

Click on the QR code to link to a reading of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

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| Scene by Scene Summary | | |
| STAVE ONE | *Ebenezer Scrooge is at work in his counting house. Despite the Christmas Eve cold, he refuses to spend money on coals for the fire. Scrooge turns down his nephew Fred’s invitation to his Christmas party and the request of two men who want money for charity. Back at home, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his dead partner, Jacob Marley, who tells Scrooge that, due to his greedy life, he now has to wander the Earth wearing heavy chains. Marley tries to stop Scrooge from doing the same. He tells Scrooge that three spirits will visit him during the next three nights. Scrooge falls asleep.* | Item Detail - Marley's Ghost :: ItemBrowser :: ItemBrowser“Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it.” |
| STAVE TWO | *Scrooge wakes to the Ghost of Christmas Past. Invisible to those he watches, Scrooge revisits his childhood school days, his apprenticeship with a jolly merchant named Fezziwig, and his engagement to Belle, who leaves Scrooge as he loves money too much to love another human being. Scrooge sheds tears of regret before being returned to his bed.* | Who had sex dreams about the Ghost of Christmas Past : GCSE“But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.” |
| STAVE THREE | *The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge Christmas as it will happen that year. Scrooge watches the Cratchit family eat a tiny meal in their little home. He sees Bob Cratchit's crippled son, Tiny Tim, whose kindness and humility warm Scrooge's heart. The spectre shows Scrooge his nephew's Christmas party. Scrooge asks the spirit to stay until the very end. Toward the end of the day the ghost shows Scrooge two starved children, Ignorance and Want. He vanishes as Scrooge notices a dark, hooded figure coming.* | Ghost of Christmas Present - Wikipedia“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.” |
| STAVE FOUR | *The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come takes Scrooge through a sequence of scenes linked to an unnamed man's death. Scrooge is keen to learn the lesson. He begs to know the name of the dead man. He finds himself in a churchyard with the spirit pointing to a grave. Scrooge looks at the headstone and is shocked to read his own name. He is desperate to change his fate and promises to change his ways. He suddenly finds himself safely tucked in his bed.* | Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come Illustration - TwinklI fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart” |
| STAVE FIVE | *Scrooge wakes and rushes out onto the street hoping to share his newfound Christmas spirit. He sends a turkey to the Cratchit house and goes to Fred's party. As the years go by, he continues to celebrate Christmas with all his heart. He treats Tiny Tim as if he were his own child, gives gifts for the poor and is kind, generous and warm.* | Christmas Turkey Dinner Clipart - Thanksgiving Turkey Dinner ...“He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge….God bless us all, every one!” |

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| Form and structure |
| The novella is narrated in the **third person** by an **omniscient narrator** who seems very biased against Scrooge.  The story is a **parable:** a moral tale with a strong message.  It is arranged in **five staves** (not chapters) as a **metaphor** for an actual Christmas carol. It contains **musical imagery** throughout (church bells, clock chimes, carol singers, Fezziwig’s party).  Dickens uses a **circular structure.** Scrooge’s interactions in Stave Five mirror those in Stave One, however he now treats everyone much differently (Fred, Bob Cratchit, the portly gentlemen, the young boy, Christmas itself) The weather also changes to reflect his transformation.  The number three is important: Scrooge is visited by three ghosts: Past, Present and Yet to come. This is a common feature in magical fairy stories (3 wishes, 3 choices etc.) and adds to the mystical feel of the novella |

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| Scrooge is in his counting house on Christmas Eve.  Scrooge is rude to Fred, refuses the charity collectors and reluctantly allows his clerk to take Christmas Day off.  The chain-wearing ghost of Jacob Marley visits to warn Scrooge that he will be visited by three spirits.  The Ghost of Christmas Past takes him to his old schoolhouse.  They visit young Scrooge at a Christmas party thrown by Mr Fezziwig.  We see Scrooge’s fiancée Belle, leaving him.  Scrooge cannot bear anymore and tries to extinguish the ghost’s light.  The Ghost of Christmas Present takes him to Bob Cratchit’s home to show how the poor can still be happy.  They visit nephew Fred’s house.  Scrooge spots two impoverished children under the ghost’s cloak.  The tone of the novella shifts with the arrival of the deathly Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, who shows Scrooge a dark future where he has died a lonely man.  Scrooge sees his name on a grave and begs for salvation. The ghost relents and saves him.  Scrooge wakes on Christmas morning and is enlightened and transformed.  Scrooge is forgiven: he goes for dinner at Fred’s house. He is the saviour of himself and also of Tiny Tim (who now lives). | 1  2  3  4  5 |

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| Characters | |
| Ebenezer Scrooge | *A selfish business man who transforms into a charitable philanthropist.* |
| Jacob Marley | *Scrooge’s dead partner who returns as a ghost to warn scrooge to change his ways.* |
| Bob Cratchit | *Scrooge’s clerk who doesn’t have much money. He loves his family and is shown to be happy and morally upright.* |
| Tiny Tim | *Bob’s ill son whose story plays a part in inspiring Scrooge’s transformation.* |
| The Ghost of Christmas Past | *A strange combination of young and old, wearing white robes and looking like a candle.* |
| The Ghost of Christmas Present | *A portly, jovial gentleman surrounded by a warm glow. He brings joy on the most needy townsfolk.* |
| The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come | *A robed and hooded spirit who confronts Scrooge with his own tombstone.* |

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| Themes |
| **American 1866 Waltham Gold Pocket WatchLogic and Time**  *Scrooge’s sense of logic is continually disrupted, helping to dismantle his cold and rational view of society. He initially dismisses the* ***supernatural*** *appearances, before then submitting to them. The ghosts are late to visit him, and then distort time as they seem to visit him all in one night – not over three nights as planned. This discarding of logic reflects Dickens’ criticism of the heartless economical logic that was used to create the New Poor Law.*  **Compassion, Forgiveness and Reclamation**  *Dickens uses different characters to demonstrate compassion and forgiveness (Fred and bob who feel pity for him) and how these people lead happy lives. In contrast, he shows the selfish nature of mankind in the dark and sinister Stave Four. Fred shows compassion and forgiveness to Scrooge in Stave Five by welcoming him for Christmas.*  **Poverty and Greed**  *Dickens wanted to highlight the plight of the poor in Victorian England, and how they are exploited by the greed of the wealthy. He uses the harshness of winter to further emphasise this. He also uses Scrooge as a vehicle to show that financial wealth does not mean contentment. Scrooge is impoverished in other ways (family, friends, happiness).*  **Isolation vs Family**  *We quickly learn that Scrooge (‘solitary as an oyster’) and Marley are isolated, and unhappy, characters. (Scrooge was Marley’s ‘sole friend and sole mourner’. The warmth and emotional richness of families (Bob Cratchit’s Fred’s, his ex-fiancée’s) are used as a contrast to Scrooge’s self-determined isolation. The disruption to Scrooge’s childhood family life may have also contributed to his future behaviour. The message may be the that family is the cornerstone of a happy society.*  **Transformation**  *The novella contains many examples of transformation: the transformation of young Scrooge into an embittered old man; his transformation to a benevolent man; the transformation of Marley from selfish human to eternally-suffering ghost; supernatural transformations; the transformation of the future – to save Scrooge and Tiny Tim. Dickens’ message may have been that it is never too late to change.* |
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| Keystone words |
| Philanthropy  Misanthropic  Redemption  Class  Empathy  Inequality |

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| Historical Context |
| 1824 - *Dickens’ father is sent to jail for debt. Dickens gives up his education until his father inherits some money* |
| *Dickens works in a warehouse pasting labels on bottles.* |
| *Dickens became a writer, reporting on court cases and writing for newspapers about his disillusionment with politics and the class system.* |
| 1832 - *Poor Law Amendment Act –Cuts in aid given to paupers. Workhouses are created for poor people to live and work in, if they were unable to pay for their own housing.* |
| 1843 - *Dickens visits a “Ragged School.”* |
| 1843 – *Dickens write A Christmas Carol focusing on how many of society’s ills can be blamed on greed for money and status.* |