



Charles Dickens'  
**A Christmas  
Carol**

*A Christmas*  
*Carol*

GCSE English Literature



**GCSE**

**ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**Higher Tier**

**UNIT 2b (Contemporary drama and  
literary heritage prose)**

**Specimen Assessment Materials**

**2 hours**

Question 1.	(a) <i>The History Boys</i>	2 - 3
	(b) <i>Blood Brothers</i>	4 - 5
	(c) <i>A View From The Bridge</i>	6 - 7
	(d) <i>Be My Baby</i>	8 - 9
	(e) <i>My Mother Said I Never Should</i>	10 - 11
Question 2.	(a) <i>Silas Marner</i>	12 - 13
	(b) <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	14 - 15
	(c) <i>A Christmas Carol</i>	16 - 17
	(d) <i>Lord of the Flies</i>	18 - 19
	(e) <i>Ash on a Young Man's Sleeve</i>	20 - 21

#### **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**

Twelve page answer booklet.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

Answer Question 1 and Question 2.

Answer on **one** text in each question.

#### **INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

The number of marks is given in brackets after each question or part-question.

You are reminded that the accuracy and organisation of your writing will be assessed.

What you  
need to  
do...

Answer the extract question and  
**one** essay for **BOTH** of your set  
texts.

Timings:

20 minutes

40 minutes

20 minutes

40 minutes

# Context

- Published in 1843.
- Dickens knew what life was like for the poor.
- He believed in the celebration of Christmas.
- Through Scrooge, Dickens criticises the Poor Law (1834) - the requirement for harsh workhouses to be set up to take the poor in every parish.
- Remember that in Stave 1 Scrooge wants to know if the 'Union workhouses', 'Treadmill' and 'Poor Law' are still in 'full vigour'.
- High child death rates.
- Lots of poverty.

# Context

- Social class divide = the Industrial Revolution made many businessmen and factory owners extremely rich. It also created huge numbers of new jobs in the cities. However, the factory workers often lived in extreme poverty.
- Cities - terrible living conditions - millions of people moved from the country to the city in search of factory work.
- People ended up living in slums/cheap overcrowded housing. No proper drainage/sewage systems/many families forced to share one tap and one toilet.

# Context

- Dickens was interested in the plight of the poor - link to his own childhood experience of poverty when his family went into debt.
- He wrote the novella to highlight the issues in society. He wanted to address the poverty in Britain.
- He believed education was the solution to poverty.

# Scrooge

- Begins as mean, cold-hearted and callous ('tight-fisted' 'old sinner' 'hard and sharp as flint')
- His bitterness even influences the weather 'carried his own low temperature' 'External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge'.
- Scrooge has no friends - 'solitary as an oyster.'
- He is completely isolated at the start.

# Scrooge's behaviour in Stave 1

- He is rude to Fred and cruel towards Bob.
- Scrooge is horrid towards the Charity Collectors.
- 'Are there no prisons?'
- They want to 'buy the Poor some meat and drink' when 'Want is keenly felt'.
- 'they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population'
- He 'seized the ruler' when the carol singer tried to sing!

# Scrooge and Marley's Ghost (Stave 1)



- The tail is made of 'cash-boxes, keys, padlocks' etc.
- He feels the 'chilling influence'.
- 'There's more of gravy than of grave about you' - shows he is trying to dismiss it.
- 'dismal and appalling noise'
- 'Dreadful apparition,' said Scrooge.
- 'I wear the chain I forged in life' (Marley)
- 'Speak comfort to me, Jacob'
- 'I have none to give'
- Marley's Ghost has had 'no rest, no peace.'

# Scrooge in Stave 2

- We learn details about his earlier life and they help us to understand that he isn't completely bad.
- He is a character who is damaged and fearful.
- As we see Scrooge responding to events from his younger days, we gradually see that he is far from an evil character and our sympathy builds.
- His emotions start to develop.

- "I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!"
- "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'
- "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."
- 'Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.'
- '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 had used to be.'
- 'but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with a softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.'
- "There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all."
- "No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now! That's all."

# Key Quotes for Scrooge

- 'solitary'
- 'neglected'
- 'and he sobbed'
- 'after drying his eyes with his cuff'
- 'There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all.'

# Fezziwig

- He skips with 'wonderful agility'.
- He threw parties and everyone was invited.
- Fezziwig offers a contrast to Scrooge in that he can share with others, even though the party doesn't cost that much.
- Fezziwig is like a child during the festive season.
- Dickens thought that Christmas was about bringing everybody together, just like at Fezziwig's party / ball.
- The celebration would have brought a lot of joy.



# Scrooge (end of Stave 2)

- Money caused Scrooge and Belle's relationship to end.
- Scrooge says that the spirit takes 'delight' in the 'torture' he is putting him through.
- The spirit takes Scrooge to see Belle and her husband (happy family).

## Stave 2

Think about the fact that he regrets his behaviour towards the singer, Fred and Bob in this Stave.

He is able to redeem himself in the Stave 5 by being generous and good to the charity collectors, Fred, and the boy.

# Stave 3: The Ghost of Christmas Present



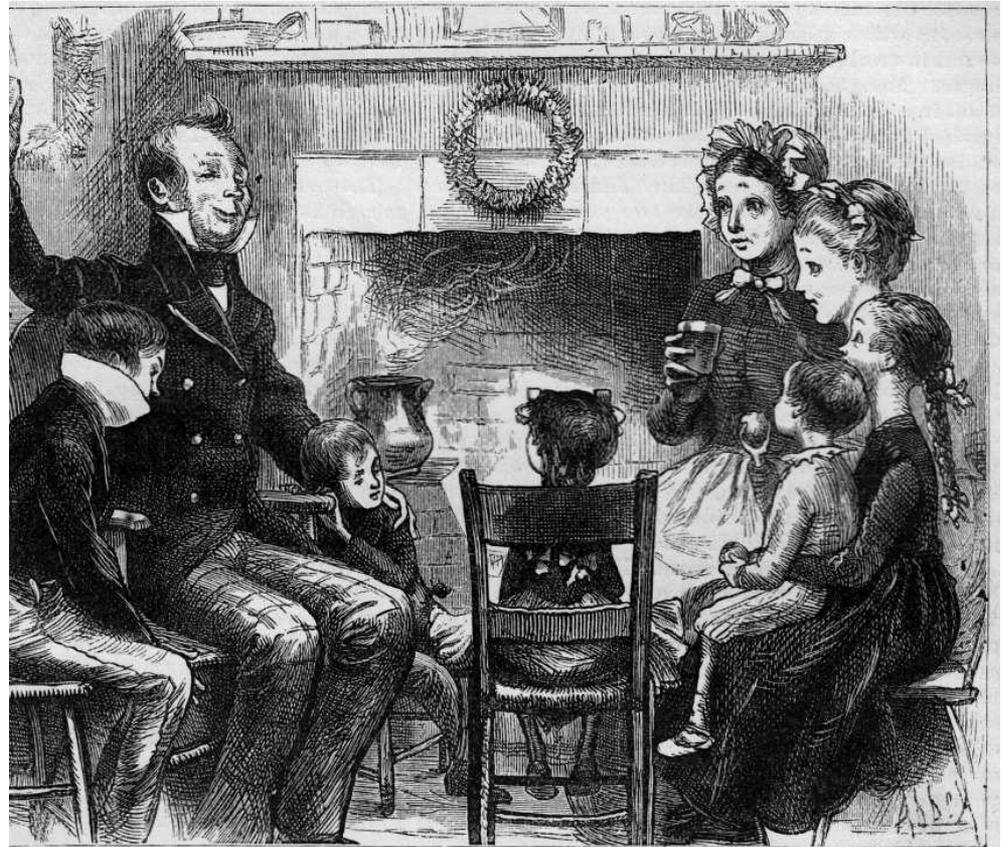
- 'jolly Giant, glorious to see'
- 'who bore a glowing torch',
- 'It was clothed in one simple deep green robe... bordered with white fur.'
- 'Its dark brown curls were long and free: free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air.'
- "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." - WHEN HE ASKS IF TINY TIM WILL LIVE.

# Scrooge in Stave Three

- We learn about how Christmas is celebrated in different places, and by different people.
- Scrooge's room has 'undergone a surprising transformation' (p.41). There is a 'mighty blaze' burning in the fireplace and the place is full of food and decorations.
- They move to the city streets on Christmas morning, where the weather is severe, but the people are still jolly, highlighting the community spirit in amongst the snow and the dirt from the factories.
- Scrooge is being taught by the ghost.

# Scrooge sees the Cratchit family...

- They make the most out of what they've got.
- 'brave in ribbons'
- Dickens shows how you made the most of what you had.
- Tiny Tim ('active little crutch' and 'limbs supported by an iron frame')



"MR. SCROOGE!" SAID BOB; "I'LL GIVE YOU MR. SCROOGE, THE FOUNDER OF THE FEAST!"

# Christmas in the Country

- The Ghost shows Scrooge a family of miners celebrating Christmas with good cheer.
- Two lighthouse keepers, who are isolated, share some of the spirit of the season.
- A ship, far from the shore, contains men who are full of Christmas thoughts.
- THE SCENES SHOW THAT THE PEOPLE ARE FULL OF HOPE AT CHRISTMAS.
- THEY CAPTURE WHAT DICKENS THOUGHT CHRISTMAS SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABOUT.

# Christmas at Fred's

- Scrooge's nephew, Fred, and his family are having fun at Christmas.
- They discuss Scrooge and decide that the only person he harms by being mean is himself.
- Scrooge joins in with the games they play although they cannot see or hear him.
- Fred is still cheerful and merry.

# Ignorance and Want

- The Ghost shows Scrooge two children called Ignorance (boy) and Want (girl).
- They are the children of the society in which Scrooge lives.
- The Ghost says both are bad, but Ignorance is more dangerous than Want.
- There is a change at this point and we are meant to take notice.
- Scrooge's own ignorance has created want.



# Scrooge in Stave Four

- Scrooge has changed, even before he is exposed to what the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come has in store for him.
- 'Scrooge feared the silent shape so much'
- 'I hope to live to be another man from what I was' (p.66)
- Scrooge's own death is foreshadowed (predicted), but nobody seems to care that he has died.
- People steal from him and it highlights how crime was on the increase.

# Scrooge

- The businessmen are cruel about the 'dead man' - 'I thought he'd never die.'
- The men are interested in what they will get.
- We see the bad side to London - 'foul', 'reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.'
- The people in the shop show Scrooge had nobody: 'why wasn't he natural in his lifetime?'
- A young woman and her husband are happy he is dead - this is the emotion he sees.
- Scrooge is appalled.
- 'Let me see some tenderness connected with a death'

- They go to 'poor Bob Cratchit's house'
- 'Quiet. Very quiet.'
- 'The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues'
- 'My little, little child!'
  
- 'Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?'
- The 'wretched man' has a grave 'overrun by grass and weeds.'

# Scrooge

- 'neglected grave'
- ' "Am *I* that man who lay upon the bed?" he cried, upon his knees.'
- "I am not the man I was."
- "I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future." (repeated right at the start of Stave Five)
- "I will not shut out the lessons that they teach"

# Stave Five: The change in Scrooge...

- 'fluttered'
- 'glowing with his good intentions'
- 'laughing'
- 'I am as happy as an angel'
- 'I am as merry as a schoolboy'
- 'I am as giddy as a drunken man'
- 'No fog, no mist; clear, bright'
- 'chuckle'





# Bob Cratchit

- A hard working and caring family man
- 'white comforter'
- He 'boasted no great coat'.
- He can't object to the way he's treated by Scrooge because he is loyal to him and he's grateful for the money he earns.
- He represents the lower classes and he has no choice but to accept the poor wages and working conditions because he has a family to support and a badly-paid job is better than no job at all.

# Bob Cratchit

- His good nature is his main characteristic, as seen when he toasts Scrooge as 'the Founder of the Feast' in Stave Three.
- Bob is cheery and grateful for what he has, despite his hardship.
- Family ties were very important during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Bob highlights the importance of love.
- Bob's great love for his family is a sharp contrast to Scrooge's miserly nature and the fact that he is unwilling to engage with his one surviving relative, Fred.

# Bob Cratchit

- Bob is gentle with his son, Tiny Tim.
- His love for the boy is evident in that they go everywhere together when Bob is not working, and Bob carries Tim on his shoulder, running all the way home from church with him.
- 'as good as gold'
- Bob understands the wisdom of children, showing that he can learn from his son when he says that Tim has told him that he hopes the church-goers will see he's a cripple.

# Bob Cratchit

- Bob can be seen as truly heroic because of the way in which he mourns Tiny Tim.
- Dickens highlights child mortality (death) and how it was an unpleasant reality across all classes in Victorian Britain, but it had a particular impact on the poor, who suffered from malnourishment and poor living conditions.
- In the vision of *Christmas Yet to Come*, Bob shows his true strength of character through his grief-stricken acceptance of Tim's death.

# Bob Cratchit

- Although the whole family feels the loss of Tim, Bob seems to miss his constant companion more than any of the other Cratchits, breaking down and sobbing, 'My little, little child!'
- In spite of his despair, Bob takes comfort in his surviving family members and once again tries to learn from Tim.
- Bob doesn't give in to misery and draws courage from Tim's memory instead and uses this to bind his family together.

# Bob and Scrooge

- Bob and Scrooge are at opposite moral poles and it's clear that Dickens wants us to compare their lives. Scrooge is wealthy and isolated, whereas Bob is happy in spite of his poverty.
- Scrooge takes his meals in solitude, but Bob light-heartedly flings himself down the ice slide on Cornhill 'twenty times' before racing home to play blind man's buff with his family.
- Scrooge's world is defined by work and material gain, while Bob is able to balance work with cheer. Bob is like a child when he leaves work for Christmas and Dickens links childish qualities to Christmas cheer.

# Fred



- Scrooge's nephew and the only son of Scrooge's much loved sister, Fan.
- Along with Fan, he is the only other person we see treating Scrooge with love in the novella.
- He is the antithesis of Scrooge, demonstrating how we should behave towards one another.
- Fred acts as a foil to the hardened Scrooge

He is someone with the opposite characteristics to Scrooge. He is used to balance Scrooge out and draw attention to his failings.

# Fred (Stave 1)

- He is able to stand his ground against Scrooge in Stave 1.
- He values love over money.
- He is the voice for Dickens' views as he defines Christmas as: 'a good time; a kind forgiving, charitable, pleasant time.'
- He wishes his uncle a 'Merry Christmas' several times.

# Fred (Stave 3)

- He shows us that Scrooge is to be pitied: 'I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always.'
- Fred is thoughtful and this is a typical approach of his character.

# Fred (Stave 3)

- He is defined by his good humour and laughter: 'Scrooge's nephew revelled in another laugh.'
- The verb 'revelled' suggests his enjoyment of laughter. It displays his very positive approach to life.

# Fred (Stave 5)

- He accepts the changed Scrooge without question.
- 'Let him in! It is a mercy he didn't shake his arm off.'
- Fred accepts somebody at face value and does not question the change in Scrooge's character. He is very trusting and is a perfect representation of goodness, love and kindness in the text.

# Show how Dickens presents the hardships of life in 19th century London in *A Christmas Carol*.

- Link this to the context and the conditions during the time of *A Christmas Carol*. Remember that Dickens believed the poor suffered unfairly.
- Explore Scrooge's attitude towards the collectors and carol singer in Stave 1.
- Explore the Cratchit family and what we learn about the poverty they live in. Dickens felt the suffering of the poor children during the time of the nineteenth century (Tiny Tim).
- Explore the inclusion of 'Ignorance' and 'Want' and what they represent within the text.
- You could also consider how Scrooge's ignorance has created want within the Cratchit family, as well as any others he has dealt with.
- Explore what is revealed in Stave 4 by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come and the condition of London (dirty, dank, horrible, crime).
- Conclude with anything thoughtful about Dickens' intentions in terms of the theme.

# What are Dickens' moral messages in A Christmas Carol?

## You could consider:

- the presentation of Scrooge and how he changes;
- what Dickens thought about how poverty was dealt with at the time;
- how he presents suffering in different parts of the story;
- how he uses particular people or children to highlight / reinforce his message.
- how Scrooge changes.

# Horror in *A Christmas Carol*

- The use of the way in which Marley's Ghost becomes a vision of horror in Stave 1 (Marley's Ghost is very important - only friend Scrooge had - had to be this ghost first).
- Scrooge's own horror at seeing his former self in Stave 2 and the events which upset him.
- The inclusion of Ignorance and Want.
- The use of the 'Phantom' in Stave 4 and how it is described and what it reveals to Scrooge (unpleasant treatment from others, London, the way people react to the death of the man (Scrooge), death of Tiny Tim, Scrooge seeing his grave).

# Childhood in *A Christmas Carol*

- Consider Scrooge's attitude to the carol singer in Stave 1.
- Scrooge's own childhood in Stave 2.
- Stave 3: Tiny Tim and Ignorance and Want
- Stave 4: The 'death' of Tiny Tim.
- Stave 5: Scrooge becomes like a child himself!

# Christmas (Stave 1)

- Scrooge rejects Christmas; Fred embraces it.
- Scrooge dismisses the men who are collecting for charity.
- Even through the fog and darkness in the city, the Christmas spirit breaks through.
- Bob wants to celebrate with his family.

# Christmas (Stave 2 and Stave 3)

## Stave 2

- Scrooge was left alone!
- Scrooge regrets his previous behaviour in Stave 1.
- Fezziwig is there to highlight how Scrooge should behave now.
- Stave 3: The ghost teaches him about Christmas (Cratchits, people in difficult conditions, Fred).



# Christmas (Stave 5)

- Scrooge wakes on Christmas Day and finds everything as he left it the night before. He is overwhelmed at having a chance to change things.
- He delights in everything he sees.
- He arranges for a prize turkey to be sent to the Cratchit household.
- On his way to church, he makes a large donation to charity (think about change and redemption).

# Change

- Scrooge has to be presented negatively in Stave 1 for us to recognise (and accept) him in Stave 5.
- Stave 2: We see how Scrooge becomes emotional.
- Stave 3: He is affected by seeing the Cratchits and Tiny Tim. He is deeply disturbed by the appearance of Ignorance and Want.
- Stave 4: Think about his reaction to other people (businessman, the young couple). He is very affected by Tiny Tim's death.

# Change

- The ghosts play a significant role in Scrooge's changing character.
- The phantom takes Scrooge to his grave in Stave 4 and this horrifies him.  
Remember that he cries upon his knees.
- He is described as being 'in agony.'
- He wants to live in 'the Past, the Present and the Future.'
- Stave 5: Scrooge is transformed!

# Goodness / Love / Kindness / Care in *A Christmas Carol*

- Dickens highlights that goodness and love overcome greed and selfishness.
- He highlights how the poor needed people to show goodness and love towards them during Victorian times.
- **Stave 1**: Scrooge is presented as lacking in goodness and love at the start of the novella - dismisses his own nephew, as well as the charity collectors and the carol singer. He treats Bob like a prisoner when he should be caring for him.
- Marley's Ghost highlights how there is 'incessant torture of remorse' in the afterlife and he says: 'I wear the chain I forged in life.' Marley is emphasising how he should have demonstrated care and love for others when he was alive.
- **Stave 2**: The Ghost of Christmas Past - shows Scrooge how he used to be and how he changed as a person - he rejected love because of his own self-interest.
- Fezziwig - kind and welcoming - involves everyone - caring/generous.

# Goodness / Love / Kindness / Care

- Stave 3: Consider Bob and the way he treats others - respect for Scrooge / looks after his family.
- The Cratchit family (Tiny Tim)
- Fred and his friends and family in Stave 3 - pities Scrooge / they laugh at him - but he still invited him over in Stave 1 and has him there in Stave 5.
- The change in Scrooge throughout the book - concern for Tiny Tim, doesn't like to see behaviour of others in Stave 4, changes completely in Stave 5.

# Religion

- Victorian society was very religious.
- Christianity had a strong influence on many areas of everyday life in Victorian Britain, particularly amongst the middle and upper classes.
- To be good Christians, people believed they should live by a strict moral code - attending church regularly.

# Dickens and Religion

- His view of Christianity was different - he believed that to be a good Christian, people should seek out opportunities to do good deeds for other people.
- He thought that people should be humble, charitable, faithful and forgiving, rather than merely appearing religious.

# Religion and Context

- It was a widespread Victorian practice to spend Sunday going to church and resting - known as Sabbatarianism.
- Dickens was opposed to this because it meant that working poorer people were denied any enjoyment on their day off - everything was shut.
- Many poorer people didn't have ovens at home, so they often had food cooked by bakers. Sabbatarianism meant that many people couldn't get a hot meal on Sundays because the bakers were shut.