

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

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Comprehension Questions

Stave One – Marley’s Ghost

1. What adjectives does Dickens use to show us how greedy Scrooge was?
2. How did the author compare Scrooge to the weather?
3. What did Scrooge think about how people treated him?
4. Why was it so cold in the clerk’s office?
5. Why did Scrooge think his nephew was foolish to feel happy at Christmas? If this was so, why do you think Scrooge wasn’t happy?
6. How did Scrooge feel about Christmas?
7. What did his nephew say about Christmas?
8. What did Scrooge think should be done with people who were poor and destitute?
9. How were the ways the clerk and Scrooge behaved when they left the office different?
10. What happened to the knocker on the door when Scrooge went to unlock the door?
11. When he lit the candle, what did he think he saw going before him?
12. Why was Scrooge surprised at the sight of Marley’s ghost?
13. Why did Marley wear chains?
14. What did Marley tell him about the seven years since his death?
15. Why was Christmas the most trying time of the year for Marley?
16. Why had he come to visit Scrooge?
17. What did Scrooge see when he looked out the window?

Stave Two – The First of the Three Spirits

1. Why did Scrooge want to stay awake until 1:00?
2. What vision appeared at his bed when the bell tolled one?
3. Where did the ghost first take Scrooge?
4. What was on Scrooge’s cheek that he dismissed as a pimple?
Why do you think it was there?
5. Who was the child left alone in the school?
6. What does this tell us about Scrooge’s childhood?
7. How does the home of Scrooge’s childhood compare with his present home?
8. How did Scrooge react when he saw his books? Why did the author say his face would have been a surprise to his business friends?
9. What regret did Scrooge have?
10. Who was “little Fan”? Why had she come to the boarding school?
11. What impression do you get about Scrooge’s father?
12. How was the place where Scrooge apprenticed different from his own office?

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Creative Writing Activity 1

The spirit of Christmas present visits Bob Cratchit's home. Describe his home in your own words. Include descriptions of the children and their behavior.

Draw a colorful illustration to accompany your written description.

Creative Writing Activity 2

Which spirit had the greatest effect on Scrooge leading him to change his behavior?

Write an essay to answer this question providing support from the novel for your answer.

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Elements of the Novel Activity 7

Explain each of the following symbols in the novel, A Christmas Carol.

1. The bells Marley wore
2. Marley's mouth fettered shut
3. The youth of the First Spirit
4. The chains and register that Marley wore around his waist
5. The boy and girl underneath the skirt of the Second Spirit
6. The fact that the Second Spirit aged so quickly
7. The hidden face of the Third Spirit

Elements of the Novel Activity 8

There are examples of irony throughout the novel, A Christmas Carol.

For example, Scrooge's father shows some of the same characteristics that Scrooge displays, yet Scrooge resented his father for behaving in the same manner.

List three more examples of irony from the novel and explain their significance in the novel.

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Research Activity 3

How was Christmas celebrated at the time Dickens wrote the novel, A Christmas Carol?

How has this changed through the centuries?

Research how Christmas was celebrated in Victorian times to how you celebrate with your family.

Write an essay to give details of the similarities and differences.

Research Activity 4

What provisions existed in Victorian times for the poor and the destitute?

Is this the same or different today? What provisions are now in place to help the people who find themselves in financial difficulties?