



Contexts

Dickens' Life



1. Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812 in Hampshire into a middle class family.
2. His father was imprisoned for debt leading to poverty for the family.
3. Dickens was put to work at Warren's Blacking Factory.
4. Dickens found employment as an office boy at an attorneys.
5. A Christmas Carol was written in 1843.

Dickens and Education



1. Dickens believed strongly in the importance of education.
2. In 1840s, Dickens became involved in the Ragged Schools. The aim was to provide poor children with basic education.
4. Dickens believed that it is through education that one can leave poverty

Dickens' Intentions



1. Dickens' intention in A Christmas Carol is to draw readers' attention to the plight of the poor and to highlight the hypocrisy of Victorian society.
2. Dickens juxtaposes the wealth and greed of capitalists with the poorer classes and draws attention to the way in which the greed and selfishness of some impacts on the quality of the lives of others.
3. His moral message appears to be that we should care for our fellow man.
4. The transformation of Scrooge suggests that Dickens feels it is never too late for change and redemption. Dickens emphasises the importance of family, friendship and charity in bringing about this change.

Dickens' Influences



1. Dickens' writing criticised economic, social, and moral issues in the Victorian era.
2. He showed compassion and empathy towards the vulnerable and disadvantaged people in English society, and help to bring about several important social reforms.
3. Dickens' deep social commitment and awareness of social issues come from his traumatic childhood, where his father was imprisoned for debt, and he was forced to work in a shoe-blackening factory at 12 years old.
4. In his adult life, Dickens developed a strong social conscience and empathised with the victims of social and economic injustice.



The Industrial Revolution

1. From 1780 factory owners in Britain began to use coal-fired steam engines to power the machines in big factories, bringing great fortune.
2. Transition from traditional farming methods to machinery led to Industrial revolution.
3. People flocked from the countryside to the cities. London's population between 1800 and 1900 from 1 million to 6 million people.
4. This led to over-crowding and hunger, disease and crime. There were no proper drainage / sewage systems. Many families had to share one tap / toilet. Children suffered the most and were exploited by factory owners who forced them to work long hours in dangerous conditions.



Thomas Malthus and The Poor Laws

1. In 1798, Thomas Malthus wrote that the human population would grow faster than food supplies leading to famines and death. Malthus believed poverty was the result of overpopulation.
2. Malthus believed people should families in later life and not have too many children.
3. Dickens believed Malthus was wrong. He believed there was plenty of food to go around but only if the rich were more generous. Dickens felt it wrong the poor should suffer because the rich were too selfish to share their wealth.
4. Malthus thought existing poor laws in Britain were too charitable. Poverty relief, he believed, encouraged laziness in the poor and reduced the incentive to work hard and save money.
5. 1834 a new Poor Law was introduced to reduce the financial help available to the poor. It also ruled that all unemployed people would have to enter a workhouse in order to receive food and shelter. Conditions in workhouses were unpleasant to discourage the poor from relying on society to help them.



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Religion

1. Christianity held a strong influence in Victorian Britain, especially amongst the middle/upper classes.
2. Good Christians believed in a strict moral code – attending church regularly, avoiding alcohol and exercise sexual restraint.
3. Dicken's view on Christianity was different. He believed that to be a good Christian people should seek out opportunities to do good deeds for other people.
4. **Sabbatarianism** – when people spent Sunday going to church and resting. Dickens was opposed to this because it meant that working poorer people were denied any enjoyment on their one day off – everything was shut.
5. Poorer people didn't have ovens at home so often food cooked by bakers. **Sabbatarianism** meant that many people couldn't get a hot meal on Sundays because the bakers were shut.



Christmas

1. At the start of 19th century Christmas was hardly celebrated. By the end of the century it was the most important celebration of the year.
2. Traditions associated with Christmas became important: cards, crackers, carols, decorations, gifts and Christmas dinner. Prince Albert in 1840 brought a tree from Germany to Britain for the first time. Christmas card dates back to 1843 when Henry Cole asked an artist to design one for him. They were expensive so children made their own.
3. Christmas celebrations were becoming more secular as feasts and games became a central part of the festivities.

Ghosts and the Supernatural



1. Despite making many advancements in science and medicine, there was a fascination in the Victorian Era with the supernatural.
2. Ghosts were popular throughout the period and appeared in stories, plays, photographs (through trickery) and people held séances.
3. It was traditional for people to gather round the fire and tell ghost stories on Christmas Eve.
4. Gothic fiction was popular at the time and 'A Christmas Carol' uses many of its elements: a strong atmosphere, fear, an awe of the supernatural, strong emotions, melodrama and Scrooge metaphorically fighting his inner demons.

Language

- Allusion**- reference to another literary work
- Anaphora** – to repeat a word/phrase at the beginning of successive clauses
- Asyndeton**- list without conjunctions
- Characterisation**- built up description of character
- Foil** - someone with opposite characteristics to the
- Hyperbole**- exaggerated statement
- Imagery**- visually descriptive language
- Metaphor**- an image created by writing about something as if it is something else
- Motif** - a recurrent image
- Pathetic fallacy**- giving nature human qualities, or the description of surroundings to reflect the mood of a character
- Pathos**- language to evoke pity or sorrow
- Personification**- writing about an object as if were human
- Polysyndeton**- list with conjunctions
- Protagonist** – the main character
- Satire**- use of humour or ridicule to criticise
- Semantic field**- words related in meaning
- Simile**- comparing using 'like' or 'as'

Structure and Form

- Allegory** - characters/events represent ideas about society, religion, morals or politics
- Analepsis** (flashback) – a past event is narrated later than its chronological place by "flashing back" to an earlier point in the story
- Antithesis** – a person or thing that is in direct contrast to something else
- Authorial intrusion** - where author pauses to speak directly to reader
- Conflict**- a problem faced by characters
- Cyclical structure** – when a story's beginning and end mirror each other
- Exposition** – the opening part of a story where setting and characters are introduced
- Foreboding**- sense that something will occur
- Foreshadowing**- clue about something later
- Juxtaposition**- two contrasted ideas
- Melodrama** - exaggerated characters/events
- Novella** – a short novel
- Poetic justice** - good is rewarded; bad is punished
- Prolepsis** (flashforward) – a future event is narrated before its chronological place by "flashing forward" to a moment later in the story
- Resolution**- the point where conflict is resolved



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Key Characters

Ebenezer Scrooge at the start. 	The central protagonist (main character). A mean businessman who is visited by three spirits.	Miserly, misanthropic, bitter, materialistic, unsympathetic, indifferent, parsimonious, selfish, isolated, cynical.
Fred 	Scrooge's cheerful, kind nephew, the son of his sister Fan. Acts as a foil to Scrooge.	Warm-hearted, altruistic, empathetic, optimistic, compassionate, insightful, charming, generous, forgiving, jovial, enthusiastic, caring.
Bob Cratchit 	Scrooge's hardworking and underpaid clerk.	Uncomplaining, courteous, deferential, grateful, moral, paternal, vulnerable, caring, tender, cheerful, loving, forgiving.
Jacob Marley 	Scrooge's deceased business partner who appears as a ghost warning Scrooge to change his ways.	Materialistic, uncharitable, terrifying, haunting, restless, weary direct, reformed, regretful, prophetic. Emblematic.
The Ghost of Christmas Past 	The first ghost to visit Scrooge. A spirit that constantly changes shape and has light beaming from its head. Represents truth, hope and memory.	Contradictory: strong, gentle, quiet, forceful. Commanding, questioning, mysterious, ephemeral.
Fezziwig 	Scrooge's former employer. As a young man, Scrooge was Fezziwig's apprentice.	Generous, benevolent, jovial, lively, friendly.
Belle 	Scrooge's former fiancé who breaks off their engagement because Scrooge begins to value money more than her.	Resolute, dignified, honest, modest, kind, content.
The Ghost of Christmas Present 	A huge and cheerful, clad in a green robe. The embodiment of the Christmas spirit – shows Scrooge different Christmas celebrations.	Compassionate, abundant, welcoming, generous, cheerful, jolly, friendly, sympathetic, ephemeral, prophetic.
The Cratchit family 	Bob's large and loving family.	Grateful, content, impoverished, deprived, lively, loving, warm, hard-working.
Tiny Tim 	Bob Cratchit's young son who is crippled and in ill-health.	Vulnerable, frail, patient, mild, thoughtful, saintly, sentimentalised, emotive, moral and religious.
Ignorance and Want 	Two children who hide under the robes of the Ghost of Christmas Present that Dickens uses allegorically.	Wretched, frightful, hideous, miserable, yellow, meagre.
The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come 	The last ghost to visit Scrooge and the only one who does not speak. Its appearance is similar to the Grim Reaper and it shows Scrooge visions of his death.	Silent, dark, mysterious, solemn, ominous, sinister, frightening.
Scrooge at the end. 	Scrooge has been transformed	Benevolent, charitable, generous, joyful, sociable, transformed, redeemed, altruistic. Emblematic.



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Plot Summary and Key Quotations

<p>Preface</p>	<p>A note from Dickens to his readers to explaining that he wants to introduce an entertaining idea to them.</p>	<p>'I HAVE endeavoured in this Ghostly little book to raise the Ghost of an Idea' 'May it haunt their houses pleasantly'</p>
<p>Stave 1</p>    	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are introduced to Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas Eve. He is a lonely miser obsessed with money. He won't pay to heat the office properly – meaning his clerk, Bob Cratchit is very cold. 2. We learn Jacob Marley, Scrooge's business partner, died exactly 7 years earlier. 3. Scrooge is irritated that Christmas Day seems to be interrupting his business. Scrooge is visited by his nephew Fred, who invites his uncle to Christmas dinner. Scrooge refuses. 4. Scrooge is visited by two charity workers, asking for donations. Scrooge refuses and exclaims he wants to be left alone. 5. Scrooge allows Bob to have Christmas Day off. 6. Scrooge, when he is home, is visited by the Ghost of Jacob Marley – warning him he will be visited by three more ghosts to help him change his ways. 	<p>'squeezing, wrenching, grasping, covetous old sinner' 'tight-fisted hand at the grindstone' 'no warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill' 'a dismal little cell beyond' 'he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled' 'Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?' 'decrease the surplus population' 'I wear the chain I forged in life...I made it link by link, yard by yard, and of my own free will I wore it' 'The chain was made up of cash boxes, ledgers, heavy purses' 'Mankind was my business!'</p>
<p>Stave 2</p>      	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Past who takes him to witness his past. 2. Scrooge is taken first to his schoolboy years and he is reminded how his friends would go home for Christmas while he was left at school. 3. We see him with his sister, who one year took him home for the holidays. 4. Next we are shown Scrooge as a young apprentice, working for Fezziwig. Dickens describes the Christmas ball Fezziwig organised for his employees. 5. Finally, Scrooge is taken to see his ex-fiancée, Belle. We see the scene when they break up, as money has taken over Scrooge's life. 6. Scrooge cannot bear to see any more and struggles with the spirit. 	<p>'like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man' 'from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light' 'a solitary boy neglected by his friends' 'lonely boy sitting by a feeble fire' 'The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune' 'Our contract is an old one' 'Another idol has displaced me'- "A golden one" 'I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off, until the master passion, Gain engrosses you" 'Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!" 'but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light'</p>
<p>Stave 3</p>       	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scrooge is then visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present. 2. The spirit shows Scrooge how the Cratchit family celebrate Christmas. 3. Scrooge asks if Tiny Tim will live. The spirit explain unless there are changes, he will die. The spirit reminds Scrooge of his earlier words: 'If he is to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population' 4. Scrooge is then taken to see how others celebrate Christmas: miners, lighthouse workers, sailors on a ship. 5. He is then taken to Fred's house at Christmas, where they are playing games. 6. The spirit then begins to age, and see under the spirit's robes two children: Ignorance and Want. 7. The Ghost of Christmas Future then appears. 	<p>'there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see, who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge' 'brave in ribbons'/ 'dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown' 'he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame' 'at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass; two tumblers and a custard-cup without a handle.' 'I see a vacant seat [...] in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, 'If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population" 'two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable' 'This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom"</p>



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Plot Summary and Key Quotations Continued

Stave 4



1. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is described.
2. The phantom takes Scrooge to see a group of businessmen discussing someone who has died.
3. Scrooge is then taken to see Old Joe, where he is in the process of buying property of the dead man – which have been stolen.
4. Scrooge then returns to Bob Cratchit's house, where it is revealed Tiny Tim has died.
5. Scrooge is then taken to a neglected part of a graveyard and is shown a grave stone. The name is revealed and Scrooge realises this is for him.
6. Scrooge falls to his knees and says he will change his ways.

'The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached.'
'the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery'
'Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him'
'I fear you more than any Spectre I have seen.'
"Spirit...I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now"
'He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!'
'Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues'
'Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood'
"hear me. I am not the man I was"
"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future"

Stave 5



1. Scrooge wakes up in his own bed and is joyous.
2. Scrooge wonders how much time has passed and calls to a boy. He then sends the boy to the poulterer for the prize turkey to give to Bob Cratchit.
3. Scrooge meets one of the charity collectors from earlier and whispers to him that he will give a large donation.
4. Scrooge then goes to Fred's house and is welcomed in. He enjoys the dinner and party.
5. On Boxing Day, Scrooge arrives early to work, and plays a trick on Bob. Scrooge then tells him he is going to raise his salary and promises to help Bob's struggling family.
6. Scrooge is described to have completely changed and becomes a 'second father' to Tiny Tim – 'who did not die.'

"I am as light as a feather"
"I am as merry as a schoolboy"
'it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs'
'I am quite a baby'
'No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial... Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky'
"Not a farthing less. A great many back payments are included in it"
'Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness!'
'Bob! Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle'
'Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father'

Key Themes

The Christmas Spirit:

1. A combination of religion, enjoyment and charity
2. Shown symbolically in the Ghost of Christmas Present
3. Characters show the spirit of Christmas in the way they behave towards others.
4. The Christmas spirit is powerful enough to transform Scrooge and its qualities are important throughout the year.



Family:

1. Family is shown to be a source of comfort strength and joy throughout the story.
2. Happy families contrast Scrooge's isolation
3. Love is shown between married couples and large families are idealised.
4. Scrooge's childhood shapes his future, but in Stave 4 he sees the result of the rejection of his family and by the end he becomes part of two families.



Responsibility:

1. Scrooge feels no responsibility towards the poor and embodies Malthusian ideals.
2. Scrooge is responsible for the Cratchits problems and his own isolation and misery.
3. Fred and Fezziwig show a sense of responsibility to others.
4. Dickens wants his readers to take responsibility for the problems in society and help those around them.



Redemption:

1. Scrooge is a 'sinner' and needs to be redeemed.
2. Scrooge changes through the visions shown to him by the ghosts – he learns from what they show him.
3. Tiny Tim, the innocent child, plays a key role in Scrooge's change.
4. Scrooge is redeemed because he changes his behaviour and attitude towards others. Dickens wanted Victorian society to undergo a similar transformation to Scrooge.

