

A Christmas Carol: Overview 10.1/11.1

Characters	
1. Scrooge	Protagonist. Initially miserly, selfish and cold , he experiences a moral transformation into a charitable philanthropist.
2. Marley's Ghost	Scrooge's late business partner. Marley symbolises the limitations of a life focused on greed and selfishness . He visits Scrooge in chains to warn him about his own future .
3. The Cratchits	The face of the poor . Scrooge's kind, mild-mannered clerk who is treated terribly by hi. He is a very poor man with a large family, but the family are still cheery and grateful .
4. The Ghost of Christmas Past	A figure that is both old and young. Its illuminating head symbolises how shining a light on memories from the past can be used to illuminate one's thoughts and behaviours in the future .
5. The Ghost of Christmas Present	A majestic jolly giant , who is dressed in a green robe. This ghost shows Scrooge how others spend Christmas , forcing him to contemplate his own solitary existence.
6. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come	A silent phantom wearing black robes. This ghost presents Scrooge with an ominous view of his own death and the lack of care or love surrounding it.
7. Tiny Tim	The son of Bob Cratchit and Mrs Cratchit. Tiny Tim is a young boy born with physical disabilities that his family are too poor to have treated, yet he still remains positive .
8. Fred	Scrooge's nephew. Fred's life is fulfilled through his joy, kindness and interactions with others. Scrooge's foil .

Context	
1. The Poor Law Amendment Act	The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 allowed the poor to receive help only if they went to the workhouse. Workhouses were deliberately made to be miserable to deter the poor from relying on public assistance. The poor had to work for food and accommodation and often the poor would rather die that go to a workhouse.
2. Industrial Revolution	After the invention of steam power, many people moved from rural areas to cities in search of higher paying work. Everything converted from manual labour to machine-driven labour , causing a reduction in the amount of people needed for work. This caused increased poverty levels and crime in cities .
3. Poverty	There were still significant distinctions between social classes . Life was terrible for the poorest: lack of money resulted in negligible food supply. For many, money was so tight that they required their children to work in order to survive .
4. Charles Dickens	Dickens was born in 1812 and spent his first years in Kent before moving to London at the age of 9. At 12, his father was sent to debtor's prison and Dickens was sent to label bottles in a factor near the prison.
5. Thomas Malthus	Malthus thought we would never have a truly perfect (or utopian) society , because every time we came close to providing a great standard of life for everyone, the population grew and the process had to start again .
Themes	
1. Greed and Poverty	Scrooge represents the selfish middle class who do not share their wealth. Dickens criticises how wealth has become associated with happiness , at the expense of relationships and good will.
2. Transformation	A moral transformation takes place as the reader witnesses a lonely boy's transformation into a bitter old man, and the efforts to redeem his character .
3. Family	Scrooge is reminded that being together with family is more important than being miserly and isolated .
4. Christmas Spirit	Scrooge learns that the true meaning of Christmas is to spend time with loved ones and to be charitable to those less fortunate .

A Christmas Carol: Stave One 10.2/11.2

Plot of Stave One		Key Vocabulary	
1. Scrooge	We are introduced to Scrooge on Christmas Eve and learn that he is an isolated, lonely man who treats his employee Bob Cratchit unfairly , keeping a cruel monopoly of coal and keeping his clerk Bob Cratchit in the cold.	1. Miser	a person who hoards wealth and spends as little money as possible.
2. Fred and the Charity Collectors	Scrooge’s cheerful nephew Fred enters, inviting Scrooge to a Christmas party, but Scrooge declines . Two gentlemen enter, asking if Scrooge is willing to make a charitable donation to the poor . Again, Scrooge declines . He reluctantly gives Bob Cratchit a day off work .	2. Misanthropist	a person who dislikes humankind and avoids human society .
		3. Stave	a structure that mimics musical organisation – each stave is a chapter.
		4. Diatribe	a forceful and bitter verbal attack against someone or something .
		5. Surplus	more than what is needed or used; excess .
3. Marley’s Ghost	At home, Scrooge sees the ghost of his old business partner (Jacob Marley) in the knocker. Marley is in chains as punishment for his selfishness and greed when living. He says that he seeks to save Scrooge from the same fate, and hence Scrooge will be visited by three ghosts over the next three nights .	6. Solitary	existing alone , secluded
		Symbols and motifs	
		Chains	The chains that Scrooge’s deceased partner wear are important because of their material. Whereas normal chains are forged from metal, Marley’s are constructed from what he valued in life—versions of material wealth . Dickens uses this image to suggest that actions in life may have inescapable consequences even in death.
		Fire	The use of fire imagery symbolises greed and generosity . Fuel was an expensive commodity for many so the amount burnt, reflected by the size of a fire, reflected the generosity of a character . The image of small fires at the start reflect the mean-spirited characteristics of Scrooge. By contrast, large fires represent happiness and generosity (such as Fezziwig’s party).

Stave One Quotations		
1. Narrator about Scrooge	"secret and self-contained and as solitary as an oyster"	This conveys his lone existence and his decision to be emotionless and isolated from society. Yet, the soft pearl inside foreshadows his transformation.
2. Narrator about Scrooge	"squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner"	List to show he is obsessed with money – most actions are to do with the hand to show he was "tight-fisted".
3. Scrooge	"If they had rather die...they had better do it and decrease the surplus population."	Scrooge's obsession with business and profit means he does not value poor members of the population who do not profit society .
4. Marley's Ghost	"Mankind was my business."	Marley warns Scrooge to change his ways as he reflects that his priorities were wrong during his lifetime.
5. Marley's Ghost	"I wear the chain I forged in life"	Marley's chains are a symbol of greed and sin . Scrooge is making his chain with his evil, covetous ways. He is going to hell.

A Christmas Carol: Stave Two 10.3/11.3

Plot of Stave Two		Key Vocabulary	
1. Ghost of Christmas Past	Scrooge wakes from a deep sleep and is met by the Ghost of Christmas Past who is a brightly glowing candle like apparition .	1. Benevolent	kind, charitable , well-meaning
2. Scrooge as a schoolboy	The Ghost flies Scrooge over his past self as a lonely schoolboy who is invited home by his sister Fan.	2. Exuberant	full of energy , excitement and cheerfulness
3. Fezziwig	The Ghost then takes Scrooge back to his apprentice days where his boss Fezziwig led joy filled celebrations .	3. Avarice	extreme greed for wealth or material gain.
4. Belle	Lastly, the Ghost takes Scrooge to moment his fiancée Belle called off their engagement due to his obsession with money. He is also shown her new family, which upsets Scrooge and extinguishes the Ghost.	4. Antithesis	a person or thing that is the direct opposite of someone or something else.
		5. Foil	a character whose purpose is to accentuate or draw attention to the qualities of another character
		6. Sympathy	feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.
		7. Empathy	the ability to understand and share the feelings of another .
Symbols and motifs			
Light		Symbolic of redemption, memories, knowledge, goodness and hope .	
The Ghost of Christmas Past		This ghost symbolises the experiences and memories that have made him into the callous person he is today . The spirit's glowing head suggests the location of the memories that Scrooge holds.	

Stave Two Quotations		
1. Ghost of Christmas Past	"Would you so soon put out... the light I give?"	This metaphor illustrates that the first ghost is there to illuminate Scrooge's past and to show him where things have gone wrong , but Scrooge needs to accept this help.
2. Scrooge about Fezziwig	"He has the power to render us happy or unhappy... the happiness he gives, is... as if it cost a fortune"	Scrooge has an epiphany and realises that happiness doesn't have to cost a fortune and that Fezziwig was a benevolent employer.
3. Belle	"Another idol has displaced me. A golden one."	Belle recognises that Scrooge's greed for money has overtaken his love for her . Scrooge's reaction shows his regret and humanises him.
4. Belle	"I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master passion, Gain, engrosses you."	Scrooge used to have 'nobler' aspirations, such as loving Belle. The fact they have fallen 'one by one' emphasises his slow, avaricious descent into greed and selfishness .
5. Narrator about Scrooge	"A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still"	The young Scrooge was left isolated and ignored, creating sympathy towards his character. Perhaps this ongoing sadness and isolation was motivation for his misanthropic ways.

A Christmas Carol: Stave Three 10.4/11.4

Plot of Stave Three		Key Vocabulary	
1. Ghost of Christmas Present	When Scrooge wakes, he finds the Ghost of Christmas Present, a large, joyful man resembling stereotypical images of Father Christmas sitting atop a mountain of festive food. Scrooge is taken to see a range of different people enjoying the festivities.	1. Ignorance	lack of knowledge or information
		2. Injustice	lack of fairness
		3. Inequality	difference in size, degree, circumstance etc. not equal
		4. Allegory	a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning , typically a moral or political one.
2. The Cratchit Family	They take a stop at Bob Cratchit's house where the hard working family are embracing the Christmas spirit despite their poverty . Scrooge is moved by Tiny Tim's bravery being a cripple.	5. Compassionate	feeling or showing sympathy and concern for others.
		6. Abundant	having plenty of
		7. Impoverished	made poor
3. Fred's party	The last stop is Scrooge's nephew's house, where Scrooge enjoys the festive games and merriment although the party make fun of Scrooge's misery .	Symbols and motifs	
4. Ignorance and Want	Before the Spirit's time is up, two impoverished children are revealed from under his cloak ; the children are Ignorance and Want and Scrooge is warned to beware of Ignorance the most .	Ignorance and Want	These children represent two social issues . While the poor are weighed down by Want, it is clear that Ignorance is more dangerous for society .
		Ghost of Christmas Present	This ghost represents generosity and peace , bringing Scrooge visions of feasts. Scrooge's room is transformed to show the contrast between his cold home and abundance of other families . Though the others do not have material wealth, they are rich in happiness and warmth .

Stave Three Quotations		
1. Fred	"His offences carry their own punishment"	Scrooge is judged by his only living relation and Fred is frustrated at his fixed mindset . Scrooge is in charge of the burdens he will face if he doesn't change .
2. Ghost of Christmas Present	"I see a vacant seat. The child will die."	These short sentences emphasise the hole that will be left in the Cratchit family when Tiny Tim dies in the future . 'Will' highlights the certainty if nothing changes .
3. Bob Cratchit	"Founder of the feast"	The Cratchit family toast Scrooge showing their Christmas spirit . They are thankful regardless of their poverty and display love and affection for each other.
4. Ghost of Christmas Present	"Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons?"	The Ghost recites Scrooge's own words back to him to make him feel guilty for his previous ignorance, greed and lack of compassion.
5. Ghost of Christmas Present	"The boy is Ignorance. The girl is Want...Most of all beware this boy."	Dickens uses two malnourished and impoverished children to symbolise ignorance (unawareness) and want (need for more) as they emanate greater sympathy from readers.

A Christmas Carol: Stave Four 10.5/11.5

Plot of Stave Four		Key Vocabulary	
1. Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come	The final ghost appears in a hooded black cloak and does not talk to Scrooge but points. The first stop is the business district where Scrooge overhears a heartless conversation between two businessmen about the funeral of a miserly man.	1. Ominous	giving the worrying impression that something bad is going to happen; threatening .
2. Old Joe and Caroline	Scrooge visits Joe and the thieves who are trading in the dead man's possessions . Scrooge sees a family who are relieved over the man's death as it relieves them of the pressures of the debt they owed.	2. Resolute	admirably purposeful, determined , and unwavering.
3. The Cratchit Family and Tiny Tim	This visit is followed by the Cratchit house, where the family are mourning the death of Tiny Tim .	3. Repentance	sincere regret
4. Scrooge's graveyard	The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come then takes Scrooge to a graveyard and points to a graveyard which Scrooge discovers has his name engraved . He is beside himself with sadness and promises to keep the Christmas spirit from now on .	4. Remorse	deep regret or guilt for a wrong committed.
		5. Symbolism	the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities .
		Symbols and motifs	
		Scrooge's gravestone	The gravestone symbolises Scrooge's potential fate if he does not change : a lonely death, inconsequential to those who know him.
		Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come	The final spirit, silent and clothed in black, symbolises the uncertainty of fear of the future . The presence is mysterious and without identifiable features, showing that the future is not yet set.
Stave Four Quotations			
1. Scrooge to the Ghost	"I fear you more than any spectre I have seen"	This establishes the idea that Scrooge is changing – he is now frightened of what is to become of him and is taking notice. He is no longer angry and ignorant .	
2. Charwoman to Old Joe about Scrooge	"He frightened everyone away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead!"	The poor are able to "profit" from Scrooge's possessions when he died because nobody was there to claim them . This forces Scrooge to feel sad for his own loss but also acknowledge that it is a result of his own actions, which need to change.	
3. Bob Cratchit	"My little, little child!"	The repetition of 'little' emphasises how small and weak Tiny Tim was and just how desperately he was in need of help .	
4. Scrooge	"sponge away the writing on this stone"	Scrooge finally realises the terrible consequences of his behaviour and how it affects others.	
5. Scrooge	"I will not shut out the lessons they teach"	This illustrates that Scrooge will not forget what he has learnt and will make an effort to change for the better; he will show compassion and help those in need .	

A Christmas Carol: Stave Five 10.6/11.6

Plot of Stave Five		Key Vocabulary	
1. Scrooge’s change	Scrooge realises that he has been returned to Christmas morning, and is utterly overjoyed . He pays a boy that he meets a huge sum to deliver a great big turkey to Bob Cratchit’s household . He bumps into the gentlemen collecting for charity, apologises for his prior behaviour, and promises to donate lots of money to the poor . He attends Fred’s party and is so happy and kind that the other guests can barely believe his behaviour. The next morning, he gives Bob Cratchit a pay rise .	1. Redemption	the action of saving or being saved from sin , error, or evil.
		2. Transformation	the task of changing who you are and becoming the person you want to be .
		3. Philanthropist	a person who seeks to promote the welfare of others , especially by the generous donation of money to good causes.
		4. Morality	principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behaviour.
		5. Juxtaposition	the fact of two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect.
2. Scrooge and Tiny Tim	As time passes by, he stays true to his word – he helps the Cratchits and becomes like a second father to Tiny Tim, who does not die . Scrooge brings Christmas cheer to every day, and shrugs off the doubts that others have about his changed behaviour. The narrator concludes by suggesting that Scrooge’s changed attitude and behaviour should be shared by everyone.	Symbols and motifs	
		Weather	Weather is used as a motif to represent Scrooge’s character and how it changes . As we are introduced to Scrooge the weather is cold and bleak, reflecting his cold character. The fog is symbolic of ignorance. By the end, the weather has turned ‘bright’ and ‘jovial’, reflecting Scrooge as a changed man.
		Turkey	Scrooge purchases a large turkey to provide for the Cratchits. This purchase is symbolic of his transformation from miserly to generous , illustrating his renewed commitment to Christmas values.
Stave Five Quotations			
1. Scrooge	“I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school boy.”	This group of three similes juxtaposes those used at the exposition of the novella when Scrooge is described “as solitary as an oyster” and “as hard and sharp as flint.” These similes imply Scrooge is no longer burdened and is filled with joy and goodness .	
1. Narrator about Scrooge	“Scrooge regarded everyone with a delighted smile.”	Scrooge no longer frightens passers by into the shadows but greets them warmly . Like his old boss Fezziwig, Scrooge is now warm towards others and resembles a joyful character on Christmas day.	
3. Scrooge	“I don’t know anything. I’m quite the baby”	This highlights that Scrooge has been re-born and redeemed , contrasting him as an ‘old sinner’ in Stave 1.	
4. Scrooge	“I have come to dinner. Will you let me in Fred?”	Scrooge feels uncertain about his position with his nephew due to the way he has behaved in the past. He is asking to be let into the family again .	
5. Tiny Tim	“God bless us, Every one!”	Tiny Tim embodies the spirit of Christmas . ‘Every one’ highlights his compassion and care and he acts as a symbol of hope and positive outcomes through personal and social reform .	