

SUBJECT: English

UNIT: KS4 A Christmas Carol



Overview and Context

A Christmas Carol is an allegorical novella by Charles Dickens about Ebenezer Scrooge, an old man, who is well-known for his miserly ways.

Dickens wrote this story in 1843. At the time there was a tradition for reading ghost stories at Christmas, hence the numerous spirits that Scrooge encounters. The themes of wealth and injustice are clear comments on the inequalities of wealth distribution in Victorian England. A Christmas Carol is a moral tale about the spirit of giving and being kind to one another

Plot Summary

On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by a series of ghosts, starting with his old business partner, Jacob Marley. The three spirits which follow, the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come, show Scrooge how his mean behaviour has affected those around him. At the end of the story he is relieved to discover that there is still time for him to change and we see him transformed into a generous and kind-hearted human being.

Chapter Breakdown

1. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge makes his clerk, Bob Cratchit, work in the cold.
2. He refuses an invitation to his nephew Fred's Christmas party and will not give money to the charity collectors.
3. At home he is visited by the ghost of his old business partner, Marley.
4. The Ghost of Christmas Past wakes Scrooge and shows him moments from his childhood, his apprenticeship and his failed engagement.
5. The Ghost of Christmas Present takes him to the Cratchit's home, where he is saddened by the ill, but kind, Tiny Tim. He is also shown how Fred celebrates Christmas with friends and how others celebrate Christmas together.
6. The final ghost is the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come who terrifies Scrooge with visions of his death.
7. Scrooge awakes on Christmas Day and is delighted to find he has the chance to repent of his miserly ways. He buys a turkey for the Cratchits and attends his nephew's party.
8. Scrooge becomes like a second father to Tiny Tim and gains a reputation for knowing how to celebrate Christmas

Key Vocabulary

- **Avaricious** - Having or showing an extreme greed for wealth.
- **Allegory** - a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one.
- **Contemptuous** - Feeling or expressing deep hatred or disapproval. Feeling or showing contempt
- **Wretched** - When someone is in a very unhappy/unfortunate state.
- **Benevolent** - Kind, helpful, well-meaning
- **Repentant** - Expressing or feeling sincere regret and remorse / feeling sorry for what you have done.
- **Redemption** - The state of being kept from evil or of improving morally