**Stave 2 – Scrooge’s Past**

Starting with the extract below from Stave 2, explore how Dickens emphasises the significance and impact of the past throughout the novella.

"The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."  
Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.  
They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were over-run with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat.  
They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.  
Not a latent echo in the house, not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the panelling, not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind, not a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty store-house door, no, not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with a softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

You should consider:

* How Scrooge’s childhood is presented
* How the description of the setting reinforces ideas from Stave 1
* The impact Scrooge’s childhood may have had on his present self

**Task 1:** Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how the significance and impact of the past is presented. Don’t forget to identify language and structural features.

**Task 2:** The question asks you to ‘explore’ which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens’ presentation of the theme of religion may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you’ve already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

**Task 3:** Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella that emphasise the significance and impact of the past.

* 1)
* 2)
* 3)

**Task 4:** Why does Dickens choose to return to Scrooge’s childhood at this point in the novella? How does this change our impression of Scrooge?

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