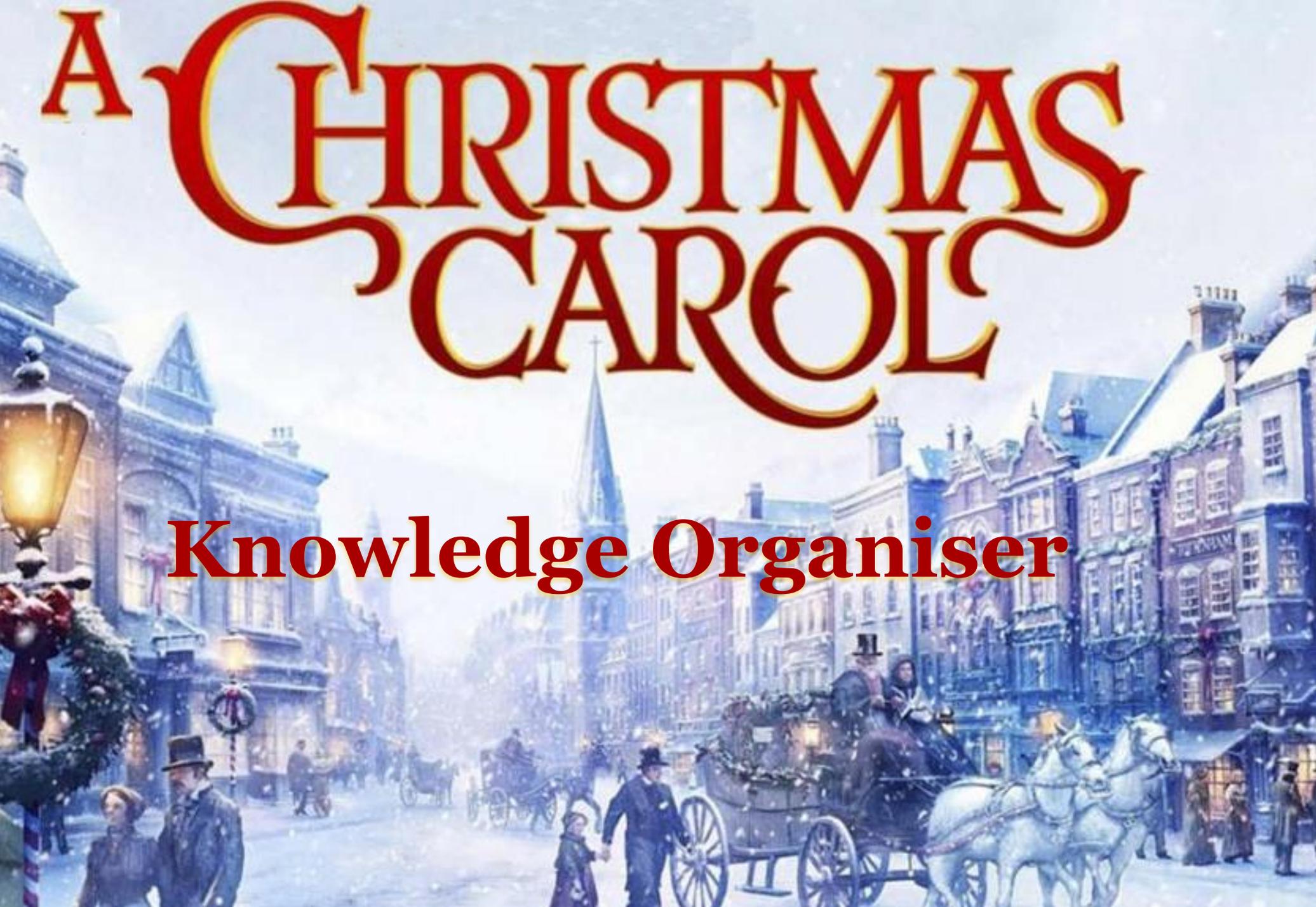


A CHRISTMAS CAROL



Knowledge Organiser

Social and Historical Context

Industrial Revolution	Poverty	The Workhouse	Capitalism
<p>During the Victorian era, Britain became one of the world's primary economic powers. After the invention of steam power, many people moved to the cities to search for higher paying work. The people who moved to the city in search of work were called the "working class". Britain became an industrial hub and the economy was strong. 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 more dangerous and life threatening for the workers.</p>	<p>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. 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 conditions. 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.</p>	<p>The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 allowed the poor to receive assistance from public money only if they went to the workhouse. Workhouses were deliberately made to be miserable in order to discourage the poor from relying on public assistance. In the workhouse, the poor had to work for their food and accommodation. Workhouses were awful 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 were not taught to read or write, 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.</p>	<p>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 for themselves by producing what people want and need. 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.</p>
Charles Dickens: Ideas and Intentions	Language		Structure and Form
<p>Dickens' writing criticised economic, social, and moral issues in the Victorian era. He showed compassion and empathy towards the vulnerable and disadvantaged people in English society, and help to bring about several important social reforms. Dickens' deep social commitment and awareness of social issues come from his traumatic childhood, where his father was imprisoned for debt, and he was forced to work in a shoe-blackening factory at 12 years old. In his adult life, Dickens developed a strong social conscience and empathised with the victims of social and economic injustice. Dickens' intention in A Christmas Carol is to draw readers' attention to the plight of the poor and to highlight the hypocrisy of Victorian society. He juxtaposes the wealth and greed of capitalists with the poorer classes and draws attention to the way in which the greed and selfishness of some impacts on the quality of the lives of others. His moral message appears to be that we should care for our fellow man. The transformation of Scrooge suggests that Dickens feels it is never too late for change and redemption. Dickens emphasises the importance of family, friendship and charity in bringing about this change.</p>	<p>Satire- use of humour or ridicule to criticise Simile- comparing using 'like' or 'as' Metaphor- saying one thing is another Personification- make object human Pathetic fallacy- weather to create mood Pathos- language to evoke pity Allusion- reference to another literary work Hyperbole- exaggerated statement Connotation- associated meaning of word Characterisation- built up description of character in text Semantic field- words related in meaning Imagery- visually descriptive language</p>		<p>Conflict- problem faced by characters Resolution- point where conflict is resolved Foreshadowing- clue about something later Foreboding- sense that something will occur Juxtaposition- two contrasted ideas Backstory- insight into character's past Exposition- revelation of something Poetic justice- good rewarded bad punished Motif- repeated image or symbol Antithesis- contrast of ideas in same grammatical structure Allegory- characters/events represent ideas about religion, morals or politics</p>

The Plot	
PREFACE:	Charles Dickens explains to his readers that he wants to introduce an entertaining idea to them. He calls the novella a 'Ghostly little book' and refers to his 'Ghost of an idea'. Dickens wants his ideas to 'haunt' the 'house' of the reader - the house in this case is not just the reader's home, but also their body and mind. Dickens wants the reader to accept and embrace the ideas in this book and not just dismiss them when they finish reading it.
STAVE 1: MARLEY'S GHOST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are introduced to Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas Eve. He is a lonely miser obsessed with money. He refuses to pay to heat the office - meaning his hard-working clerk, Bob Cratchit, is very cold. We learn Jacob Marley, Scrooge's business partner, died exactly 7 years earlier. Scrooge is irritated that Christmas Day seems to be interrupting his business. He is visited by his nephew, Fred, who invites his uncle to Christmas dinner. Scrooge refuses with a grumpy 'Bah!' followed by 'Humbug!' Scrooge is visited by two charity workers, asking for donations. They are collecting for the poor and homeless. Scrooge refuses to give them a donation, claiming that the prisons and workhouses should provide for such people and if they cannot go, the poor should die 'and decrease the surplus population'. Reluctantly, Scrooge allows Bob to have Christmas Day off. When he is home, Scrooge sees the face of Jacob Marley in his door knocker and is visited his ghost. Marley explains that he is in torment because he only cared about money. He warns Scrooge that he will suffer the same fate if he continues to live the way he does. Marley reveals that Scrooge will be visited by three more ghosts to help him change his ways.
STAVE 2: THE FIRST OF THE THREE SPIRITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Past who takes him to see his past. The apparition is 'a strange figure' that looks like both an old man and a child. Scrooge is taken to his schoolboy years and is reminded how his friends would go home for Christmas while he was left at school alone. He is reminded of how unhappy and lonely he was. We see him with his sister, who one year took him home for the holidays. We are shown Scrooge as a young apprentice, working for Fezziwig. Dickens describes the Christmas ball Fezziwig organised for his employees. Finally, Scrooge is taken to see his ex-fiancée, Belle. We see the scene when they break up, as money has taken over Scrooge's life. Scrooge cannot bear to see any more and struggles with the spirit. Then they see the girl become a woman, with her happy family. Scrooge is very upset and the ghost returns him to his bed.
STAVE 3: THE SECOND OF THE THREE SPIRITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present who embodies Christmas and generosity. He takes Scrooge, via the city streets, to the Cratchit family where he sees the way the family celebrate Christmas and deal with their poverty. Scrooge learns that Tiny Tim will die unless the future changes. The spirit reminds Scrooge of his earlier words: 'If he is to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population' Scrooge is then taken to see how others celebrate Christmas: miners, lighthouse workers and sailors on a ship. He is then taken to Fred's house where they are playing games. They discuss Scrooge and Fred is full of pity for him. The spirit reveals two children hidden under his robes: Want and Ignorance. The Ghost explains that they belong to Man and warns Scrooge to beware of them both, but especially to beware of Ignorance. The Ghost disappeared and the hooded phantom of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come appears.
STAVE 4: THE LAST OF THE SPIRITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come takes Scrooge to see a group of businessmen discussing someone who has died. They do not care about his death. Scrooge is then taken to see Old Joe, where he is in the process of buying stolen property belonging to the dead man. The Ghost tries to make Scrooge look at the face of the dead man but Scrooge says he can't. A young couple are given hope that they will have longer to repay a long because this man has died. Scrooge then returns to Bob Cratchit's house to find the family mourning the loss of Tiny Tim. Scrooge is then taken to a gravestone with his own name on it. He realises he is the dead man whom the people were talking about. Scrooge falls to his knees and vows to change his ways.
STAVE 5: THE END OF IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrooge wakes up in his own bed to find everything as it was the night before. He is full of a zest for life. Scrooge arranges for a prize turkey to be sent anonymously to the Cratchits, On his way to church, Scrooge makes a large donation to charity. Scrooge then goes to Fred's house and is welcomed in. He enjoys the dinner and party. On Boxing Day, Scrooge arrives early to work and plays a trick on Bob. Scrooge then tells him he is going to raise his salary and promises to help Bob's struggling family. Scrooge is described to have completely changed and becomes a 'second father' to Tiny Tim - 'who did not die.'

Main Characters

Character	Summary	Words to describe	Key Quotations
Scrooge	<p>As the protagonist of the novella, the whole story revolves around Scrooge. Even if he is not in a scene, he watches the events unfold and we see how these affect him. Dickens shows how each scene Scrooge is shown changes him, until his final transformation.</p> <p>In stave one, Dickens shows that Scrooge is cruel both with his money and in his dealings with others. Stave two builds pathos for Scrooge as we learn about his childhood. At the arrival of the Ghost of Christmas Present the change in Scrooge is clear. He behaves "timidly". Scrooge is horrified by what he sees at the Cratchit household; he shows a level of concern he has never shown before. The detached and uncaring reactions towards Scrooge's death in Stave 4 emphasise how vital it is for him to change. He learns that he will die alone unless he becomes a better man. The cold responses to his death force him to reflect on his egotistical lifestyle. Scrooge begs for the chance to redeem himself and pledges to live in the past, present and future.</p> <p>At the end of the novella, Scrooge is a new man. Dickens uses pathetic fallacy to reflect his newfound happiness. The weather is "clear, bright, jovial" - a huge contrast to the fog and cold in Stave 1.</p>	<p>Miserly, mean, bitter, materialistic, unsympathetic, indifferent, cold, selfish, isolated, cynical, charitable, value driven, generous, happy, sociable, transformed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'as solitary as an oyster' • 'as hard and sharp as flint' • 'squeezing, wrenching, grasping, covetous old sinner' • 'tight-fisted hand at the grindstone' • 'no warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill' • 'Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?' • 'decrease the surplus population' • 'a solitary boy neglected by his friends' • 'There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all' • 'Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief' • "'Spirit!" he cried, tight clutching at its robe, "hear me. I am not the man I was"' • 'I am as giddy as a schoolboy' • 'Not a farthing less. A great many back payments are included' • 'Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father'
Bob Cratchit	<p>Bob and his family represent the lower classes. He must accept poor wages and working conditions to support his family.</p> <p>He also represents the loving father that we see Scrooge never had. Despite the severity of their poverty, Bob and his family have unyielding Christmas spirit and love. They are far richer than Scrooge when it comes to family and affection.</p> <p>Bob still toasts Scrooge even though he is not paid enough and is shown no respect from his employer. He is a grateful and gracious man despite the hardships his faces.</p> <p>He is devoted to his son Tiny Tim and his love is shown through his grief.</p>	<p>Uncomplaining, tolerant, courteous, deferential, patient, civil, humble, eager, pleasurable, good-humoured, playful, caring, tender, cheerful, loving, forgiving, generous, sensitive</p>	<p>(Quotations for the Cratchit family)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like only one coal' • 'dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown' • 'brave in ribbons' • 'Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame' • 'Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him' • 'He broke down all at once, he couldn't help it' • 'I'll raise your salary, and endeavour to assist your struggling family'
Fred	<p>Fred acts as a foil to the hardened Scrooge. Their personalities juxtapose one another at the start which helps to emphasise Scrooge's initial selfishness. Fred is defined by his good humour and laughter. His unrelenting Christmas spirit illustrates Dickens' own views about Christmas. He sees Christmas as 'a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time'.</p> <p>He refuses to be rude about Scrooge. He does laugh at his miserly ways but also pities his uncle.</p> <p>He accepts the changed Scrooge without question which suggests he always suspected there was good in Scrooge and he welcomes it.</p>	<p>Warm-hearted, empathetic, cheerful, optimistic, even-tempered, insightful, determined, generous, forgiving, jovial, enthusiastic, caring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I have always thought of Christmas as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time" • "Don't be angry Uncle. Merry Christmas!" • "I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him." "Let him in! It is a mercy he didn't shake his arm off."

Main Characters continued

Character	Summary	Words to describe	Key Quotations
Jacob Marley	<p>Marley is weighed down with chains and baggage that represent the concerns Marley had in life. The chains symbolise his greed and disregard for the lower classes.</p> <p>He awakens Scrooge to the seriousness of his situation; his message is serious and there is nothing humorous about his appearance. He scares Scrooge and shows him the horror of not being able to help others.</p> <p>Marley verbalises Dickens' message that caring for others is more important than making money and that actions speak louder than words. Marley cannot make amends for his life despite his deep remorse. It is made clear that Marley was the same kind of person as Scrooge. When the reader hears about Marley's fate there is no doubt that Scrooge will suffer the same fate if he does not change.</p>	<p>Materialistic, self-centered, terrifying, haunting, exhausted, direct, reformed, regretful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ' Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail' 'I wear the chain I forged in life...I made it link by link, yard by yard, and of my own free will I wore it' 'The chain was made up of cash boxes, ledgers, heavy purses' 'Mankind was my business! [...] The deals of my trade were but a drop in the comprehensive ocean of my business'
The Ghost of Christmas Past	<p>The ghost appears as a strange figure - an old man and a child combined. This serves as a reminder that our past actions and experiences help to form the person we will become in the future. Whilst it may be long gone, our past is a part of our identity. The white tunic the ghost wears represents the innocence that should be a part of childhood. The "fresh green holly" suggests that change is possible for Scrooge.</p> <p>Although Scrooge attempts to extinguish the ghost's light with its own cap, the light cannot be put out. The light symbolises seeing the truth. Scrooge must revisit his past to light up the dark shadows that have caused his misery. Without illuminating his past, Scrooge cannot redeem himself in the present.</p>	<p>Contradictory, strong, gentle, quiet, forceful, questioning, mysterious, ephemeral.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man' 'from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light' (Fezziwig) 'The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune' (Belle) 'Another idol has displaced me...A golden one' 'would you so soon put out, with worldly hands, the light I give'. 'Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!'
The Ghost of Christmas Present	<p>This ghost illustrates what life is like for different people in Victorian Britain at Christmas.</p> <p>The spirit provides Dickens with a mouthpiece to show the importance of education, implying that ignorance is more dangerous than poverty. The Ghost of Christmas Present personifies generosity, both spiritual and material. The ghost is sitting on a throne of food, this emphasises that there is enough to go around in the world.</p> <p>Despite the ghost's pleasant appearance, it conceals the harsh realities of Victorian life in the shape of the children, Ignorance and Want.</p>	<p>Compassionate, abundant, generous, cheerful, jolly, friendly, severe, sympathetic, prophetic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur' 'free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air' 'I see a vacant seat...If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die' 'From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable' 'This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy'
The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come	<p>This is the most mysterious of the ghosts, reflecting the fact that the future is uncertain and depends on our actions. It shows Scrooge what will happen if he doesn't change his ways.</p> <p>Personifies death which is inevitable for all humans. It is a terrifying figure, 'shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form'. This reminds us of the Grim Reaper archetype.</p> <p>We are unable to distinguish its features, reminding us that the exact details of death are unknown until it strikes. Just as time will not stop for anyone, the ghost will not wait for Scrooge; it leads him from scene to scene, pointing out what he must see.</p>	<p>Mysterious, silent, ominous, intimidating, frightening, resolute, menacing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached.' 'the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery' 'Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him'

<p>KEY THEMES:</p> <p>Redemption</p>	<p>Redemption is the idea of being saved from sin or evil. In <i>Scrooge</i>, we see a man who is transformed from a greedy, selfish miser into a generous and good-natured character by the end. Dickens uses the <i>Ghost of Christmas Present</i> to show how Scrooge is clearly ashamed of his poor behavior when the <i>Ghost</i> uses his own words against him, he hangs his head and is overcome with 'penitence and grief'. This self-reflection builds the foundations of his redemption. When the last <i>Ghost</i> leaves and Scrooge finally awakes on Christmas day, we are shown a new man. Scrooge becomes generous and full of life, he is emotionally overwhelmed with his new chance at life. Scrooge declares that he will live in 'the past, present and future' confirming that he has grown from his experience and learned from the errors of his ways. He is able to avoid the same fate as Marley.</p>
<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>Dickens felt that every individual had a responsibility for those around them. Marley's <i>Ghost</i> conveys the message of the novella when he cries, 'Mankind was my business'. This change of focus jolts us, as well as Scrooge, because we learn that the proper 'business' of life is not about seeking financial reward but having concern for others. Scrooge learns to take responsibility for the poor, and in doing so redeems himself. Scrooge shows us the difference a wealthy individual can make, but Dickens also shows us that Fezziwig's small contribution, just being happy and kind, can make a significant difference to an individual's life.</p>
<p>Poverty</p>	<p>The Cratchits are regarded as Dickens' face of the poor in this novella:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bob Cratchit can only just afford to keep his family fed and sheltered. Tiny Tim's poor health emphasises the harsh realities and consequences of living in such poverty. Mrs Cratchit's ribbons may be a luxury but they are also a symbol of her desperation to make her dress look new and respectable. She is 'brave in ribbons'. The Cratchits are grateful for their Christmas meal, although we have to wonder if this is because they don't have enough throughout the rest of the year. <p>Dickens also shows us glimpses of poverty even deeper than that of the Cratchits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The charity collectors show the desperation of the poor, they reveal that many of the poor 'would rather die' than go to the Union Workhouses. Dickens also places Old Joe's shop in a part of the city which 'reeked with crime, with filth, and misery'. With this scene, he shows the corrupting nature of poverty as these thieves enjoy showing what they have stolen to sell. • Scrooge is appalled by the appearance of the children, Ignorance and Want. The children personify the dangerous consequences of allowing poverty to continue. Scrooge's refusal to give to charity highlights the selfishness of the higher classes and the injustice of wealth distribution in Victorian society.
<p>Education</p>	<p>Dickens emphasises the value of education through his presentation of the two children, Ignorance and Want: They are horrific in their appearance 'Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish'. We are told to 'beware' ignorance for he is 'Doom'. This not only refers to the inadequate lives the children will have as adults, but it also warns readers about the ignorance of the rich who do not take any responsibility for the children. The negligence of the higher classes only contributed to the suffering of the poor. Dickens makes us think about the role of education in the fight against poverty.</p>
<p>The Supernatural</p>	<p>A Christmas Carol is set in an ordinary location, having a convincing setting means that readers are more likely to accept an event as supernatural. This theme does not just refer to Ghosts - Dickens also makes use of the supernatural to manipulate time and allow Scrooge to travel to his past, present and future and back again. The use of supernatural characters and events creates a unique story. Being the first writer to associate Christmas with ghost stories meant Dickens gave his readers a new experience. The gothic characteristics also help to structure the story: each ghost teaches Scrooge an important lesson.</p>
<p>Family</p>	<p>Dickens shows us the positive benefits of a close and loving family life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lonely young Scrooge is rescued by his sister and returns home. • As an apprentice, Scrooge is part of Fezziwig's Christmas party, along with countless locals. Dickens emphasises the impact small actions can have. • The Cratchits and Fred's family show the benefits of sharing laughter and optimism. Despite poverty, the Cratchits are shown as the model happy family. • The closeness the Cratchit family have supports them in dealing with the foreshadowed death of Tiny Tim in stave four. • The transformed Scrooge revels in being part of his own and the Cratchit family.
<p>Isolation</p>	<p>Dickens demonstrates the need for companionship and company. As an adult, Scrooge focuses on making money at the expense of personal relationships. The difference between Scrooge at the beginning and the redeemed Scrooge we see is not just due to his helping poor; it is a result of his rejoining society, 'as good a man'. Becoming a second father to Tiny Tim means Scrooge gets some of the love and support he has been missing or refusing.</p>