is another one of these Christmas-vacation-spent-at-school days. This time, though, Scrooge's little sister comes to bring him home. Her big news is that their dad has for some reason gotten way nicer and so little Ebenezer is allowed to come back home for good.
- (Wait, what? Yeah, no kidding. None of this is filled in beyond what we're telling you here—why on earth he was sent away in the first place, what was the matter with crazy old dad, why the sister was allowed to stay behind, and what changed? Apparently doesn't matter when you're trying to crank this thing out to get it published before the Christmas deadline.)
- Anyway, we learn that the sister is dead now, but that Scrooge's nephew is her son. Which... doesn't really tell us anything that the word "nephew" didn't already convey, but, you know, clearly this is more important than the whole our-dad-was-way-crazy-but-let's-just-gloss-right-over-that-shall-we situation.
- So, fine then, dead sister, got it.
- Now, it's on to stop number three, where Scrooge remembers how awesomely he partied that one Christmas at the house of his master Fezziwig with his BFF and fellow apprentice, Dick Wilkins. Dudes, that party was totally off the hook!
- Also, it's the first nice Christmas scene we've gotten so far—the point being that just for a few bucks, Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig make a whole bunch of neighborhood apprentice kids happy for a few hours and are then remembered with affection forever. Or something like that.
- Scrooge immediately gets the point of this. By contrast he's been kind of a jerko to his own clerk. He's really pretty quick on the uptake, no?
- On to the next glimpse into the past: the Christmas when Scrooge really starts turning into the greedy old hobgoblin we know and love.
- In the scene, a slightly older Scrooge sits with his fiancée who straight up accuses him of loving money more than her. He's all, "Um, but I can still love you second-best, right? And also, money is really totally important!" But she is not having it, and breaks off the engagement. He doesn't really argue.
- Finally, one last thingie from the Ghost of Christmas Past, which turns out to be basically the Dickensian equivalent of Beyoncé's "[if you liked it then you should have put a ring on it](#)."
- The ex-fiancée is now sitting in the middle of her huge family, with a whole bunch of kids happily running around, and a husband who totally loves her and them and is just completely the kind of Prince Charming that Scrooge would never have been. The happiness is so absolute that it's a little suspicious. Or maybe Shmoop's just getting cynical in its old age.
- Anyway, just like that, these super happy people just happen to mention crazy old Scrooge, who the husband says is all alone, now that Marley is on the verge of death. Wow, what a coincidence that they would just happen to talk about him right then!
- Scrooge can't take any more of this all of a sudden. He grabs the extinguisher cap thing and tries to smother the kid/grandpa ghost with it. Wow, that's like [Chekhov's gun](#)! You just knew that thing was going to be used at some point as soon as Dickens described it when the ghost first showed up.
- The ghost kind of melts into the floorboards and Scrooge falls asleep, which is clearly his go-to method of coping with a crisis. We prefer chocolate.

# Stave 3 - The Second of the Three Spirits

- Scrooge snorts himself awake, and again it's about to be one o'clock. Scrooge is hip to all this now, though, so he doesn't freak out.
- Instead, he decides to be proactive, so he pulls apart the bed curtains himself this time, and gets ready to not be shocked. Except... nothing happens.
- Well, nothing happens until he sees a weird light coming from the next room and decides to investigate. Guess what? That's right. Ghost time.
- The second ghost looks like a middle-aged frat boy after a party. He's only wearing a half-open bathrobe, has a drunkenly jolly vibe, and he's surrounded by a ton of food and drinks.
- Oh, and he's holding a cornucopia in his hand. (Cool word alert, kids—cornucopia is the Latin word for "horn of plenty", and it literally means a hollow animal horn filled with whatever goodies you want. It has since come to have a more general, figurative meaning: an overabundant supply of something.)
- This guy turns out to be the Ghost of Christmas Present.
- Scrooge grabs onto his bathrobe and away they go!
- First on the menu is just a nice little flyover of the city, where everyone is bustling around getting ready for Christmas dinner. Friendly snowball fights, lots of food, neighbors getting together, and just an eerily picture-perfect scene all around.
- The cornucopia turns out to have magic pixie dust in it that spreads Christmas cheer wherever the middle-aged frat ghost dumps some of it out.
- They float away from the town and on to the house of Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's clerk. Spoiler alert: Tiny Tim is coming, so grab the tissues and get ready for the tear-jerking.
- The Cratchits are poor, but totally loving and adorable, of course. The mom loves the kids, the kids love the mom, the kids love each other, and everyone is just super hunky-dory.
- They get the table ready for the meal, and then Bob comes home from church with their youngest, sickest kid, Tiny Tim, who is all shriveled up and also walks with a crutch.
- Not only is Tiny Tim brave and stoic about his illness, but he also has deep thoughts about it—he tells his dad that he likes being a visual reminder for everyone else at church about how Christ healed the lame and made the blind see again. Wow, that's some high-level maturity perspective there, kiddo! Sure you aren't secretly a tiny seventy-year-old man?
- Their sad little dinner is served, and they all eat with gusto.
- Scrooge is again really quick on the uptake and asks his frat man ghost whether Tiny Tim will live. Um, not so much, says the ghost... unless something changes in their lives! Hmm... wonder what needs to change?
- Then, Bob proposes a toast to his boss Scrooge. He seems to have a lot of compassion for how miserable and horrible Scrooge is, but Mrs. Cratchit, not so much. When the gloom of mentioning Scrooge's name in public wears off, they all get happy again and talk about how awesome it will be when the older kids get jobs and start to earn some money.
- The ghost rubs Scrooge's nose in all of this just a little more, and then they float away to a mining field. It's horrible and desolate, but still, in a tiny hut, there is a little family celebrating Christmas.
- Then they float even farther away to a lighthouse in the middle of nowhere. But of course, the two dudes inside are totally Christmasing it up.
- And even all the way out in the middle of the ocean, on a boat, all the sailors are drinking and singing and getting into the holiday spirit.
- Scrooge is all, huh.
- And then, just like that, the final stop on the tour: Scrooge's nephew Fred's house.
- Fred and his wife are having a party with some friends, and of course, they are totally talking about Scrooge right when he gets there. Weird how that keeps happening, right?
- Mostly, Fred and the gang are laughing about how Scrooge doesn't believe in Christmas. Fred says that he will continue to try to get his uncle to come over for the holiday every year forever.
- They then start to play games, mostly **blind-man's bluff**. (Shmoop brain snack: this is basically blindfolded tag.)
- It's pretty funny, actually, because the dude who is "it" starts peeking around his blindfold to keep hugging the girl he's into at the party.
- Fun is had by all.
- The last game is a variation of Twenty Questions, with Fred thinking of something, and the others eventually guessing that the "growling and grunting animal" is actually Scrooge. Okay, okay, we get it. Point made.
- They drink to Scrooge's health, and with that, the ghost pulls Scrooge away from the scene.
- They fly around a little bit more, seeing more of the same thing.
- Finally, Scrooge notices that the middle-aged frat ghost is now more like an old man frat ghost. Turns out, it only gets to live until the end of Christmas.
- And now it's time for some totally freaky craziness.
- Scrooge looks down and sees a huge claw coming out of the bottom of ghost's robe (and there is a totally great moment, in which, with awesome British politeness, Scrooge is like, "excuse me please for being so forward, but is that perhaps some kind of monster coming out from under your clothing?" as opposed to a more normal reaction which would probably be something like "AAAAAH!").
- The claw turns out to be... two small children! The elderly male Ghost of Christmas Present has just given birth to two small children! But we gloss right over to that, to reveal that these children are symbols—the boy is Ignorance, and the girl is Want (meaning poverty or the lack of something).
- The ghost tells Scrooge that people need to watch out and not have these children running around in the world. Scrooge makes a note of that.
- Just then, the jolly frat ghost disappears. Scrooge turns around, only to see... a scary phantom draped in a hooded cloak coming towards him.

# Stave 4: The Last of the Spirits

- The phantom doesn't talk, but just points out with its hand.
- This is definitely really spooky, but instead of getting really terrified, Scrooge turns into that kid with his hand raised straining to get called on in class. He's all, "You're the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come!"
- The thing doesn't answer. "Ooh, ooh, you're about to show me the future!" No answer. "Oh, I know, I know, you're here to make me a better person, and I'm totally on board with that!"
- The phantom floats away, with Scrooge somehow dangling from its cloak.
- Immediately they are in the city, overhearing a convo between a few business dudes. Seems like someone is dead that neither of them cares about, and they are kind of laughing about how hard it'll be to gather up people for the funeral.
- Huh. Wonder who is dead. Scrooge certainly has no idea, and tries to get the phantom to cough up some info, but no dice.
- Another couple of businessmen also seem to be talking about a dead guy, but they care even less than the first group.
- Scrooge is all, well, none of this is relevant to my embetterment, so let's get on with the show already! Oh, Scrooge, Scrooge. How could you possibly not be catching on to this?
- The phantom takes him to the shady side of town, to a rag and bone merchant (basically a gross old pawn shop type place). Just as they show up, two women and a man come up to the counter with bags of stuff.
- The first is a charwoman.
- Okay, here's a little Shmooptastic primer in ye olde Victorian house servants. So, since labor was super-cheap back in the day, most people could afford servants. This meant that basically almost everyone above the very, very dirt poor would have a bunch of different people doing stuff for them. There would at least be some housemaids for cleaning, some charwo for heavy-duty cleaning, and some cooks for... um, cooking, obviously. Poorer people would still have to rely on servants—usually just a charwoman to come and help with the serious cleaning, which was hard, because, you know, no **DJ Roomba** or **Oxy Clean** and stuff. Anyway, it's pretty significant that although Scrooge is rolling in it, he has almost no one working for except the charwoman. It's just one more way to show how tightfisted the dude is.
- Right, back to the pawnshop. The charwoman is a little stressed to show all her stolen goods at first, but the pawn shop owner is like, hey that dead guy was horrible, so who cares that you stole all his stuff, amirite?
- This brilliant bit of philosophy does the trick, and the charwoman starts to unload the stuff... except the man pushes ahead of her and goes first. His plunder is mostly some office equipment.
- Next is the second woman, who turns out to be a laundress. She's got sheets and towels and some clothes.
- Finally, the charwoman's turn. She's got... yikes, she's got the bed curtains! And the bed blankets! And even the shirt that the dead guy was going to be buried in.
- The moral of the story? No one cared enough to check on the dead guy, so these three ripped him off to their hearts' content.
- Scrooge is all, man, that poor sucker! Good thing that's not me! He tells the phantom that he's totally learned his lesson, and he'll change his ways so he doesn't become that guy. Funny how he's suddenly really not so quick on the uptake, eh?
- The phantom is all, ugh, you are so slow. Okay then. Desperate times...
- It takes Scrooge to see the dead body lying under a sheet in some dark room with no people around.
- Scrooge again isn't making the connection, and is like, yes, yes, I get it, I will totally be better so I don't end up like whoever that random stranger is! Then for some reason, Scrooge asks the phantom if there is anyone who feels anything about this guy's death.
- All right, everyone, get ready for a twist!
- The only people who feel anything about the death are a couple who feel... happiness! Oh, tricky word play, Dickens, you old so-and-so.
- The reason these two are so happy is that they were in debt to the dead guy who was threatening them with bankruptcy, but now that he is dead they have some time to try to come up with the money.
- Suddenly, Scrooge and the phantom are at the Cratchits' house. Nothing too happy is happening there. The kids all have to go out and get jobs. And also it turns out that Tiny Tim is dead. Bob Cratchit comes back from the cemetery and breaks down.
- Scrooge is moved, but kind of wants to get out of there. We don't blame him.
- He asks the phantom to finally show him himself in the future. Um. Yeah, folks, he still isn't catching on.
- The phantom starts taking him somewhere, and they go by his old office. Scrooge peeks in only to see some other guy in his place. Huh, that's curious.
- Finally, they get to an abandoned cemetery and the phantom points down at one of the graves. Scrooge totally freaks out, but still makes his way over to the grave and sees... his own name! Dun dun dun. Okay, yeah, we all saw it coming. Not too much suspense there.
- Scrooge suddenly clues in to the fact that the dead guy he saw on the bed and whom everyone was discussing was actually him.
- In terror, he asks the phantom a pretty crucial question—whether what he is being shown is actually the future, or just one of a number of possible futures. Basically, old Scrooge has just stumbled on the multi-verse theory of quantum physics. Way to go!
- Scrooge grabs onto the phantom's hand, but the phantom shrinks away into a post.

## Stave 5 - The End of It

- That post turns out to be... Scrooge's own bed post. He is back in his bed. And his bed curtains are still there. And he has time to fix his life.
- Scrooge gets dressed and runs to the window, laughing for the first time in many years. He hears church bells, and a boy passing by tells him it's Christmas Day.
- All smiles and compliments, Scrooge tells the boy to go buy the prize turkey from the poultry shop, planning to send it to the Cratchits. He pays for the boy's time, the turkey, and even cab fare for him to haul the thing out to their house.
- Outside, Scrooge runs into those charity collectors from the day before. He gives them a huge pile of money and then goes off to church and to walk around looking at people. All of this makes him super-happy.
- He decides to head over to his nephew's house, where he totally startles his niece-in-law, and where he has a blast at the Christmas party they've got going on (it's the one we saw earlier in the story).
- The next morning, he pretends to be all gruff and crabby at work, and then shocks Cratchit by giving him a huge raise and even buying some coal to heat the place for once.
- And finally, we learn what the real future turns out to be. Scrooge helps out the Cratchit family, takes care of Tiny Tim (who then ends up surviving), and generally becomes a wonderful guy all around.
- Everyone for ever after says that he sure is really good at keeping up the spirit of Christmas.



# THEMES

Theme	Thinking Point	Questions
<p>In A Christmas Carol, compassion is the main ingredient in the kindness and generosity cake that Dickens seems to crave. Scrooge gets a load of the contrast between those people who are willing to feel pity towards him (his ex-fiancée, his nephew, his clerk) and those who coldly dismiss him as he does them (fellow business people, his servants, the pawn shop owner). Then he reaches deep inside himself and finds a whole bunch of empathy that's he's been repressing, and —alakazam—he's flooded with nothing but good vibes toward those around him. After that, he transforms into a dude who can put himself into the shoes of others, and even forgive them for their misdeeds. In other words, he's now one of the people who are emotionally best equipped to live life.</p>	<p>Bonus! The person Scrooge learns to feel the most compassion for during his ghostly adventures is himself. The only way to make the novella work is to have a totally unrealistic representation of how willing to forgive everyone is for a lifetime of Scrooge's misdeeds. Can you tell Shmoop can hold a grudge?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Why does Cratchit feel pity for Scrooge? Why does Fred? Is it for the same reason, or do their different points of view affect their perceptions of him?</li> <li>2 Who has the most to forgive in the novel? Who has the least? Does anyone hold a grudge?</li> <li>3 Forgiveness and compassion are pretty important aspects of Christian belief. What would be different if the novella couched its discussion of them in a religious context? Why don't we hear more about the value Christianity puts on these qualities, and instead experience them in the mostly secular sphere?</li> <li>4 What if Scrooge didn't come around in the end?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Eric Carmen</b> was on to something. Of all the scary visions and horrible emotions A Christmas Carol describes, there is pretty much none that is quite so overwhelmingly devastating as being all alone. Over and over again we get to check out people who have been geographically or mentally isolated by their life circumstances. In all of these cases, everyone we see struggles as best they can to reverse the isolation and to seek out other humans to hang out with because, you know, that's what humans do. That's what makes Scrooge such a monstrous weirdo; he has isolated himself rather than being forced into that state.</p>	<p>The scenes of people buying the preparations for Christmas celebrations are, if anything, even more important than the scenes of people actually having Christmas parties.</p> <p>The person Scrooge is most isolated from is actually himself, and the novella is a long journey of the man coming to recognize his own humanity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Why does the novella give Scrooge a family member (Fred)? How would the story be different if he had no living family at all?</li> <li>2 Can we connect the fact that Scrooge chooses books rather than people for company during the lonely Christmas holidays at school as a boy to the fact that he lives in self-imposed exile as an old man? How does this change our perception of him? Or does it not?</li> <li>3 In the novella, it's important that Scrooge is isolated not only from companionship with other people, but also from economic transactions with them. Why? How are the two similar? How are they different?</li> </ol>
<p>A Christmas Carol is bursting at the seams with all sorts of supernatural transformations, and readers are constantly invited to feast their eyes on the way an object, a person, or even a whole scene melts into another, often totally without commentary from the characters who are living it. All this is fitting for a work which is in itself a story of two transformations—a young lonely boy's gradual evolution into an embittered old man, and the Herculean efforts necessary to reconnect that old man back to the emotionally available person he once used to be.</p>	<p>Because we see that Scrooge was a sensitive and loving boy when he was a child, this is not a true transformation story so much as a story of a man reclaiming qualities he has already had all along.</p> <p>Okay, okay. More than any memory, it is the horrifyingly chaotic and unpredictably shifting supernatural assault that bugs Scrooge.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 What's the coolest supernatural transformation in the novella? Why? What's the least interesting?</li> <li>2 What's so awesome about his transformation is that Scrooge regains his ability to feel emotions appropriately. Compare, for example, the strangely delayed and cut off fear he experiences at the sight of the transformed doorknocker with his feelings when the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come disappears. How does the novel treat these scenes of fear differently? How are they similar?</li> <li>3 Why does the transformation of Scrooge take place over one night? Why not stretch it out? What would be different if this story happened over weeks? Months? Years?</li> </ol>



# THEMES

Theme	Thinking Point	Questions
In A Christmas Carol, rationality and logic are pretty much big road blocks on Scrooge's way toward being a successful and fulfilled human being. Whatever Scrooge's emotional or psychological faults may actually be, they are outwardly shown by the way he dismisses the poor and the sentimental with the cold and heartless logic that Dickens attributed to the supporters of the <b>New Poor Law</b> and the newfangled science of economics. One of the main ways that we recognize that Scrooge has been cured is his sudden willingness to put himself in the hands of the Christmas Ghosts, and to give himself over to the supernatural irrationality and emotion they represent.	Try on an opinion or two, start a debate, or play the devil's advocate. The poignant moments when he is trying his best to make sense of the wacky supernatural stuff going on while still trying to cling to his rationality are the places where we identify strongest with Scrooge. No matter how much Dickens rails against rationalism, A Christmas Carol is totally a rationalist story; it throws the religious aspects of Christmas out the window and pushes for a more secular holiday based on kindness and generosity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Why is Scrooge's brand of clear-eyed rationality shown to be so very terrible? If he kept that part of himself while also tapping into his emotions, would that have been a cure? Why or why not?</li> <li>2 Who is the most irrational character? Who is the most rational? How do you know?</li> <li>3 Scrooge provides his own rational explanation of the ghosts he sees—that they are nightmares fueled by indigestion. Does it diminish the story if this is actually the case—that he transforms because of a bunch of bad dreams and repressed memories and guilt bubbling up as opposed to an actual supernatural sleepwalk? Why or why not?</li> </ol>
In a novella where not very much plot actually happens, it is striking that most of what we see the characters actually do is make choices about the kinds of people they want to be. Basically, this adds up to the idea that free will is the paramount power in the world, and A Christmas Carol places a heavy burden on readers. That's because this is a story that stresses that outcomes depend almost entirely on choices. Yikes. That's a whole lot of responsibility.	Scrooge actually goes wrong in the way past. It's his decision not to seek out other people during Christmas vacation in school that leads to his eventual complete isolation. Whoops. The text leaves room to wonder whether Scrooge will be harmed by the same lack of balance that led him to entirely shut the world out—except this time in the other direction, by letting the world in too much.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Is there any problem in the text that Scrooge's choice about what to do with his money can't solve? Are we ever shown anything that resembles fate rather than the logical result of human actions (or inaction)?</li> <li>2 Which character has the most power to choose? Which has the least? Is there anyone who makes no choice at all? Do the ghosts have free will of any kind—do they make choices?</li> <li>3 What's the worst choice that Scrooge makes? Why?</li> </ol>
On the one hand, in A Christmas Carol time is, quite frankly, nutso. Scrooge's experiences last one night, but feel to him like several days, and encompass many years worth of emotional crises and reversals. Whew. On the other hand, the story is structured as a race against time with the two ticking time bombs of Tiny Tim's illness and Scrooge's own eventual death as the zero hours that have to be somehow prevented or at least put off indefinitely. So time is both totally stretchable and totally scarce, which only adds to the surreal, chaotic feeling of the story.	The fact that Scrooge goes to bed at two in the morning but then wakes up at midnight of the same night (i.e. two hours before he fell asleep) means that this whole experience is a dream, plain and simple. Scrooge is much more a hoarder of time than of money. We see him bullying Cratchit over a few minutes of lateness and a day of vacation, but we never see him occupy himself with any actual bills or coins. So the upshot of the novella is to get Scrooge to reexamine the way he spends his time even more than his income.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Why does the novella feel like a race against time when we don't actually know how many years into the future the visions of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come are? What would be different if we knew that Scrooge had several years to decide to change himself?</li> <li>2 Why do the ghosts come at one in the morning? Why does time keep resetting itself? Why not just come at successive times in the same night—or at the same time on different nights? Is there a point to the destabilization of time in this way?</li> <li>3 Why does the revelation of the past show us many different time periods while the future only shows us one Christmas? What would be different if we saw several of the years yet to come and watched Scrooge's life slowly unravel further and further? Was he already at his lowest point, so there was nowhere else to go but death?</li> </ol>
A Christmas Carol presents family life as the most normal and healthiest experience that all humans should aspire to. How <b>Victorian</b> ! The inspirational characters are members of large families or family groupings—Bob Cratchit, Fezziwig, the miner, and Scrooge's ex-fiancée. But even the family-less folks strive to connect in family-like groupings. In the end, it is not enough that Scrooge simply be rehabilitated as a person—he also has to be re-incorporated into family life as Fred's uncle and father numero dos to Tiny Tim.	You know what? The ghosts are kind of a family unit, too. The most crucial moment of Scrooge's transformation is when he tears up at the thought that his ex-fiancée's children could also have been his own. We mean, he cries for crying out loud. Pardon the pun.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Should the Cratchits be psyched to have Scrooge suddenly become a "second father" to Tiny Tim? Does Tiny Tim really need another father, or does this have some weird overtones of Scrooge buying his way into this family?</li> <li>2 How are the families we see different from one another? How are they the same?</li> <li>3 Do we get the sense that if Scrooge's own family had been more intact he would have been a less damaged person?</li> <li>4 The only other people we don't see with families are the businessmen discussing Scrooge's death and the thieves pawning his stuff. How are these groups similar? How are they different?</li> </ol>

# THEMES

Theme	Thinking Point	Questions
It's not often thought of in these terms, but A Christmas Carol is all about being a Peeping Tom. Both the readers and the protagonist spend an unusually large amount of time simply watching others go about their business without realizing that they are being observed. Creepy, much? It is striking that while the ghostly invasion of Scrooge's home is felt by him to be a distinct violation, no one questions the ethics of surveillance as he and the ghosts eavesdrop on conversations and peer into the private celebrations of others. We guess Dickens had a thing for double standards.	The weirdest thing about this book is that Scrooge grows into an ethical person by doing a totally unethical thing—spying and snooping. The many transitions and transformations that Scrooge's house undergoes make it not really a home at all, but more of a no-man's-land.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Why is it okay to do the kind of invisible observing that Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present do? As far as Scrooge knows, he is actually watching real people do real things that he is not meant to see—why does no one have a problem with this in the story?</li> <li>2 Do the homes we see fit their residents? Can you think of an example where a home is exactly the right match for its inhabitants and one where it isn't?</li> <li>3 Why is Scrooge's house so uncomfortable? Why doesn't he spend his money on luxury or food or nice things? How would the story change if he did?</li> </ol>
One of the most magical elements of A Christmas Carol is that memories are totally accessible. Scrooge doesn't have to remember them—he lives them, which means his memories aren't tainted by, well, other memories and lessons learned (or unlearned). With the right guide, Scrooge is able to examine and draw conclusions from specifically those memories that are most relevant to the problems he faces in real time. Convenient! At the same time, these same memories are used to humanize and explain the otherwise monstrous and almost inhuman Scrooge—to make readers sympathize with him rather writing him off as an irredeemable jerk	Reliving his memories is what causes Scrooge to finally connect with his senses of smell, touch, taste, and hearing—rather than shutting them out and distrusting them like he does when faced with the ghost of Marley. Instead of simply explaining Scrooge, his memories attempt to excuse him, as if to say, hey, he had a bad childhood, so cut the man some slack.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Do Scrooge's memories actually explain the man he has turned into? We see him being isolated and then in turn isolating himself, but why would this have turned him bitter and vicious, rather than, say, hermit-like and shy? Does the novella suggest that we are missing the full picture?</li> <li>2 Why don't we find out more details about Scrooge's father and what exactly his sister means when she says that he is nicer now and Ebenezer can come home? What kinds of potential backstories can we imagine? Does it matter which of them is the real one?</li> <li>3 Why is Scrooge so eager to cap off the Ghost of Christmas Past? How is his exposure to his memories making him feel? How do you know?</li> </ol>
Although A Christmas Carol focuses on generosity and compassion when it comes to being connected to others, the novella argues for another, equally important motivator for good behavior—feeling guilty when doing bad deeds. A large part of what makes Scrooge such a monster is that he appears to feel no remorse for his cruel indifference and no sense of responsibility for the welfare of others. As he remembers and works through his many bad deeds through the visions brought by the Christmas Ghosts, Scrooge gradually regains his ability to feel shame about what he has done, which means he can police his own behavior in the future.	The unrealistic ease with which Scrooge accepts blame for his past actions has more to do with the fact no one holds a grudge about his behavior than with any actual sense of remorse. Scrooge's recovery of the ability to feel guilt totally misfires, because it teaches readers that however ungenerous and mean-spirited they might be, as long as they are aware of it, there is always plenty of time to change and be forgiven. Phew.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Why don't we see more of the things Scrooge should feel guilty about in the visions of the past? The main things that seem to prick his conscience are the way he treated his Christmas Eve visitors—but surely he has done much worse than that, right? Why don't we learn more about the couple who are about to go bankrupt because he is such a harsh creditor, for example?</li> <li>2 Are there any other characters that feel guilty for any reason in the text? How does their guilt compare with Scrooge's?</li> <li>3 What other feelings are triggered by the sensations of guilt? Does Scrooge feel embarrassment at his bad behavior? Remorse? Shame? Inspiration? Why or why not?</li> <li>4 Why don't Fred and Bob Cratchit blame Scrooge for being such a, well, scrooge? Would it make the text too complicated if they had a lot of hard feelings towards him?</li> </ol>

"How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day." It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow. (1.155)

That's pretty creepy. Also, compare this to how Scrooge watches his own clerk from his little office. He's a bit of a ghost himself.

Scrooge knew [Marley] was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. (1.4)

It's interesting that he and Marley basically had the same lifestyle. We initially get the sense that with Marley's death, Scrooge lost his last bridge to humanity. Which of course is immediately shown to be untrue when we meet Fred and Bob Cratchit. Why the fake out?

"It's not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!" (1.65)

Here, Scrooge is more like Dickens's later creations, Mr. Podsnad (from *Our Mutual Friend*) or Mrs. General (from *Little Dorrit*)—characters who want to enclose and isolate the unpleasant from their sight because it's just too pesky to deal with.

"I would gladly think otherwise if I could," she answered, "Heaven knows! When I have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl—you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were." (2.128)

It's funny that however earnest this speech of self-sacrifice from Scrooge's ex-fiancée is meant to be (and it's pretty clear that she really is supposed to be trying to do the right thing here by freeing him from the engagement contract with total understanding), all of it can be read in a hilarious passive-aggressive tone. Which would of course make it wildly vindictive and non-forgiving, and therefore all the more entertaining.

# Isolation Key Quotes... Compassion

"It should be Christmas Day, I am sure," said she, "on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert! Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow!"

"My dear," was Bob's mild answer, "Christmas Day."

"I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's," said Mrs. Cratchit, "not for his. Long life to him! A merry Christmas and a happy new year! He'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt!"

The children drank the toast after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn't care twopence for it. 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. (3.79-83)

"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! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man!" said the child, opening her eyes, "and are never to come back here; but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world." (2.70)

There's something weird about the way this backstory just totally skips over the "dad's not crazy anymore!" explanation here, no? So does this mean that their dad was irrationally blaming little Ebenezer for something and now no longer does? Or is the idea that the kids immediately forgive their dad once he becomes "kinder than he used to be" (which, yikes, nice understatement there)?



"There's another fellow," muttered Scrooge; who overheard him: "my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam." (1.44)

Okay, so first of all, a quick Shmoop FYI: **Bedlam** is the famous London hospital for the insane. Now that we've got that tidbit out of the way, we'll point out that Scrooge is unable to reconcile the idea of someone having positive emotions and at the same time being financially insecure—the very thought of mixing these two things seems crazy—Bedlam-worthy.

"What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!" (1.21)

Ah, here we are. This is a spot on summary of the kind of overreaching Dickens was worried about in the **utilitarian** theories of the economists—that the bottom line is the end all and be all, and that nothing else should matter to a self-interested individual but the state of his finances.

# RATIONALITY KEY QUOTES...

## TRANSFORMATION...

Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look [...]. As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again. To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle. (1.82-84)

This is the first instance of Scrooge fighting off the supernatural and its effects—the "terrible sensation"—by committing to his nonsense-free and oh so "sturdy" approach to the world.

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. (1.7-8)

Well, when you put it that way, even Scrooge himself has some supernatural qualities, no? Why is this description so overblown—why not describe Scrooge as a nasty old man, instead of the very personification of coldness? And pardon Shmoop, while we go crawl back under our snuggie.

The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed. Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. (1.67)

See, Dickens, capitalism ain't all that bad. As long as everyone's in a good mood, at least. Here, the cruel coldness of economics gives way to the jolly good fun of everyone's favorite pastime: shopping. But not for Scrooge—his business doesn't produce anything jolly good, so he can never rise above the cold hard facts of buying and selling.

It was a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. (2.20)

You know what? We'd argue that surreal and hallucinogenic images like this one make this work actually unfilmable—or at least unfilmable in a way that stays true to the original. So stop trying, Hallmark Channel!

"You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why?"  
"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?" (1.131-132)

Notice how important it is that the chain isn't something that is imposed on bad people in the afterlife, but is instead created with "free will." In other words, be nice, dear Shmoopers, or you'll wear chains forever.

"But you were always a good man of business, Jacob," faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself. "Business!" cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. "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!" (1.148-149)

Again, Marley's poor choices in life are haunting him in death. Look at the sarcastic repetition of the word "business" in combination with all the unbusinesslike things that Marley should be been involved with. That kind of word repetition is a delicious Dickensian specialty.

## CHOICES KEY QUOTES... TIME

"I wish," Scrooge muttered, putting his hand in his pocket, and looking about him, after drying his eyes with his cuff: "but it's too late now."

"What is the matter?" asked the Spirit.

"Nothing," said Scrooge.

"Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all." (2.61-63)

Scrooge begins to rethink his past choices. Sure, this is a pretty small one, but hey, it's a start.

When Scrooge awoke, it was so dark, that looking out of bed, he could scarcely distinguish the transparent window from the opaque walls of his chamber. He was endeavouring to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes, when the chimes of a neighbouring church struck the four quarters. So he listened for the hour. To his great astonishment the heavy bell went on from six to seven, and from seven to eight, and regularly up to twelve; then stopped. Twelve! It was past two when he went to bed. The clock was wrong. An icicle must have got into the works. Twelve! (2.1-2)

Okay, so here's a question (and it's kind of a doozy): do the ghosts make time go backwards?

You wouldn't believe how those two fellows went at it! They charged into the street with the shutters—one, two, three—had 'em up in their places—four, five, six—barred 'em and pinned 'em—seven, eight, nine—and came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses. "Hilli-ho!" cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. "Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!" Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. (2.90-92)

See, Scrooge? This is how to spend your time. There isn't a wasted moment in the rush to set the Fezziwig place up for the party. The text even counts out the seconds as Ebenezer and Dick bustle around, and we are treated a bunch of colloquialisms having to do with time going lickety-split: "in a minute," "before a man can say Jack Robinson," and comparing the apprentices to "race horses charging" to the hunting party cry of "Hilly-ho!"

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat. (1.71)

The only thing Cratchit has any control over is how he spends his time away from work, which is why every second of this time counts for him.

"You are quite a woman, little Fan!" exclaimed the boy.

She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her. [...]

"Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered," said the Ghost. "But she had a large heart! [...]" She died a woman," said the Ghost, "and had, as I think, children. [...]" Your nephew!"

Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, "Yes." (2.71-79)

It seems to finally sink in here that Fred is Scrooge's last tether to the world of his childhood, which clearly was in some ways miserable, but was also the last place to feature love—his love for his sister.

He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a doorstep. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever. (1.172)

Dickens's own original version of hell—being able to see but not being able to help family members. That would really only work on the emotionally healthy, though, no?

"Good afternoon," said Scrooge.

"I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?"

"Good afternoon," said Scrooge. (1.36-37)

It's never really all that well explained why Fred wants to have anything to do with Scrooge, right? But then again the very lack of explanation—the idea that "well, he's family"—is pretty powerful in its own right.

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and forgotten the way out again. It was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. (1.80)

Every other person we see eats their dinner at home. Every one, except Scrooge that is. But hey, who would want to eat in a place that's barely more than a series of "chambers" and "rooms." It hardly sounds like a home at all. Also, check out that really great image of a "young house" getting lost in a place where "it had no business to be" and then growing old. Um, does that sound familiar? Like a certain Ebenezer S. that we might have recently met?

# FAMILY KEY QUOTES... THE HOME

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. [...] There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat.

They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be. (2.53-54)

It's interesting that none of the places where we see Scrooge is actually a home. They are all either temporary housing or in some other way they lack just about all the qualities that make a house a home—safety, comfort, and love. Is this why he doesn't have a problem spying on other people with the ghosts? Because he has never really experienced the safe, cozy feeling of a real home?

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course—and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah! (3.59)

The Cratchit home is a well-oiled machine where everyone knows his or her place and function, even if it all seems a little chaotic to outside eyes. For example, the kids that put out chairs and then shut themselves up in order not to ask for a piece of goose out of turn—clearly that's something that's happened before and been frowned on, so they are now all set to self-police.

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the city of London, even including—which is a bold word—the corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven-years' dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change—not a knocker, but Marley's face. (1.81)

The supernatural is believable only when other explanations—like memory tricks or the imagination—have run plumb out.

Even this, though, when Scrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, was not its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light one instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts, no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as ever. (2.21)

This seems like a pretty reasonable way to think about how we recall past events—as shifting, wonky, tricky images. But does this description have any relation to the way memory is actually experienced in this work?

## MEMORY & Past KEY QUOTES GUILT & BLAME

"No, no," said Scrooge. "Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared."

"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."

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief. (3.72-74)

Nice. The Ghost of Christmas Present really makes short work of Scrooge by quoting him back to himself. And in general, the idea of combating the urge to wave away anonymous crowds of the needy (like Scrooge does) by putting an individual face on the problem (like Tiny Tim) is a pretty old one—and it's still being used today. Just check out those regular joes who get invited to the [State of the Union address](#) every year—each of them functions as a face to put with an abstract concept each President is trying to promote.

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

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

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

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

"You recollect the way?" inquired the Spirit.

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

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

They walked along the road, Scrooge recognising every gate, and post, and tree [...] (2.41-47)

Check out how Scrooge's senses are returning to him here in his childhood home—the "gentle touch" of the ghost reveals "odours" floating in the air and the sight of "every gate, post, and tree." And then in turn, these senses reveal the kinds of emotional connections that Scrooge has walled himself off from: "hopes, and joys, and cares". Why do you think Scrooge lies about the tear on his cheek?

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. (1.98)

This is one of the only visions of actual punishment in the novella. Why does Scrooge escape from any sort of negative comeuppance after a lifetime of misdeeds? We guess we're to assume that Marley never learned his lesson and apologized.

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a doorstep. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever. (1.172)

Dickens's specialized vision of hell is being able to see but not being able to help suffering family and friends. Also, check out that inspired image of members of bad governments being linked together in eternal torment.



# SYMBOLISM

## Marley's Chains

You know what's interesting about all the movie and TV versions of this novella they make? They usually get Marley's ghost totally wrong.

Oh, sure, he's usually a totally creepy special effect, and the makeup tends to be ghoulish enough, and they even tend to recreate the jangling rattle noise that his chains make as he walks... but the chains themselves?

In every version Shmoop can remember, Marley's chains are shown to be just really big heavy metal chains, which is fine as it goes, we guess. Except that in the original, Marley actually looks pretty much the same as he did in life, but—and it's a huge but—he's bound and tied by something that is much more sinister and scary:

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.

[...]

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

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?" (1.98-132)

What's the chain made out of? Not out of standard links at all, but instead out of the things that were most important to Marley before he died—money, debt, interest, profit. Why is this scarier, you ask? Well, maybe not scarier in a horror-movie kind of way, but certainly the idea that you will be manacled by the very things that you held up as important has a nice terror about it.

Think about it: this is specifically not a chain that's been made by some external force, some higher power that judges you after you die and that you can complain about not being fair or whatever. No, this is all your own doing—"I made it link by link of my own free will," says Marley in the above quotation, pointing out that the choice to what to value in life has endless ramifications, even beyond the grave.

## Scrooge's

So... yeah. Maybe the symbolism of this one isn't so very hard to dig out. But still, the gravestone is a very important element in the whole let's-turn-Scrooge-back-into-a-human-being project.

However invested Scrooge eventually becomes in his own spiritual life, and however bad he feels about the kind of man he has allowed himself to become, nothing really gets through to him quite like the gravestone with his name on it that confirms that the terrible, unmourned death he has been observing with the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is in fact his own.

It's this final discovery that really makes him desperate to change—to "sponge away the writing on this stone" (4.164).

In a pretty powerful scene, the unemotional, angry Scrooge that we've seen so far suddenly gives way to a guy who bursts into straight up pleading. He doesn't know whether the phantom actually has any powers to change stuff, but he can't help screaming, "hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse" (4.160).

Just imagine a really good actor sink his teeth into that one—a showstopper for sure.

## Scrooge's Bed

You know what's kind of crazy (okay, one of the many things that are kind of crazy) about the way **Scrooge gets his groove back?** It's very, very invasive.

Now, Shmoop isn't a psychiatrist and doesn't even play one on TV, but there's something about the fact that everyone who tries to reform Scrooge-the-loner keeps on breaking into his bedroom that smacks to us of the traditional treatment for phobia.

What's that you ask? It's constant exposure to the thing you're scared of.

And the object that seems to register highest on Scrooge's invasiveness scale is none other than his bed—arguably the most private and isolated place in his house, or anyone's house for that matter. Think about how many times Scrooge is pulled into and out of his bed. The Ghost of Christmas Past opens up his bed curtains to reveal a terrified Scrooge. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come turns into one of the bedposts when it melts away, and each time a ghostly adventure is over, Scrooge finds himself plopped back into his four-poster.

But the real kicker comes from the possible future that Scrooge sees while traipsing about with the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. You know, those three thieves who have made off with his stuff after his death? The most appalling of these is the charwoman, who makes off with... well, let's let her tell it:

"Bed-curtains!"

"You don't mean to say you took 'em down, rings and all, with him lying there?" said Joe.

"Yes I do," replied the woman. "Why not?"

[Scrooge] recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost touched a bed: a bare, uncurtained bed: on which, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up, which, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language. (4.64-78)

Even the pawnshop guy, who apparently is used to this kind of thievery, is floored by the idea that this corpse was so unattended that the woman could have actually removed the curtains from the bed without anyone giving a hoot.

Also, check out how the fact that the bed is "uncurtained" and "bare" makes the scene with Scrooge's corpse look even more chilling and horrifying. In the novella, this violation of the bed is pretty much the ultimate invasion—since Dickens isn't willing to have Scrooge's actual body be harmed in some way.

And finally, what's the first thing Scrooge turns to in his immense relief that he gets to Mulligan his life? You guessed it—the bed:

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! (5.1)



# GENRE

## Fairy Tale

Back in the day, when the two Grimm brothers set out to collect and write down the folk tales that peasants told in the German countryside, they were kind of shocked at the for-adults-only nature of what they were finding (a fun Shmoop aside: did you know that in the original Sleeping Beauty story, she doesn't wake up when the prince kisses her? Or when he then rapes her? Or even when she gets pregnant with twins? And that she only finally wakes up when the babies are born and crawl up her body and start nursing? Yeah. Try to make a movie out of that, Disney.). Um, anyway, so the Grimms edited here and edited there, and eventually ended up with the safe, sentimental, and moralizing children's fairy tales we all know and love today.

Well, A Christmas Carol feels like an un-Grimmed fairy tale—a story with magical creatures and fantastical events, but one that is strictly for grown-ups, what with its main feature being a really strong sense of existential dread and a fear of other people. But hey, at least there's a happy ending.

## NARRATOR AND TONE

Who is the narrator, can she or he read minds, and, more importantly, can we trust her or him?

Third Person (Limited Omniscient)

There's something a little bit screwy with the narrative voice of this novella.

No, really. Usually, when you have a third person limited omniscient narrator, readers are dealing with a voice that lets them really get into the head of the protagonist. Only hearing the thoughts of this one character, and at the same time getting the kind of background info that only a third-person narrator can supply—well, that's just the kind of unbeatable combination that makes readers deeply and strongly identify with and understand the protagonist.

Here, however, we have a third person narrator who is definitely limited to only Scrooge's thoughts, but who absolutely just hates the guy.

So instead of a sympathetic portrait, we get vicious mockery and a strange distance between the narrator and the dude he is describing:

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.

[...]

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you?" [...]

But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance. (1.7-10)

The narrator can't get enough insults in describing this guy! We are definitely in his head—for example, we learn that he doesn't care... wait, he even likes it that no one has anything nice to say to him. But instead of giving us the inside dope about why Scrooge got that way, the narrator just points fingers, laughs, and shakes his head disapprovingly. Think about it—we only find out how Scrooge got this way because we see his childhood during the Ghost of Christmas Past section.

What's that about? Well, it's a surefire way that we both detest Scrooge to begin with, and root for him in the end. Sure, he's a mean old curmudgeon at the start, but by the end, we kind of like the guy, because we've gotten to know him so well.

# HOW TO ANSWER EXAM QUESTIONS:

You have **45 minutes** to answer the question:

**5 minutes** to read and annotate the extract.

**5 minutes** planning.

**35 minutes** writing an essay style answer with PEE answers and embedded quotes.

You **MUST** refer to the extract and your knowledge of the **WHOLE** novel.

Step 1. Break down the question: what **exactly** is it asking?

Step 2. **Read** the extract several times, **highlight** and **annotate** any PEE parts that are useful or you want to include in your answer.

Step 3. **Plan** your answer - jot down notes for your **PEE** paragraphs and also jot down the **whole text references** you are going to use in your answer.

Step 4. **Write** your answer, ensuring you do a brief introduction. followed by a series of PEE paragraphs. Each should contain a **point** that refers to a **technique or subject terminology**; at least one piece of **evidence** from the text; and a sound **explanation** of how the evidence proves your point and **answers the question**. You may wish to include a short conclusions as well.

Step 5: **Reread** your answer, checking that you have made **relevant** points with **supporting evidence** with good explanations that **answer the question**. Check spelling, grammar and word order/sense. Ensure you have give **enough information** for the marks available.

# Exam Mark Scheme:



ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
AO1:1a	Read, understand and respond to texts to maintain a critical style.
AO1:1b	Read, understand and respond to texts to develop an informed personal response.
AO1:2	Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.
AO3	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.



# Exam Mark Scheme:



BAND	AO1: 1a+b, AO1:2	AO2	AO3
5 33–40 marks	Candidates: sustain focus on the task, including overview, convey ideas with consistent coherence and use an appropriate register; use a sensitive and evaluative approach to the task and analyse the extract and wider text critically; show a perceptive understanding of the extract and wider text, engaging fully, perhaps with some originality in their personal response; their responses include pertinent, direct references from across the extract and wider text, including quotations.	Candidates: analyse and appreciate writers' use of language, form and structure; make assured reference to meanings and effects exploring and evaluating the way meaning and ideas are conveyed through language structure and form; use precise subject terminology in an appropriate context.	Candidates: show an assured understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written, including, where relevant, those of period, location, social structures and literary contexts such as genre, and the contexts in which texts are engaged with by different audiences.
4 25–32 marks	Candidates: sustain focus on the task, convey ideas with considerable coherence and use an appropriate register; use a thoughtful approach to the task; show a secure understanding of key aspects of the extract and wider text, with considerable engagement; support and justify their responses by well-chosen direct reference to the extract and wider text, including quotations.	Candidates: discuss and increasingly analyse writers' use of language, form and structure; make thoughtful reference to the meanings and effects of stylistic features used by the writer; use apt subject terminology.	Candidates: show a secure understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written, including, where relevant, those of period, location, social structures and literary contexts such as genre, and the contexts in which texts are engaged with by different audiences.
3 17–24 marks	Candidates: focus on the task, convey ideas with general coherence and use a mostly appropriate register; use a straightforward approach to the task; show an understanding of key aspects of the extract and wider text, with engagement; support and justify their responses by appropriate direct reference to the extract and wider text, including quotations.	Candidates: comment on and begin to analyse writers' use of language, form and structure; make some reference to meanings and effects; use relevant subject terminology.	Candidates: show an understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written, including, where relevant, those of period, location, social structures and literary contexts such as genre, and the contexts in which texts are engaged with by different audiences.
2 9–16 marks	Candidates: have some focus on the task, convey ideas with some coherence and sometimes use an appropriate register; use a limited approach to the task; show some understanding of key aspects of the extract and wider text, with some engagement; support and justify their responses by some direct reference to the extract and wider text, including some quotations.	Candidates: recognise and make simple comments on writers' use of language, form and structure; may make limited reference to meanings and effects; may use some relevant subject terminology.	Candidates: show some understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written, including, where relevant, those of period, location, social structures and literary contexts such as genre, and the contexts in which texts are engaged with by different audiences.
1 1–8 marks	Candidates: have limited focus on the task, convey ideas with occasional coherence and may sometimes use an appropriate register; use a simple approach to the task; show a basic understanding of some key aspects of the extract and wider text, with a little engagement; may support and justify their responses by some general reference to the extract and wider text, perhaps including some quotations.	Candidates: may make generalised comments on writers' use of language, form and structure; may make basic reference to meanings and effects; may use some subject terminology but not always accurately.	Candidates: show limited understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written, including, where relevant, those of period, location, social structures and literary contexts such as genre, and the contexts in which texts are engaged with by different audiences.
0 marks	Nothing worthy of credit.	Nothing worthy of credit.	Nothing worthy of credit.



# EXTRACT PRACTICE Q. (40 MARKS)

- (i) Read the extract on the opposite page. Then answer the following question:

What impressions do you get of Scrooge here? Give reasons for what you say, and remember to support your answer with words and phrases from the extract.

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!"

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



# EXTRACT PRACTICE Q. (40 MARKS)

- (i) Read the extract on the opposite page. Then answer the following question:

With close reference to the extract, show how Charles Dickens presents the character of Scrooge here.

He dressed himself "all in his best," and at last got out into the streets. 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. He looked so irresistibly pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-humoured fellows said, "Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!" And Scrooge said often afterwards, that of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears.

He had not gone far, when coming on towards him he beheld the portly gentleman, who had walked into his counting-house the day before, and said, "Scrooge and Marley's, I believe." It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

"My dear sir," said Scrooge, quickening his pace, and taking the old gentleman by both his hands. "How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, sir!"

"Mr Scrooge?"

"Yes," said Scrooge. "That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness"—here Scrooge whispered in his ear.

"Lord bless me!" cried the gentleman, as if his breath were taken away. "My dear Mr Scrooge, are you serious?"

"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?"

"My dear sir," said the other, shaking hands with him. "I don't know what to say to such munifi—"

"Don't say anything please," retorted Scrooge. "Come and see me. Will you come and see me?"

"I will!" cried the old gentleman. And it was clear he meant to do it.

"Thank 'ee," said Scrooge. "I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!"

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk—that anything—could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew's house.

He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it:

"Is your master at home, my dear?" said Scrooge to the girl. Nice girl! Very.

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he, my love?" said Scrooge.

"He's in the dining-room, sir, along with mistress. I'll show you upstairs, if you please."

"Thank you. He knows me," said Scrooge, with his hand already on the dining-room lock. "I'll go in here, my dear."



# EXTRACT PRACTICE Q. (40 MARKS)

- (i) Read the extract on the opposite page. Then answer the following question:

With close reference to the extract, show how Charles Dickens creates mood and atmosphere here.

And now, without a word of warning from the Ghost, they stood upon a bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about, as though it were the burial-place of giants, and water spread itself wheresoever it listed, or would have done so, but for the frost that held it prisoner; and nothing grew but moss and furze, and coarse rank grass. Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red, which glared upon the desolation for an instant, like a sullen eye, and frowning lower, lower, lower yet, was lost in the thick gloom of darkest night.

‘What place is this?’ asked Scrooge.

‘A place where Miners live, who labour in the bowels of the earth,’ returned the Spirit. ‘But they know me. See!’

A light shone from the window of a hut, and swiftly they advanced towards it. Passing through the wall of mud and stone, they found a cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire. An old, old man and woman, with their children and their children’s children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their holiday attire. The old man, in a voice that seldom rose above the howling of the wind upon the barren waste, was singing them a Christmas song—it had been a very old song when he was a boy—and from time to time they all joined in the chorus. So surely as they raised their voices, the old man got quite blithe and loud; and so surely as they stopped, his vigour sank again.

The Spirit did not tarry here, but bade Scrooge hold his robe, and passing on above the moor, sped—whither? Not to sea? To sea. To Scrooge’s horror, looking back, he saw the last of the land, a frightful range of rocks, behind them; and his ears were deafened by the thundering of water, as it rolled and roared, and raged among the dreadful caverns it had worn, and fiercely tried to undermine the earth.

Built upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks, some league or so from shore, on which the waters chafed and dashed, the wild year through, there stood a solitary lighthouse. Great heaps of seaweed clung to its base, and storm-birds—born of the wind one might suppose, as seaweed of the water—rose and fell about it, like the waves they skimmed.

But even here, two men who watched the light had made a fire, that through the loophole in the thick stone wall shed out a ray of brightness on the awful sea. Joining their horny hands over the rough table at which they sat, they wished each other Merry Christmas in their can of grog, and one of them: the elder, too, with his face all damaged and scarred with hard weather, as the figure-head of an old ship might be: struck up a sturdy song that was like a Gale in itself.

# BRING ON THE TOUGH STUFF – THERE'S NOT JUST ONE RIGHT ANSWER.

- 1 Why do the ghosts look like they do? Why is the Past half child-half old man? Why is the Future a hooded phantom that doesn't talk? What would change if the Future could simply answer Scrooge's questions?
- 2 For such a short piece of fiction, there are two surprisingly long sections given over to people dancing with each other: the party at Fezziwig's house, and then the party at Fred's (okay, good call, at Fred's there is some dancing and some blind-man's bluff, but they are similar enough to fall under this category). Why? Why aren't these simply scenes of people enjoying dinner or conversation together? Why does Dickens focus so much on the physicality and movement of dance?
- 3 Why is Scrooge a miser rather than an ungenerous guy who lives in luxury? Is his self-denial as important as his tight-fistedness towards others? Do you think he will start treating himself to comfort and luxury at the end of the novella? Why or why not?
- 4 Who is the intended audience of this novella? Are we supposed to identify with Scrooge and reach into our own pockets to fix our ungenerous lifestyles before it's too late? Or are we supposed to sigh with relief as we realize that at least we're not that guy? Does the book encourage activism or passivity?
- 5 Why is Scrooge's business money-lending rather than being a big-time factory boss or something? Does it matter what he's become rich doing? How would the story be different if he still had the same personality, but was instead a really rich painter? Politician? Entertainer (like our good friend Dickens himself)?
- 6 What do you think Scrooge's whole backstory with his dad and sister actually is? Can you make up something plausible? Something implausible? What would be different if we knew definitively what had happened?
- 7 Okay, you're a bigwig exec at HBO. The original material has been done to death, but there's no reason some of these characters couldn't get spin-off shows! So, whom would we want to keep following around after the plot is over? Are there characters that fall by the wayside that we want to see more of? The couple that almost goes bankrupt? That one ghost who can't help the lady with the baby? The pawnshop guy and his crew? Are there other characters who really wouldn't be interesting without the Scrooge element?