

## CHARACTERS (AO2)

<b>Ebenezer Scrooge</b>	symbol of Victorian capitalism; echoes Malthusian sentiment; avaricious employer; misanthrope; isolated; the quintessential miser; redeemed by the end; a caricature of the archetypal businessman; evokes disapproval & sympathy; undergoes rebirth.
<b>Jacob Marley</b>	symbol of Scrooge's conscience; repentant; avaricious; condemned to wander the earth.
<b>Fezziwig</b>	symbol of compassionate capitalism; jovial; generous; epitome of Christmas cheer.
<b>Belle</b>	symbol of Scrooge's rejection of humanity; sorrowful; understanding.
<b>Bob Cratchit</b>	symbol of the plight of the poor; kind; humble; hard-working; dedicated employee.
<b>Tiny Tim</b>	angelic; evokes sympathy; warm-hearted; highly sentimentalized.
<b>Fred</b>	symbol of the Christmas spirit; enthusiastic; merry; antithesis of Scrooge.
<b>Ghost of Christmas Past</b>	represents memory; combination of young & old; sheds light on Scrooge's past.
<b>Ghost of Xmas Present</b>	jolly; a majestic giant; bestows Christmas cheer; welcoming; gives birth to Ignorance & Want.
<b>Ghost Xmas Yet to Come</b>	silent; ominous; seals Scrooge's fate; evokes fear.

## DICKENS' THEMES & IDEAS (AO1)

**WEALTH** was not shared fairly; the rich should become philanthropic; emotional wealth trumps financial wealth; the rich should help the poor, not leave them to die (i.e. Malthus).

**POVERTY:** The Poor Laws = cruel; Victorian readers should pity the poor; innocent children the main victims; poverty leads to ruin of civilization.

**AVARICE:** the avaricious would expect to be punished (in this life or the next); Victorian employers were avaricious; avarice causes unhappiness; Victorian society built on avarice.

**ALTRUISM:** Victorian poor more altruistic than the rich; altruism leads to happiness; altruism will save society; charity starts at home.

**FAMILY & ISOLATION:** togetherness more important than wealth; rejection is painful; isolation causes unhappiness; society should behave like a family.

**REDEMPTION:** everyone has the potential to transform; redemption brings joy; readers must examine their consciences and change; society should transform like Scrooge.

**THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT:** brings warmth to the most isolated of places; Christian values of hope & charity should not be forgotten; Christmas spirit is for the whole year; mankind is everyone's business.

## KO — A CHRISTMAS CAROL

### PLOT SUMMARY

**STAVE 1:** Dickens introduces Scrooge as a cruel, lonely, avaricious old businessman. Marley's Ghost, dressed in symbolic chains, warns Scrooge of his future.

**STAVE 2:** The Ghost of Christmas Past appears and shows Scrooge a series of painful memories.

**STAVE 3:** The Ghost of Christmas present reveals the true nature of Christmas to Scrooge, taking him to visit Fezziwig's party and the Cratchit's house.

**STAVE 4:** The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come reveals how Scrooge's sin will result in his, as well as Tiny Tim's, if he does not change.

**STAVE 5:** Scrooge awakes on Christmas Day transformed and begins to make amends for his cruel and selfish behaviour.

## WRITERS METHODS (AO2)

### LITERARY FORMS (3)

**(1) SOCIAL SATIRE:** Humour, irony & hyperbole to reveal societal issues

**(2) SOCIAL COMMENTARY:** comment on the issues in society and promoting change by informing citizens and appealing to their sense of justice.

**(3) ALLEGORY:** A story with a political or moral lesson/meaning containing symbolism; prolepsis (the future is shown as reality in S4)

**SYMBOLISM:** fog = Victorian moral blindness; Marley's chains = past will catch up with you; cold = uncaring attitude of the rich to the poor; Scrooge's counting house = greed of society & unfettered capitalism; Ignorance & Want = ragged children of London & collapse of civilisation

**IRONY:** The Ghost of Christmas Past repeats back Scrooge's words; Bob toasts Scrooge for meagre dinner; dramatic irony in S4 (reader knows Scrooge's death before he does).

### PATHOS (emotion):

Stave 2 – Scrooge pities the child he was; he rejected Belle in favour of wealth;

Stave 3 – love & Christmas spirit at Cratchit home; Christmas

Stave 4 – 'death' of Tiny Tim; Scrooge faces his own grave

Stave 5 – Scrooge's redemption.

**CONTRAST:** warm vs cold; light vs dark; greed vs generosity; alienation vs family; the interior vs the exterior; misanthropy vs philanthropy; Scrooge vs Fezziwig; Scrooge vs Bob; Scrooge vs Fred; Ghost of Christmas Past vs Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

### CONTEXT (AO3)

**(1776) ADAM SMITH** argued that if you remove rules and taxes from businesses they will flourish & everyone will benefit. This is known as free-market capitalism. Wealth will trickle down to the poor.

**INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION:** Prior to and during the Victorian era, people rushed to the city as agriculture became mechanized and wages fall significantly. The 1840s were known as the 'Hungry '40s' because of economic recession and crop failure.

**THOMAS MALTHUS (1798):** Malthus was an economist who thought that working-class people reproduce too rapidly & population should be controlled by allowing surplus people to die – if not, food supplies will run out. Charity should be avoided as it would only result in increased numbers of the poor. Dickens held anti-Malthusian beliefs.

**CHARLES DICKENS' CHILDHOOD:** Dickens forced to work in a blacking factory & father sent to debtor's prison.

**LONDON (1831):** largest city in world. Cholera epidemic leads to 1000s of deaths.

**THE POOR LAW (1834):** was supposed to help the poor but meant they got less support & were sent to workhouses & forced to work in terrible conditions.

**RAGGED SCHOOL (1843):** Following a visit to a 'Ragged School' and a government report on poverty, Dickens writes 'A Christmas Carol' in 6 weeks.

### SPIRITS

Many Victorians were fascinated by 'spiritualism' – the belief that spirits of the dead can communicate with the living. Public séances were common. Victorians also associated Christmas with ghost stories.