

Context (AO3):

- Dickens wrote ‘A Christmas Carol’ in 1843 focusing on how many of society’s inequalities can be blamed on greed.
- Dickens’ early life gave him first-hand experience of poverty.
- 1834 – Poor Law Amendment Act – Led to a cut in support given to the poor.
- Workhouses were created which poor people would have to live and work in, if they were unable to pay for their own housing.
- Dickens wanted to use his popularity to champion the needs of the poor and bring attention to the public.
- Victorian London was a place of great wealth and great poverty following the Industrial Revolution which rapidly increased the population of cities.

Plot and Structure.

Dickens uses a journey through time to teach Scrooge a lesson in morality towards the poor. He uses a circular narrative by revisiting the same characters in Stave One and Five to allow Scrooge to make amends with people he has wronged.

Preface - Dickens introduces his ‘Ghostly Little Book’ and his ‘ghost on an idea’. He talks to his reader telling them that he wants if to ‘haunt’ their memories, so they don’t forget why we need to live by Christian value and morals.

Stave One – Dickens introduces the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge where we see him living and working along following the death of his business partner Jacob Marley. He is unkind to his poor office clerk Bob Cratchit and pushes away his only living relative Fred. He also refuses to help the poor when he is asked to make a charitable donation. The ghost of Marley visits him to warn him of the punishment he faces if he does not change and the visits of three spirits to help him.

Stave Two – The Ghost of Christmas Past visits Scrooge and takes him to his past to show him where he has come from. We see him twice as a neglected child at school until his sister Fan brings him home. A visit to his former boss Fezziwig’s Christmas Party. The loss of his engagement to his fiancé Belle and finally her new family. Scrooge shows some emotion at seeing this moments from his past.

Stave Three – The Ghost of Christmas Present visits as a personification of Christmas Day. This ghost shows Scrooge how a range of people celebrate including the poor, The Cratchit Family and Scrooge’s own nephew – Fred. Scrooge is faced with the true meaning of Christmas through the stark images of two children representing Ignorance and Want.

Stave Four- The final spirit The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come appears as a dark, hooded, silent figure who shows Scrooge the death of an unknown man. He hears people pleased about this man’s death while also the sadness the Cratchit family show to the death Tiny Tim. Scrooge is finally shown the grave of the unknown man who he discovers is his own. He promises to change and abide by the lesson she has learnt from all three spirits.

Stave Five – Scrooge wakes on Christmas Day a changed man. He send a giant turkey to the Cratchit family, promises the charity workers a large donation and finally spends Christmas with Fred and his family. We leave Scrooge on Boxing Day giving Bob a raise and sporting his family.

Vocabulary Vault

Misanthropic
 Jovial
 Benevolence
 Societal
 Redemption
 Allegory
 Humanitarian
 Cordial
 Phenomenon
 Destitute
 Prophetic
 Implore
 Melancholy
 Beneficent

Characters

Ebenezer Scrooge
 Bob Cratchit
 Marley’s Ghost
 The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, Yet To Come
 Fred
 Tiny Tim
 Fezziwig
 Belle

Themes

Supernatural
 Poverty
 Redemption/Change
 Wealth
 Class
 Christmas
 Social Responsibility
 Greed

Key Quotations

Solitary as an oyster

Another idol has
displaced me [...] a
golden one

Are there no prisons?

Haunt me no longer

I wear the chains I
forged in life

If you have aught to
teach me, let me profit
by it

You will be haunted by
three spirits

Tell me if Tiny Tim will
live

What is that upon your
cheek?

His eye was on Tiny Tim
until the last

I should like to have a
word or two with my
clerk

Have they no refuge or
resource?

Additional Quotations

Lead on spirit

Thankful heart

The spirits of all three
shall strive within me

Light as a feather

Assist your struggling
family

Tiny Tim, who did not
die, he became a second
father