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| **GCSE English Literature**  ‘A Christmas Carol’ Charles Dickens (1843)  Spend 45 minutes answering the question. Answer both parts. | | |
| **Plot** | | |
| Stave 1 | The opening sentences of the novella are devoted to stating that Jacob Marley, Scrooge’s business partner, is dead. He died seven years ago. Dickens then introduces Ebenezer Scrooge who is the main protagonist: a miserable old miser who finds no joy in anything and whose life is devoted to accumulating and saving money as the owner of a counting house (an accountant’s office).  The story begins on Christmas Eve with the mean-spirited Scrooge working in his counting-house. Scrooge watches over his clerk, Bob Cratchit. Scrooge refuses to pay for another lump of coal to warm the office even though it is freezing in Cratchit’s outer office. Scrooge's jovial nephew Fred arrives and invites Scrooge to Christmas dinner. Scrooge responds with a "Bah! Humbug!" refusing Fred's Christmas cheer.  Two portly gentlemen enter the office to ask for a charitable donation to help the poor. Scrooge replies that he already gives money to the prisons and workhouses. One of the gentlemen state that some poor people would rather die than go to the workhouses (as conditions are so terrible) and Scrooge states that they should die then and help reduce the surplus population.  Scrooge confronts Bob Cratchit, complaining about Bob's wish to take a day off for the holiday. Scrooge claims it is theft. He begrudgingly agrees to give Bob a day off. Scrooge returns home through the dismal London streets. Just before entering a ghostly image in the curves of the knocker gives the old man a shock: It is the face of Jacob Marley. As he plods up the staircase, Scrooge sees a locomotive hearse climbing the stairs beside him. After rushing to his room, Scrooge locks the door behind him. He eats his gruel before the fire.  Suddenly all the bells in the room begin to ring. Scrooge hears footsteps thumping up the stairs and heavy chains being dragged. A ghostly figure floats through the closed door--Jacob Marley, transparent and bound in chains. Scrooge shouts in disbelief, refusing to admit that he sees Marley's ghost--food poisoning, he claims. The ghost has spent seven years wandering the Earth in his heavy chains as punishment for his sins. Scrooge looks closely at the chains and realizes that the links are cashboxes, padlocks, ledgers, and steel purses. The wraith tells Scrooge that he has come to warn him and try to save him from the same fate. He says that Scrooge will be visited by three spirits. He rises and backs toward the window, leaving a trembling Scrooge. Scrooge looks out the window and sees a throng of spirits, each bound in chains. Scrooge stumbles to his bed and falls instantly asleep. | |
| **STOP-CHECK!**  Copy and complete the following questions. They are in chronological order.   1. Who is dead and how long have they been dead for? 2. List 4 details that we learn about Scrooge from the first paragraph. 3. When does the story begin? **CHALLENGE:** Can you think why Dickens has started the story at this time? 4. What is the name of Scrooge’s nephew? 5. What is Scrooge’s response to the charity collectors? 6. Explain why Scrooge is unhappy with his clerk, Bob Cratchit. 7. From the final paragraph list 4 details which link to the supernatural. 8. Why has Marley’s ghost visited Scrooge? | | |
| Stave 2 | Scrooge awakes and remembers the words of Marley's ghost. He can’t put Marley’s warning out of his head and it bothers him exceedingly. The first of the spirits will arrive at one o'clock. Frightened, Scrooge decides to wait for his visitor. The curtains of Scrooge's bed are blown aside by a strange figure, the Ghost of Christmas Past. This spirit is both young and old, summer and winter. It is dressed in white and has a light streaming from its head.  The ghost transports Scrooge to the countryside where he was raised. He sees his old school and familiar landmarks of his youth. He is shown boys he remembers playing happily. Touched by these memories, Scrooge begins to sob. But then the ghost takes him into the school where we meet Scrooge as a solitary and neglected child in the schoolroom. He has been left to pass the Christmas holiday alone. The ghost takes Scrooge on a tour of more Christmases of the past--the boy in the schoolhouse grows older. Scrooge's sister Fan runs into the room, and announces that she has come to take Ebenezer home. The aged Scrooge regretfully tells the ghost that Fan died many years ago and is the mother of his nephew Fred.  The ghost escorts Scrooge to more Christmases of the past including a merry party on Christmas Eve thrown by Fezziwig, the merchant with whom Scrooge apprenticed. Scrooge is entranced by this happy memory and remembers Fezziwig with great fondness. Scrooge later sees himself in conversation with Belle (his fiancé at the time). She is breaking off their engagement crying that greed has corrupted the love that used to impassion Scrooge. Scrooge begs the ghost to spare him and tells him not to show him anymore visions. However the spirit takes Scrooge to a more recent Christmas scene where a middle-aged Belle reminisces with her husband about her former fiancé. The husband says that Scrooge is now "quite alone in the world." Tormented and full of despair, Scrooge seizes the ghost's hat and pulls it firmly over top of his head, dimming the light. Scrooge finds himself back in his bedroom, where he falls asleep immediately. | |
| **CHECK-POINT!**  Copy and complete the following questions. They are in chronological order.   1. From the first paragraph, list four details that you learn about the Ghost of Christmas Past. 2. Where did Scrooge grow up? 3. What do we find out about how Scrooge was treated as a child? 4. What kind of boss does Fezziwig seem to be? CHALLENGE: Why do you think that the ghost shows Scrooge this memory? 5. Why did Belle break off her engagement to Scrooge?   **CHALLENGE:** What is different about the character Scrooge in Stave 2 in comparison to Stave 1? | | |
| Stave 3 | Scrooge is rather surprised when no spirit arrives at his bedside on the stroke of one. Curiously, Scrooge follows a glowing light and finds himself in a transformed version of his own room where he finds the second spirit waiting for him. The figure, a majestic giant clad in green robes, sits atop a throne made of a gourmet feast. In a booming voice, the spirit announces himself as the Ghost of Christmas Present. The spirit orders Scrooge to touch his green, furred robe. Upon doing so, Scrooge finds himself alongside the spirit in the midst of the bustling city on Christmas morning. People greet one another with a cheery "Merry Christmas!”  The spirit then takes Scrooge to the home of Bob Cratchit and shows the family preparing for Christmas dinner, with a goose being cooked at the baker’s and the pudding at the wash house. Poor people then did not have ovens, so they took roasts to the local baker. They shared a place for washing clothes, where there was a tub to heat the washing. This is where the puddings would have been boiled.  The oldest daughter, Martha, returns from her job. Bob comes in carrying the crippled Tiny Tim, on his shoulders. They have been to church while Mrs Cratchit, Belinda and Peter have been preparing the food. The family is more than content despite its skimpy Christmas feast. This vision allows Scrooge to see Bob in a different light, not just as his clerk but also a husband and a father. Scrooge finds himself anxious to know whether Tiny Tim will live and begs the spirit to tell him. The spirit replies that there will be an empty chair at next year's Christmas dinner.  The spirit takes Scrooge to a number of other Christmas gatherings, including an isolated community of miners and aboard a ship. In all of the different places Scrooge is shown, everyone is celebrating Christmas as best as they can.  He also takes Scrooge to Fred's Christmas party, where Scrooge loses himself in party games. However, Scrooge also hears himself being discussed as a miserable miser who gets no satisfaction from his life and his fortune benefits neither himself nor anyone else. Fred, his nephew, says he feels sorry for Scrooge as Scrooge is the only one that loses out by his actions.  The Ghost takes Scrooge away from the party. His final revelation is that he shows Scrooge a pair of starving children beneath his robes--their names are Ignorance and Want and they are the children of mankind. The children are hideous creatures who are shrivelled and ugly. Scrooge inquires if nothing can be done to help them. The Ghost turns to Scrooge and echoes Scrooge’s words from Stave 1: "Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?“ The spirit disappears as the clock strikes midnight. | |
| **CHECK-POINT!**  Copy and complete the following questions. They are in chronological order.   1. From the first paragraph, list 4 details we found out about the Ghost of Christmas Present. 2. What 2 details do we find out, in paragraph two, about how poor people cooked their Christmas dinner? 3. Why is Scrooge shown Bob Cratchit’s family and home? Can you think of 3 reasons? 4. How does Scrooge behave at Fred’s Christmas party? 5. How are the two children hidden underneath the Ghost of Christmas Present described?   **CHALLENGE:** Why does the Ghost of Christmas Present describe Ignorance and Want as ‘the children of mankind’?  **CHALLENGE:** How is Scrooge different to Stave 1? Can you think of 2 reasons? | | |
| Stave 4 | The final ghost is a phantom: a menacing figure clad in a black hooded robe who approaches Scrooge. It only has a hand showing. Scrooge kneels before him in abject fear and dread and asks if he is the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. The phantom does not answer but simply points the way forward. Scrooge pleads with the ghost to share his lesson; he is now very willing to find out what it has to teach him and he follows it.  The ghost takes Scrooge to a series of places. The first place is the London Stock Exchange, where there is a group of businessmen who Scrooge is familiar with. They are discussing the death of a colleague that nobody cared for and are reluctantly volunteering to arrange a funeral as there is no one else to do it.  Scrooge then overhears two business men in the street who he also knows. They are dismissive of the death of someone they call ‘Old Scratch’.  Next the phantom takes Scrooge to a dingy shop in a London slum, where a group of characters sell items stolen from a dead man. They discuss the dead man from whom they have taken from, and say that if he’d had any humanity he would not have died alone, with no one to care for him and stop his death bed from being robbed.  The Ghost then shows him a corpse on a bed without curtains around it. The phantom motions to Scrooge to turn down the sheet, but Scrooge becomes scared and thinks his own life might be going that way. He begs the Ghost to show him someone who shows emotion at the death.  Scrooge is shown a husband and wife who owed payments on their mortgage to the man and he had refused them even a week’s extension on the loan. They express relief at the death of a man to whom they owed money as his death will give them some respite.  Scrooge then begs the phantom to show him a death where people feel grief and tenderness. The Ghost shows Scrooge the Cratchit household, where the family struggles to cope with the death of Tiny Tim. Bob comes home and tells them he has seen them burial place and has met Scrooge’s nephew Fred, who was very kind to him.  Scrooge is exasperated in his attempts to understand the lesson of the silent ghost. Scrooge wants to know where he is himself at this time, but when the Ghost shows him his office it has changed and another person occupies his chair. Then the Ghost hurries him to the graveyard and points at a gravestone. Scrooge reads the inscription on the headstone: EBENEZER SCROOGE. Appalled, Scrooge clutches at the spirit and begs him to undo the events. He promises to honour Christmas within his heart and to live by the lessons of Past, Present, and Future. Scrooge continues to cry out for mercy, the phantom's robe shrinks and collapses. Scrooge, again, finds himself returned to his own bed. | |
| **CHECK-POINT!**  Copy and complete the following questions. They are in chronological order.   1. From the first paragraph, list four things which you learn about the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come. 2. Looking at paragraphs 2 and 3, how do people react to the death of Scrooge? 3. How does Scrooge react when he realises that the Ghost is foretelling his death?   **CHALLENGE:** Why do you think the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come shows these visions to Scrooge when he has already started to change? | | |
| Stave 5 | Scrooge is overjoyed to find that he is at home in his own bed. He gives thanks to Jacob Marley for his warning and is determined to be a different person. Upon realizing he has been returned to Christmas morning, Scrooge begins shouting "Merry Christmas!" at the top of his lungs. Genuinely overjoyed, Scrooge barely takes time to dress and dances while he shaves. Scrooge runs into the street and offers to pay the first boy he meets a huge sum to deliver a great Christmas turkey to Bob Cratchit's. He intends to have it delivered anonymously. He meets one of the portly gentlemen who earlier sought charity for the poor and apologizes for his previous rudeness, promising to donate huge sums of money to the poor. Scrooge goes to church. Then he attends Fred's Christmas party where he is warmly welcomed. The other guests can hardly manage to swallow their shock at his behaviour.  The following morning, Scrooge arrives at the office early and plays a trick on Bob Cratchit. Feigning disgust, he begins to scold Bob acting as if he is going to sack him. Instead he announces his plans to give Cratchit a raise and assist his family. Bob is stunned, but Scrooge stays true to his word. He helps the Cratchits and becomes a second father to Tiny Tim. Scrooge respects the lessons of Christmas more than any man alive. He becomes a good man, a good employer and his heart is full of laughter. | |
| **CHECK-POINT!**  Copy and complete the following questions. They are in chronological order.   1. Give two examples of how we know that Scrooge has changed in the first paragraph. 2. How is Scrooge different by the end of the novel? Use the final paragraph to help you. | | |
| **Characters** | | |
| **Character** | **Description** | |
| Scrooge | **At the start of the novel:**  **curmudgeonly** (stubborn, mean, bad- tempered and stubborn) selfish, ruthless, heartless, cruel, lacking empathy, prefers darkness and solitude. Villain  **Over the course of the novel:** regretful, displays sadness and concern for others.  **At the end of the novel:** generous, caring, concerned, responsible for the less fortunate, selfless  A selfish business man who transforms into a charitable giving character at the end of the novel. During the course of the novel, he feels regret and sadness about the way he has behaved. Hero. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | ***Key techniques*** |
| *Stave 1* | *‘Oh! but he* ***was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone****!...****Hard and sharp as flint****…****secret, and self-contained****, and* ***solitary as an oyster****.’*  *‘The cold within him* ***froze*** *his old features,* ***nipped*** *his* ***pointed*** *nose,* ***shrivelled*** *his cheek,* ***straightened*** *his gait, made his eyes* ***red****, his* ***thin*** *lips* ***blue****; and spoke out* ***shrewdly*** *in his* ***grating*** *voice’* | *Metaphor, simile, sibilance, simile*  *Verb & metaphor; combination of verbs and adjectives in the list*  *Adverb* |
| *Stave 1* | *‘If I could work my will,’ said Scrooge* ***indignantly****, ‘every idiot who goes about with ‘Merry Christmas’ on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.’* | *Adverb* |
| *Stave 2* | *‘To hear Scrooge* ***expending*** *all the earnestness of his nature on such subjects, in a* ***most extraordinary*** *voice between laughing and crying; and to see his* ***heightened*** *and* ***excited*** *face; would have been a surprise to his business friends in the city, indeed.’* | *Verb*  *Superlative, adjective*  *Adjectives*  *Compare to the first quotation* |
| *Stave 3* | *‘Spirit,’ said Scrooge* ***submissively,*** *‘conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learned a lesson which is working now. Tonight if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.’* | *Adverb- Compare to the 2nd quotation and the adverb used there. How has Scrooge changed?* |
| *Stave 5* | *‘I am light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy, I am giddy as a drunken man.’* | *Similes*  *Compare to the end of the second quotation.* |
| Fred | Scrooge’s nephew whose party invitation he declines. Acts as antithesis of Scrooge: positive, persistent, enthusiastic, hospitable and generous. He shows empathy for others. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | ***Key techniques*** |
| *Stave 1* | *‘He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge’s, that he was all in a glow; his face was* ***ruddy*** *and* ***handsome****; his eyes* ***sparkled****…’* | *Adjectives* |
| *Stave 1* | *‘I want* ***nothing*** *from* ***you****; I ask* ***nothing*** *of* ***you;*** *why cannot we be friends?’* | *Repetition and parallelism- sentences 1 and 2* |
| *Stave 4* | *Bob Cratchit describing Fred. ‘Bob told them of the* ***extraordinary kindness*** *of Mr Scrooge’s nephew…for he is the* ***pleasantest-spoken*** *gentleman you ever heard.’* | *Adjective, abstract noun*  *Comparative (Compare to how Scrooge talks at the start of the novel.)* |
| Jacob Marley | Scrooge’s dead business partner who returns as a ghost to warn Scrooge to change his ways. Scrooge was his only friend. Marley manifests the horror of regret through his burdensome chain. Scrooge and Marley are very similar characters in order to make Marley’s message credible. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | ***Key techniques*** |
| *1* | *‘Scrooge was his* ***sole*** *executor, his* ***sole*** *administrator, his* ***sole*** *assign, his* ***sole*** *residuary legatee, his* ***sole*** *friend, and his* ***sole*** *mounter.’* | *Repetition*  *Use of legal language and order of the list* |
| *1* | *‘The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was* ***long****, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made…of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel.’* | *Adjective*  *List of nouns* |
| *1* | *‘I wear the chain I* ***forged*** *in life,’ replied the Ghost, ‘I* ***made*** *it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it…’*  *‘Or would you know,’ pursued the Ghost, ‘the weight and length of the* ***strong coil*** *you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it since. It is a* ***ponderous chain!****’* | *Verb use*  *Adjective, noun*  *Adjective, noun, exclamatory sentence*  *What is the chain a metaphor of?* |
| Bob Cratchit | Scrooge’s clerk who is poor. He is fearful and oppressed by Scrooge.  He loves his large family and is shown to be happy and morally upright.  Optimistic, loyal, humble, symbol of forgiveness, demonstrates the virtues of Christmas. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | ***Key techniques*** |
| *1* | ***‘****The door of Scrooge’s counting-house was open, that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who was in a* ***dismal little cell beyond’*** | *Use of adjectives and connotations of the noun ‘cell’* |
| *1* | ***‘…****the clerk with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no greatcoat), went down a slide on Cornhill…twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve’* | *What does this represent about Bob and his outlook on life?* |
| *3* | *‘Bob held his [Tiny Tim]* ***withered little*** *hand to his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and* ***dreaded*** *that he might be taken from him.’* | *Adjectives*  *Verb* |
| *3* | ***‘****Mr Scrooge!’ said Bob. ‘I’ll give you Mr Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!’* | *Exclamatory sentences* |
| Tiny Tim | Bob’s ill son whose story plays a part in inspiring Scrooge’s transformation. His threatened future death acts as catalystfor Scrooge’s transformation. Tiny Tim’s role in the story is to demonstrate how poverty can affect those who are ill and unable to pay for treatment. Dickens has chosen to present a child as this makes it easier to gain the reader’s sympathy.  Victim, brave, good-natured, merry, reminder of the Christmas Spirit and virtuous, exceptionally thoughtful. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | ***Key techniques*** |
| *3* | *On Christmas Day, Tiny Tim goes to church in the hopes that others would see him and ‘remember…who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.’* | *How and why does Dickens link Tiny Tim to religion? What could he represent?* |
| *3* | *‘…and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife and* ***feebly*** *cried Hurrah!’* | *Adverb* |
| The Ghost of Christmas Past | The first of the three Ghosts represents memory. It is a strange combination of young and old, wearing white robes and looking like a candle. The light shining from its head is symbolic of memory, enlightenment, and guidance. It is reborn and dies each Christmas; It has the innocence of an infant but presented as elderly; ephemeral, gentle but firm.  The Ghost forces Scrooge to remember his childhood and memories from his life. These memories cause Scrooge to experience sadness which he has suppressed for a long time, remember the kindness and generosity of his sister and former employer and consider the choices he has made. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | ***Key techniques*** |
| *2* | ***‘****But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown on its head there sprang a* ***bright clear jet of light…a great extinguisher*** *for a cap’* | *Adjectives and connotations of the adjectives* |
| *2* | ***‘****But the* ***relentless*** *Ghost* ***pinioned*** *him in both his arms, and* ***forced*** *him to observe what happened next.’* | *Adjective, verb* |
| *2* | ***‘****The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though* ***Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light,*** *which* ***streamed*** *from under it, in an* ***unbroken flood*** *upon the ground.****’*** | *Verb and adverb*  *Verb*  *Adjective and connotations of the noun* |
| The Ghost of Christmas Present | The second Ghost summons Scrooge through a blaze of light. The light represents knowledge. It is a portly, jovial gentleman surrounded by a warm glow. He brings joy on the neediest townsfolk. It personifies everything that is generous and giving about Christmas. The Ghost wears a loose green robe, a holly wreath and a disused rusty scabbard from which the sword, a symbol of battle, is missing, implying that it has known peace for a very long time. Its torch represent the light of goodwill, for it makes those sprinkled with its contents feel happier and at peace with each other.  Dickens uses the Ghost to criticize those narrow-minded religious people who would like to shut all the bakers and other shops on Sundays. The Ghost acts as Dickens’ mouthpiece and criticises the businessmen and financiers who make money at the expense of the poor. He is like a mentor, sent to teach Scrooge by example and by wise words. | |
| **Stave** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| *3* | *‘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, as he came peeping round the door.’*  *\*Plenty’s horn: also known as ‘Cornucopia’, this is a mythical horn filled with everlasting produce. In the context of the quotation, this is suggesting that the knowledge of the Ghost is everlasting.* | *Adjectives*  *Comparison* |
| *3* | *‘There are some upon this earth of yours, ‘ returned the Spirit, ‘who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us, and all our kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us.’* | *How does the Ghost describe some people? Which people might it be describing?* |
| *3* | *‘They are Man’s,’ said the Spirit, ‘…This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want.* ***Beware of 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, unless the writing be erased.’* | *Imperatives* |
| Ignorance (boy) & Want (girl) | Dirty, street-children who symbolise everything wrong with Victorian society. They are the product of poverty and ignorance created by a society that does not care. | |
| **Stave** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| *3* | *‘From the foldings of its robe it brought two children, wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable.’*  *‘Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish, but prostrate too, in their humility.’* | *List of adjectives from both quotations* |
| The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come | A robed and hooded spirit who confronts Scrooge with his own tombstone. The most ‘traditional’ spook; it resembles the Grim Reaper. It accompanies Scrooge in the darkest part of story. The Ghost shows Scrooge only misery and despair. It seems to represent the fear that humans have of death, as well as Scrooge’s personal fear of what the afterlife means for him, following the appearance of Marley’s Ghost. The Ghost delivers a moral message; it is ominous and foreboding, frightening, solemn, and unrelenting. | |
| **Stave** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| **4** | **‘**It was **shrouded** in a **deep black** garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save **one outstretched hand**. ‘ | Verb, adjectives  Adjective noun |
| **4** | **Scrooge ‘feared** the **silent shape** so much that his legs **trembled** beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it.’ | Verb, sibilance, verb |
| **4** | ‘The Spirit was **immoveable** **as ever**.’ | Adjective |
| **STOP-CHECK!**   1. Make spider diagrams for each character, using the descriptions and key words. 2. Learn the quotations for each character. 3. Copy out the quotations for each character. Identify the key techniques and explain their meaning and effect. | | |
| **Minor characters** | | |
| Fezziwig | The jovial merchant with whom the young Scrooge apprenticed. Fezziwig was renowned for his wonderful Christmas parties. Prosperous and giving | |
| Belle | A beautiful woman who Scrooge loved deeply when he was a young man. Belle broke off their engagement after Scrooge became consumed with greed and the lust for wealth. She later married another man. | |
| Fan | Scrooge’s sister whom he has great affection for when visiting his past.  Symbolic of Christmas kindness | |
| Mrs Cratchit | Bob’s wife. She is an ideal wife and mother. | |
| **STOP-CHECK!**   1. What does Scrooge learn from each of the minor characters? | | |
| **Characters** | | |
| **Term** | **Definition** | |
| Caricatures | Exaggerated types | |
| Charactonym | A name which makes suggestions about a character’s manner or appearance. | |
| Archetype | A universal symbol in character form intended to represent basic human nature | |
| Allegorical | A hidden moral as symbolised through character(s) and/or story. | |
| **CHECK-POINT!**   1. Learn and/or revise the character terms and definitions using the following Quizlet set: https://quizlet.com/\_53hil6 | | |
| **Form and structure** | | |
| **Term** | **Definition** | |
| Novella | A short novel | |
| Staves | Chapters referred to as staves to link to music and the title ‘A Christmas Carol’. In ‘ACC’ there are five staves, which could be seen as five verses of a song or carol. | |
| Narrative structure | ‘ACC’ follows a three-act structure which consists of:   1. The inciting incident (the event that triggers the rest of the plot)- In ‘ACC’ it is the visit of Marley’s Ghost. 2. The climax (the event that everything in the novella is building towards)- In ‘ACC’ it is Scrooge’s sight of his grave. 3. The resolution- In ‘ACC’ it is Scrooge’s reformation. | |
| Allegory | A story which has a moral meaning. | |
| Transformation Narrative | A story which has a change from the starting point to the end. | |
| 3rd person omniscient narrative | An all-knowing narrator who controls the action of the story. | |
| Binary opposition | This is a pair of related terms or concepts that are opposite in meaning. In ‘ACC’ these are oppositions such as ‘poor vs. rich’; ‘mean vs. generous’. | |
| Authorial intrusion | A narrator who tells the story but frequently breaks into the story to give comments. Used for stories where there is a moral or commentary on life. Dickens frequently teaches the reader his beliefs about how the poor should be looked after and cared about. | |
| Prolepsis | Flash forward to events which happen later. | |
| Analepsis | Flashback to an earlier part in the story/narrative | |
| Timescale | There is a dual timescale taking place within the novella: the physical action takes place in a single night, but the metaphorical journey is that of a lifetime. Due to the fact that the action takes place in one night, Dickens is able to show Scrooge’s change of heart taking place during the Christmas season. The spirits are not bound by time or space, therefore Dickens is able to take Scrooge to many places and have him observe actions over many years. Scrooge himself imagines that days must have passed and is relieved to find it has all happened in one night. The travels Scrooge undertakes are metaphorical signifying the emotional and spiritual journey that he has to undertake in order to become a new person. | |
| **CHECK-POINT!**  Learn and/or revise the structure and form terms and definitions by using the following Quizlet set: https://quizlet.com/\_53hj6x | | |
| **Language** | | |
| Anaphora | Repetition of a word/ phrase at the start of a sentence. | |
| Metaphor | A direct comparison (where you say something is something else). | |
| Motif | A dominant or recurring idea. | |
| Pathetic fallacy | It is a kind of personification that gives human emotions to inanimate objects of nature for example referring to weather features reflecting a mood | |
| Personification | The attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human (inanimate object). | |
| Semantic field | This is a set of words related in meaning. | |
| Simile | A comparison using the words ‘as’ or ‘like’. | |
| Symbolism | The use of symbols (e.g. objects, characters) to represent ideas or qualities. | |
| Bathos | An abrupt change from extraordinary to everyday, giving a comic effect. For example at the start of Stave 3, Scrooge has mentally prepared himself for a supernatural visitation but when nothing happens, it frightens him. | |
| **CHECK-POINT!**  Learn and/or revise the language terms and definitions by using the following Quizlet set: https://quizlet.com/\_53hjqi | | |
| **Context** | | |
| **Term** | **Definition** | |
| Poverty | The population of the towns and cities was increasing rapidly. Due to the effects of the industrial revolution, people were flocking into the towns and cities in search of employment. Large numbers of people were looking for work, so wages were low, barely above subsistence level. If work dried up, or was seasonal, men were laid off, and because they had hardly enough to live on when they were in work, they had no savings to fall back on. Living conditions for the poor were appalling- large houses were turned into flats and the landlords who owned them, were not concerned about the upkeep or the condition. These houses were extremely overcrowded and dirty. There were children living with their families in these desperate situations but there were also numerous homeless children living on the streets of London. Sometimes, the only water the poor had access to was from the sewage ditch in the street. | |
| Childhood and Ragged Schools | The result of the expansion of manufacturing processes and the need for coal was child labor. Children as young as four worked 12-14 hours per day, many dying of disease or being killed or maimed in accidents. Ragged Schools were set up by well-meaning people for the poor in cities, offering free education. For many children this was the only education they received. The need for proper education was a priority for Dickens. After he visited one of these schools he wrote that the pupils were ‘abandoned of all help; speeding downwards towards destruction’. | |
| Class Inequality | In general Victorian Society was divided into classes; upper, middle, working class. The upper class were the ruling class and were afforded luxuries and everything you need to succeed in life, namely a good education and access to health care. | |
| Industrial Revolution and Victorian London | During the Victorian era, Britain became one of the world’s primary economic powers. After the invention of steam power, many people moved from rural areas to the cities to search for higher paying work. The people who moved to the city in search of work were dubbed the “working class”. Britain became an industrial hub and the economy was strong. With a sharp increase in production, Britain’s trade industry increased drastically as well. Everything converted from traditional, manual labour to machine-driven, highly-productive labour. This caused a reduction in the amount of men needed for work, which therefore increased poverty levels and crime in the cities. Working with machinery was also was more dangerous and life threatening for the workers. Throughout most of Dickens’ adult life the monarch was Queen Victoria. The Victorian Era was a time of change in many ways, driven by the changing economy in which there was less of a reliance on agriculture & a move into the Industrial Revolution (when goods changed from being made by hand to being made by machines in factories). | |
| The Workhouse and the 1834 poor Law Amendment Act | The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 allowed the poor to receive public assistance only if they went to the workhouse. Workhouses were deliberately made to be miserable in order to deter the poor from relying on public assistance. In the workhouse, the poor had to work for their food and accommodation. Workhouses were appalling places and the poor would often beg on the streets or die to avoid going to these places. Upon entering the workhouse, the poor were stripped and bathed. If a family entered the workhouse, they were split up and they would be punished if they tried to speak to one another. Children received an education which did not include the two most important skills of all, reading and writing, which were needed to get a good job. They sometimes were ‘hired out’ to work in factories and mines where they were made to do dangerous and deadly jobs. | |
| Capitalism | The word capital means “something of value”. Capitalism is an economic system in which people who own the means of production (factories, land, shops, tools, machines, shipping companies etc.) are able to make a lot of money by producing what people want and need. Capitalism has a more or less free market economy. That means prices move up or down according to the availability of the products. The people who own the businesses (capitalists) produce these popular goods and employ workers on a wage to produce them. These workers use their skills to produce products which are then sold for a profit by the business owner. The profit is not shared with the employees. Some people argue that this system hurts workers, because businesses make more money by selling things than they pay the workers. Business owners become rich while workers remain poor and exploited. | |
| Malthus (a respected academic and economist) | Dickens shows his disgust with the Malthusian principle that population will always grow faster than food and should be controlled by diseases and starvation. | |
| **STOP-CHECK!**  Create a spider diagram for each contextual aspect. | | |
| **Themes, symbols and concepts** | | |
| **Theme** | **Definition** | |
| Moral and social responsibility | Dickens felt strongly that Victorian society ignored the poverty of its underclass. On the one hand were the rich who enjoyed comfort and feasting at Christmas, and on the other were children forced to live in dreadful conditions in workhouses. Dickens had very little faith in, or respect for, political or church movements to counter poverty. He saw the New Poor Law as harsh and unfeeling and he felt the church schools set up to help children were more concerned with preaching than helping children out of poverty. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | |
| *1* | *‘If they would rather die,’ said Scrooge, ‘they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.’* | |
| Christian and community values | With each Ghost's tale functioning as a parable, *A Christmas Carol* advances the Christian moral ideals associated with Christmas--generosity, kindness, and universal love for your community--and of Victorian England in general. The book also offers a distinctly modern view of Christmas, less concerned with solemn religious ceremony and defined by more joyous traditions--the sharing of gifts, festive celebrations, displays of prosperity. | |
| Forgiveness and redemption | Redemption is the idea of being saved from sin or evil. In Scrooge we see a man who is transformed from a greedy, selfish miser into a generous and good-natured character by the end.  He is shown the error of his ways by the ghosts that visit him and is redeemed by his own willingness to change. The moral message of the novella is that all human beings have the opportunity to behave in kinder ways towards each other. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | |
| *2* | *`Nothing,’ said Scrooge. `Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all.’* | |
| *3* | *‘Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief. ‘* | |
| *5* | *“I will honour Christmas in my heart. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.”* | |
| Family values, relationships and love | Scrooge has a family awaiting his presence, asking him to dinner, wanting to celebrate the season with him, yet he refuses. This is one of the important moral moments in the story that helps predict Scrooge’s coming downfall. He chooses to live alone and in darkness while even poor Cratchit is rich in family. Scrooge’s distaste for Fred’s happiness is motivated by bitterness towards marriage based on Scrooge’s own lost love Belle. Symbols of coldness such as Scrooge’s empty hearth, refusal to provide heat for Cratchit, and keeping his own house dark to save money show Scrooge’s cruelty and lack of connection. But family provides the antidote to this coldness. When Fred enters, the counting house suddenly warms up. Further, Cratchit’s warmth, despite his lack of coal, and the togetherness and energy of his large family, show him to be one of the most fortunate men in the story. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | |
| *3* | *Fred and his family ‘being thoroughly good-natured, and not much caring what they laughed at, so they laughed at any rate, he encourage them in their merriment, and passed the bottle joyously.’* | |
| Benevolence, generosity and philanthropy | Scrooge is a miser, greedy and mean in every way. He spends all day in his counting house looking after his money but is so cheap that he keeps his house in darkness, his fire small and allows no extravagance even on Christmas day. But we soon learn that he is the most impoverished character – he is lacking love, warmth and the spirit of Christmas, all of which make lives like Bob Cratchit’s so worth living. The story’s structure and Scrooge’s character development are engineered so that as Scrooge becomes aware of his own poverty and learns to forgive and listen to his buried conscience, he is able to see virtue and goodness in the other characters and rediscovers his own generosity – he even becomes a symbol of Christmas in the final stave. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | |
| *3* | *‘Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.’* | |
| *3* | *‘His wealth is of no use to him. He doesn’t do any good with it. He don’t make himself comfortable with it.’* | |
| Time | Time: Three ghosts appear to Scrooge to show him he is living sinfully and what the consequences will be if he doesn’t choose to live better. The three-part ghost story shows the reader a clear path – sins in Scrooge’s past leading to his present misery and the continuation of that sin leading in the future to death, symbolized by the hooded figure. Each ghost shows Scrooge a vision of life gone wrong, set in a chronological path to destruction. Bells tolling and chiming recur at key moments, reminding Scrooge of the time passing. Time in the story is also threatening because of the changes its passing will enact in traditional society. Tradition is important for all of these characters and the changing of the city during these industrial times threatens to break down all of these traditions through its transformation of economic conditions and the grinding poverty it inflicts. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | |
| *1* | For Marley’s Ghost time is endless. *‘No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.’* | |
| *2* | The Ghost of Christmas Past has power over space and time. *‘As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand.’* | |
| Christmas | *A Christmas Carol* was published as a Christmas story, a Christian morality tale containing a lesson that the highly religious and traditional English population of Dickens’ time would enjoy. Dickens uses the idea of singing to connect the story to the joyful Christian traditions of the season, while at the same filling it with more serious, politically-minded themes. This theme has two aspects: Firstly, the festive, jolly Christmas atmosphere and the ethos of the nativity is embodied in characters like Tiny Tim, Bob Cratchit, and Fred –examples of goodness and charity, and show Scrooge the way to kindness. The love and strength of the Cratchit family despite their poverty shows the reader that the spirit of Christmas can defeat Scrooge’s spirit of misery. At the same time, Dickens uses Christmas to highlight the sort of unfair and crushing poverty that the Cratchit’s face. He profoundly criticizes the laws, policies, and economic system that promote such poverty. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | |
| *3* | *‘A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is!’ said Scrooge’s nephew.* | |
| *3* | *‘every man on board, waking or sleeping, good or bad, had a kinder word for another on that day than on any day in the year; and he shared to some extent in its festivities; and he had remembered those he cared for at a distance, and had known that they delighted to remember him.’* | |
| *3* | Dickens shows Christmas as a time of religious observance. *‘the steeples called good people all, to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with the gayest of faces.’* | |
| Social Dissatisfaction | Social Dissatisfaction: *A Christmas Carol* is a timeless moral tale, but Dickens also wrote the story with a very present problem in mind. His structure was designed to make the real issues of Victorian London stand out. In Scrooge’s assurance that the poor deserve to live in the poor house, we see the common misconceptions that the poor house is keeping people usefully employed. Rather, it was a terrible place that served to keep the poor out of view. Scrooge’s dismissive phrase “Humbug!” is a symbol of the ignorance of the middle class. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come shows us not only Scrooge’s miserable future but also the future of others who are uncaring. Dickens shows us that meanness is often connected to wealth. In fact, *A Christmas Carol* had a tangible effect on poverty – stories of factory owners being so affected by readings of *A Christmas Carol* that they sent their workers gifts and changed harsh conditions. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | |
| *1* | ***‘****Many thousands are in want of common necessaries; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.’* | |
| Supernatural | In the novella, the supernatural elements are a natural extension of the real world of Scrooge and his victims. There are many supernatural elements such as the ghosts and the visions which Scrooge has. Scrooge is presented a fantastic (as in absurd and nonsensical) vision of the city. The ghosts/ apparitions are used as a mouthpiece for social values. | |
| ***Stave*** | ***Key quotations*** | |
| *3* | *‘There are some upon this earth of yours, ‘ returned the Spirit, ‘who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us, and all our kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us.’* | |
| **STOP-CHECK!**  1. Create spider diagrams of each specific theme.  2. Quotation work- work on each theme and its group of related quotations. Complete the following tasks: learn the quotations, identify and explain how the specific theme is being shown in each quotation and identify and explain how key techniques have been used in each quotation. | | |
| **Symbols** | | |
| **Symbol** | **Definition** | |
| Music | *A Christmas Carol* was written as a metaphor for a traditional Christmas hymn. The title conjures the familiar Christmas tradition of singing, a seasonal activity that joins rich and poor together and echoes the political theme of the story. Many features of the story also reinforce its musical quality. The virtuous characters, Fred Scrooge and his family, the Fezziwigs, and many other unnamed townspeople that Scrooge initially despises, all bring music into Scrooge’s life, be it through laughter, dancing or the joyful chanting of “Merry Christmas!”. | |
| Images of Age and Youth | Dickens was especially aware of the plight of poor children in the 19th century, and children appear in the story as symbols of the ruined youth of Industrial Capitalism. The youths of Ignorance and Want are especially clear representations of these problems. And Tiny Tim is a lasting symbol of the power of goodness and generosity. Putting these large themes in the figures of children emphasizes the tragedy of the premature suffering of the Victorian youth, affected by the grinding poverty created by the Industrial Revolution and England's poverty laws. The story is also populated with images of age, which taunt Scrooge with the idea of the past and of his approaching death. The Ghost of Christmas Past is a strange mixture of the two. | |
| Jacob Marley’s Chains | Symbolic of Marley's business affairs and his pursuit of wealth. Like Scrooge, he focused on enriching himself instead of caring about the plight of others. As a result, he is forced to wear this chain in the afterlife to remind him of his neglect of others. This has clearly worked: Marley's conversation with Scrooge shows how his character has transformed. The chains are also symbolic of Marley's attempt to reform Scrooge's character. It is interesting to note, for example, that Marley clanks his chains every time that Scrooge says something negative or reminds him of his previous misdeeds. For instance, when Scrooge mentions that Marley was always a good man of business, he shakes his chains in response. In this respect, the chains symbolise the beginning of Scrooge's transformation and the heavy price he will pay should he fail to see the errors of his ways. | |
| The Counting House | It is a symbol of Scrooge’s greed and stinginess that his business is sitting around and counting money all day, the only thing he cares for in life. | |
| The Weather | Used to symbolise the coldness and greed shown by the rich in society, particularly Scrooge. The weather is a metaphor for the coldness of Scrooge who is not affected by the weather (either cold or hot). | |
| The number three | This is linked to the form of the novella as an allegory. There are three spirits. The number three is seen as a religious and magical number which is often used in fairy tales and myths. | |
| **STOP-CHECK!**  Create a spider diagram for each symbol in the novella. | | |
| **Useful Youtube videos** | | |
| The NTS English teachers recommend you use the Mr Bruff ‘A Christmas Carol’ playlist. There are 15 in total. You should select the ones you want to develop your knowledge of and/or gain a different perspective.  https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqGFsWf-P-cBhNFIdX59nQmTodoDmDQsh | | |
| **Example exam question**  Read the following extract from Stave 4 and then answer the question that follows.  In this extract Scrooge is taken to a shop in London by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.  They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offenses of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.  Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a grey-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frowsy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement.  Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present poverty in A Christmas Carol?  Write about:   * how Dickens presents present poverty in this extract * how Dickens presents present poverty in the novel as a whole. | | |