

A Christmas Carol

Lessons and Activities

Key Stage 3/4, National 3/4

Aims:
Students will learn...

- ...how to search for information online (honing search criteria skills)
- ...about characterisation, setting, and symbolism in the story
- ...about the traditions the Victorians had at Christmas
- ...about creating and designing a Christmas decoration (this is a fun ad-on experience rather than a lesson)

Objectives:
Students will...

- ...read the story
- ...listen to the story
- ...complete a cloze passage
- ...read an article on The Victorians at Christmas and answer questions
- ...Summarise the story
- ...show the progression of the character of Scrooge
- ...write an analysis of selected themes in the story
- Make their own word search
- ...analyse the setting
- ...search for DIY Christmas decoration ideas online
- ...create a book-themed Christmas decoration design
- ...create an instruction manual for making the decoration
- ...note the use of selected symbolism in the story
- ...write a Christmas story

Task: Listen to the text:

You can listen for free on various free audiobook apps - Search online or on smart phone apps

Task: read the text

You can download the full text on line:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46/46-h/46-h.htm>

<https://www.planetebook.com/a-christmas-carol/>

Cloze Passage (From Stave 1)

CLOZE Passage

Oh! But he was a _____ hand at the grindstone,
_____! ... The _____ within him _____ his _____ features,
_____ his _____ nose, _____ his cheek,
stiffened his _____; made his _____, his _____ lips _____;
and spoke out _____ in his _____ voice. A
_____ rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his _____
chin. He carried his own low _____ always about with
him; he _____ his office in the _____; and didn't _____ it
one _____ at _____.

Words Used

tight-fisted, temperature, shrivelled, Christmas, shrewdly, Scrooge, pointed, grating, dog-days, nipped, frosty, degree, froze, cold, gait, eyes, thin, blue, wiry, iced, thaw, old, red,

The Victorians at Christmas

Understanding and Analysis (word choice, sentence structure, and imagery)

- ◆ [https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/victorian-christmas-traditions?
gclid=Cj0KCCQjw4X8BRCPARIsABmcnOr0
erAzH5PmBVmpLG6OuECNJ90 PdaNCU2
FdwkpARVwbfDW a4IC0waAmiUEALw wc
B](https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/victorian-christmas-traditions?gclid=Cj0KCCQjw4X8BRCPARIsABmcnOr0erAzH5PmBVmpLG6OuECNJ90PdaNCU2FdwkpARVwbfDWa4IC0waAmiUEALw_wcB)
- ◆ Link to original Text (edited version below)
- ◆ Task: read the passage that follows and answer the questions, using your own words.



Paragraph 1: At the dawn of the 19th century, Christmas was hardly celebrated – at least, not in a way we would recognise today. Many businesses didn't consider it to be a holiday. Gift-giving had traditionally been a New Year activity, but moved as Christmas became more important to the Victorians. By the end of the century, Christmas had become the biggest annual celebration in the British calendar. Victorian advancements in technology, industry and infrastructure – as well as having an impact on society as a whole – made Christmas an occasion that many more British people could enjoy.

Paragraph 2: One of the most significant seasonal traditions to emerge from the Victorian era is the Christmas card. It was Sir Henry Cole, the first director of the V&A, who introduced the idea of the Christmas card in 1843. Cole commissioned the artist J.C. Horsley to design a festive scene for his seasonal greeting cards and had 1000 printed – those he didn't use himself were sold to the public. Later in the century, improvements to the chromolithographic printing process made buying and sending Christmas cards affordable for everyone.

Paragraph 3: The greater mechanisation and widespread industrialisation of the country had helped to create a new middle class with a greater disposable income. Increased prosperity across Britain saw a rising market for mass-produced toys, decorations and novelty items such as the Christmas cracker. Inspired by bon bons (French sweets wrapped in paper) he saw during a trip to Paris, sweetshop owner Tom Smith first invented the cracker in the 1840s. It wasn't until the 1860s, when Smith perfected its explosive 'bang' that the Christmas cracker as we know it today became a popular seasonal staple. Along with a joke, gifts inside could range from small trinkets such as whistles and miniature dolls to more substantial items like jewellery.

Paragraph 4: The Victorian age placed great importance on family, so it follows that Christmas was celebrated at home. For many, the new railway networks made this possible. Those who had left the countryside to seek work in cities could return home for Christmas and spend their precious days off with loved ones. Family life was epitomised by the popular Queen Victoria, her husband Albert and their nine children. One of the most important Christmas traditions, the decorated Christmas tree, was a custom introduced to Britain by Prince Albert.

Paragraph 5: The idea of an indoor Christmas tree originated in Germany, where Albert was born. In 1848 the Illustrated London News published a drawing of the royal family celebrating around a tree bedecked with ornaments. The popularity of decorated Christmas trees grew quickly, and with it came a market for tree ornaments in bright colours and reflective materials that would shimmer and glitter in the candlelight.

Paragraph 6: Mechanisation and the improved printing process meant decorations could be mass-produced and advertised to eager buyers. The first advertisements for tree ornaments appeared in 1853. Victorians would often combine their sparkly bought decorations with candles and homemade edible treats, tied to the branches with ribbon.

Paragraph 7: Today, candles on the Christmas tree have been replaced by fairy lights, printed cards may be substituted with e-cards and we're more likely to find plastic knick-knacks in our crackers than jewellery. Our Christmas customs continue to be shaped by technological advancements and modern changes in society. How many of us do our Christmas shopping online, or Skype our families across the world on Christmas Day? But these new traditions are still rooted in the spirit of the Victorian Christmas – an integral part of the Christmas we celebrate today.

Answer the questions in your own words

1.1 'Christmas was hardly celebrated – at least, not in a way we would recognise today.' Identify the punctuation used. (1)

1.2 'By the end of the century, Christmas had become the biggest annual celebration in the British calendar.' Summarise this. (2)

1.3 Look at the last sentence. What reasons does the writer give for Christmas becoming such a celebrated tradition? (2)

2.1 Summarise the introduction of the Christmas card. (4)

3.1 What helped to sale of toys? (2)

3.2 Summarise the development of the Christmas Cracker. (4)

4.1 In what ways is Queen Victoria and her family connected with these traditions? (2)

5.1 What made the Christmas tree popular? (2)

5.1 What did people add to it? (2)

6.1 Look at the first sentence. How does the author use word choice to highlight the enthusiasm for the decorations? (2)

6.2 Look at the last sentence. How is word choice used to create a festive mood? (2)

7.1 How does the author use language to indicate that this paragraph is reacting a conclusion? (2)

7.2 Look at the phrase, 'more likely to find plastic knick-knacks in our crackers than jewellery'. How does the word choice used here create a contrast? (2)

7.3 What point do you think the author is trying to make about our Christmas traditions now? (2)

7.4 Look at the sentence structure used. How does the author use sentence structure to now create a more philosophical point? (4)

Article as a whole

a. How does the article use time and a linking function? Give at least 2 examples. (4)

b. Summarises the main ideas of the passage. (6)

Create a word cloud

Copy and paste your favourite section of the story to create a word cloud:

Text online: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46/46-h/46-h.htm>

Word Cloud maker: [https://www.beautiful.ai/templates/word-cloud?](https://www.beautiful.ai/templates/word-cloud?utm_source=googleAds&utm_medium=searchGen&utm_campaign=11119171406&ntwrk=g&adgpid=112042789627&plcmnt=&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIybXposSM7AIVzuntCh0Brg25EAAYASAAEgKvLfD_BwE)

[utm_source=googleAds&utm_medium=searchGen&utm_campaign=11119171406&ntwrk=g&adgpid=112042789627&plcmnt=&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIybXposSM7AIVzuntCh0Brg25EAAYASAAEgKvLfD_BwE](https://www.beautiful.ai/templates/word-cloud?utm_source=googleAds&utm_medium=searchGen&utm_campaign=11119171406&ntwrk=g&adgpid=112042789627&plcmnt=&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIybXposSM7AIVzuntCh0Brg25EAAYASAAEgKvLfD_BwE)

Or, you can also simply search for 'create a word Cloud' - there are many websites out there.

A Christmas Carol - Stave Summaries

In case you need to refresh your memory:

To outline a story -

Break it down into its important sections.

Write couple of sentence for each section.

Write a paragraph for each chapter.

Redraft your paragraph(s) as needed to make your writing concise, to correct technical mistakes or repetition, adding linking phrases to move between points.

Make sure your summary includes important supporting points of each idea.

The final version should be to the point and flow well.





Stave 1 Summary

Handwriting practice area for Stave 1 Summary, featuring eight sets of dashed lines on a green background.

Stave 2 Summary

Handwriting practice area for Stave 2 Summary, featuring eight sets of dashed lines on a green background.



Stave 3 Summary

Stave 4 Summary



Stave 5 Summary

Acrostic Poem

How to write an acrostic poem:

1. Decide what to write about.
2. Write down your word vertically on the page.
3. Brainstorm words or phrases to describe your word.
 1. Use the thesaurus to find interesting synonyms.
4. Write the word
5. Now sort through the words finding words that start with the letters that make up your subject word.
6. Use a dictionary of thesaurus to find any words beginning with 'subject word' letters that you don't have.
7. Redraft, making any longer phrases or sentences.
8. Redraft using poetic techniques like imagery, repetition, and enjambement.

Example, 'Snow Time':

Brainstorm: clouds, blue skies, wind, crisp, crunch, flurry, ice, icy cold, ski, swirl snowman, coal carrot, woolly hats, noel gloves, sparkling, white, wintery, winter-wonderland,

Sparkling

Noel

O

Wintery wonderland

T

Ice

M

E

After using the thesaurus and word references' and filling out the phrases.

Sparkling snow with you and me

Not long till Noel, said she.

Onwards to tomorrow when we'll sleep in a

Wintery wonderland.

Ten lords a leaping over melting

Ice. So

Meet me there on Christmas

Eve.

Final draft

After leaving it for a couple of days:

Sparkling snow, you and me

Not long till Noel, said she.

Onwards to tomorrow when we'll dream a

Wintery wonderland where

Ten lords a leaping over

Ice. So

Meet me there on Christmas

Eve.

First Draft

C
H
R
I
S
T
M
A
S
C
A
R
O
L

Redraft

C
H
R
I
S
T
M
A
S
C
A
R
O
L

Scrooge:

- ◆ Task: Look at the rest of Stave one. Find evidence for the table opposite, and write a brief explanation as to why these descriptions tell us this about Scrooge.



Adjective	Evidence	Explanation
Unhappy		
Mean		
Miserly		
Isolated		

Scrooge:

A Character outline

Task:

Look at your Stave summaries and use them to create a character outline of the changes Scrooge goes through. Think about who he is at the beginning of the story, what happens to him that changes him, what we find out about his earlier life, and who he becomes.

Task:

Look at these quotes.
Note the change in Scrooge.

“the cold within him froze his old features”

“Hard and sharp as flint”

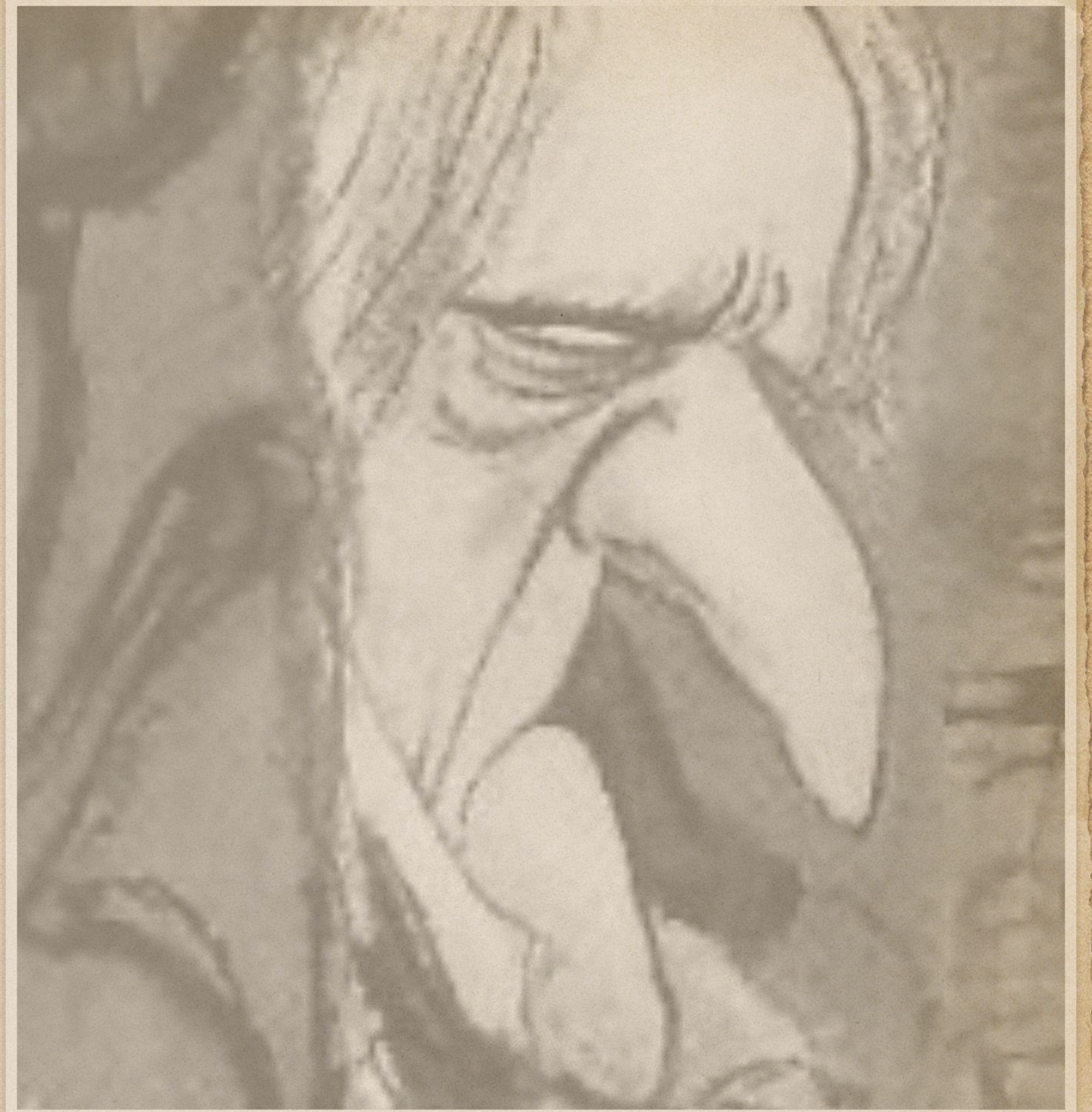
“solitary as an oyster”

“I am as light as a feather”

“I am as merry as a schoolboy”

‘Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. ‘

Task: Read the extract above and pick out as many words and phrases as you can that describe Scrooge's character. Not the connotations of the words and how they help convey who Scrooge is:



Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already—it had not been light all day—and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

Task: Read the extract above and pick out descriptions of the weather and surroundings that help us understand more about, not the setting itself but, Scrooge's character:

Example: 'It was cold, bleak, biting weather...' Just like the weather Scrooge is all of these things. He is cold and unpleasant. He makes those around him shiver with misery because he is so miserable.

Word Search

ANGRY
APPRENTICE
AVARICE
BAH
BED
BELINDA
BELLE
BOB CRATCHIT
CAUSTIC
CHAINS
CHARLES DICKENS

CHRISTMAS PAST
CHRISTMAS PRESENT
CHRISTMAS YET TO COME
CLERK
COUNTING HOUSE
CRUTCH
CURTAINS
DRESSING GOWN
EBENEZER SCROOGE
FOG
GREEDY

HUMBUG
JACOB MARLEY
KNOCKER
LONDON
MARLEY'S GHOST
MARTHA
MERRY CHRISTMAS
MRS CRATCHIT
MRS FEZZIWIG
NEPHEW

NIGHTCAP
OFFICE
OLD FEZZIWIG
PETER
REDEMPTION
SNOW
SPIRITS
TINY TIM
TURKEY
WINTER

A Christmas Carol

Find and circle all of the "A Christmas Carol" words that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining letters spell a secret message.

P	A	N	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	D
E	S	U	O	H	G	N	I	T	N	U	O	C	S	M	O	A	S	T	N
T	O	L	D	F	E	Z	Z	I	W	I	G	I	E	N	Y	T	I	O	E
E	H	W	E	M	O	T	I	H	C	T	A	R	C	S	R	M	D	M	O
R	A	O	G	B	N	E	P	H	E	W	R	B	S	E	M	N	O	F	T
E	B	N	U	B	E	R	J	V	C	Y	I	S	E	R	O	C	F	S	E
C	D	S	B	O	G	N	O	A	C	I	N	N	S	L	O	I	O	C	C
I	N	D	M	B	T	B	E	H	C	I	T	F	T	T	C	H	L	H	I
R	W	Y	U	C	E	S	R	Z	A	O	E	S	T	E	G	Y	K	A	T
A	O	R	H	R	N	I	A	T	E	Z	B	E	U	S	R	D	N	R	N
V	G	G	S	A	S	O	R	P	Z	R	Y	M	Y	A	S	E	O	L	E
A	G	N	U	T	S	U	I	I	S	S	S	E	A	S	C	E	C	E	R
T	N	A	M	C	C	P	W	T	A	A	L	C	S	R	B	R	K	S	P
U	I	A	E	H	V	I	I	M	P	R	M	N	R	E	L	G	E	D	P
R	S	E	R	I	G	N	T	R	A	M	I	T	L	O	Y	E	R	I	A
K	S	O	N	T	Y	S	E	M	I	A	E	L	S	D	O	G	Y	C	C
E	E	O	D	T	I	B	L	E	H	T	E	D	E	I	S	G	S	K	L
Y	R	U	I	R	F	O	G	C	S	E	S	B	E	V	R	E	E	E	E
R	D	M	H	N	I	G	H	T	C	A	P	M	A	R	T	H	A	N	R
Y	H	C	T	U	R	C	O	A	D	N	I	L	E	B	N	E	C	S	K



Make your own Word Search:

Task: Go to the word search website. Take the words and phrases from the theme notes and create your own word search.

<http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/WordSearchSetupForm.asp>

Themes

Task: Look at the quotations given below. Add the correct stave and theme.

Write a short analysis for that quote, linking it to the theme.

Themes include: The Spirit of Christmas, Redemption, The supernatural, Social Responsibility.

Quotation	Stave	Theme	Analysis
"Decrease the surplus population"			
"This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want"			
"A merry Christmas, Bob ... I'll raise your salary"			
"I will honour Christmas in my heart"			
"I wear the chain I forged in life"			
"I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's"			
"To any kindly given. To a poor one most"			



Create your own Word Wheel

<https://www.edu-games.org/word-games/word-wheel/word-wheel.php>

Task: Take all the quotes you've looked at for setting and create a word cloud.

Task: Making a Book Themed Christmas Decoration

Look at the examples of these home made Christmas decorations
Search online for more ideas - be clear with your search criteria, for example 'book Christmas decorations', book themed Christmas DIY, 'DIY tree Decorations'

Make design drawings

List the tools and materials you think you'll need

Find the tools and materials you need

Make a prototype

Analyse your work and progress

Make any changes you now need

Make a second prototype

Think about the process you went through making the decoration - note down what you remember

Look at these 'How to' advice on making an instruction manual:

<https://www.swipeguide.com/insights/how-to-write-manual-work-instructions>

<https://www.dozuki.com/blog/2017/01/12/how-to-write-a-user-manual>

Draft your instruction manual

Book themed Christmas decorations



Symbolism:

‘Symbolism is a literary device that uses symbols, be they words, people, marks, locations, or abstract ideas to represent something beyond the literal meaning.’ [masterclass.com](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-symbolism)

Symbol	Literal Meaning	Symbolic Meaning
Marley's Chains		
The Ghost of Christmas Past		
The Ghost of Christmas Present		
The Ghost of Christmas Future		
Ignorance and Want		

For those of you who are artistic...

Task:

Look at the images here and on the next slide.

Look up online images of a Victorian Christmas.

Use them as inspiration for creating your own Victorian Christmas Scene.
This is to be an idealised, Victorian Christmas scene... no need for realism.

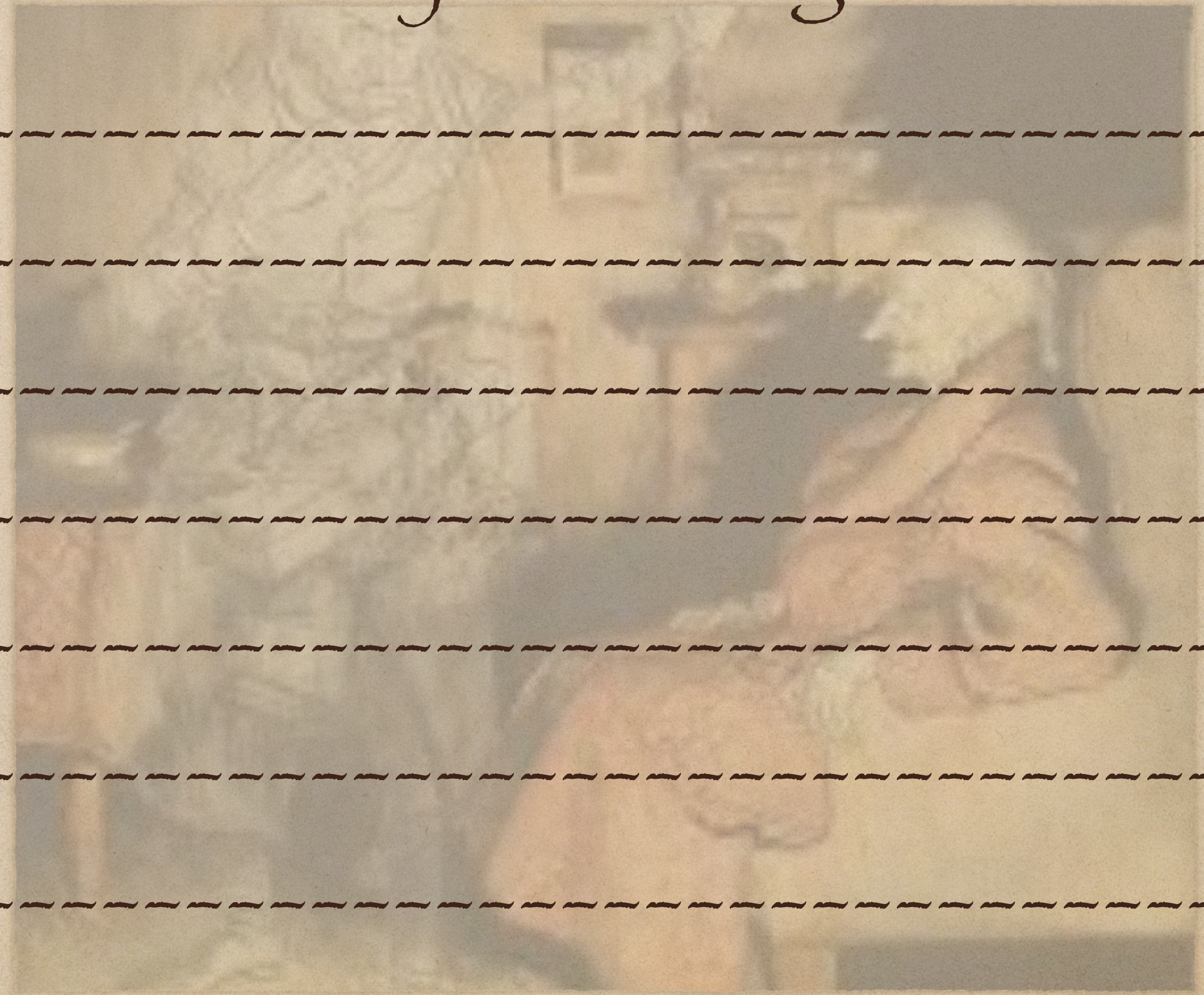




Creative Writing - A Christmas Story

- ◆ A Christmas Carol is set in Victorian London.
- ◆ Looking online and using the help of your parents/siblings, and input from friends and fellow learners, note down what your local area was like in this period in British history.
- ◆ Set your story here.

Write down your findings



- ◆ Write a description of your setting, using the senses as much as you can (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell). Remember the evocation of setting and atmosphere in the text, for example:
 - ◆ ‘The room was very dark, too dark to be observed with any accuracy, though Scrooge glanced round it in obedience to a secret impulse, anxious to know what kind of room it was. A pale light, rising in the outer air, fell straight upon the bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man.... Scrooge glanced towards the Phantom. Its steady hand was pointed to the head. The cover was so carelessly adjusted that the slightest raising of it, the motion of a finger upon Scrooge’s part, would have disclosed the face. He thought of it, felt how easy it would be to do, and longed to do it; but had no more power to withdraw the veil than to dismiss the spectre at his side... Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command: for this is thy dominion!’
 - ◆ Describe the place, the natural scenery, the buildings, the people, and as you write these first few paragraphs, be conscious of the atmosphere you are creating. Be deliberate about this.

- ◆

Task: Create your character using historical research. Search for the period and your local area. What kind of people lived here at this time?

Character name: _____

Age: _____

Family background (mother, father, siblings):

Personality (outgoing? Shy? Emotional? Logical?):

Task

- ◆ Now, using the same methods as before, research the people of the area and time.

- ◆ Write down your findings:

- ◆ _____

- ◆ Decide on a goal/problem - one external and one internal.
 - ◆ External is something outside of the character/protagonist (a war going on, a landslide, a bankruptcy). Internal is something within themselves, a weakness or fear or need (revenge, love).
 - ◆ This is what motivates your protagonist, a situation that they have to overcome (Scrooge has to overcome his miserable nature (internal goal) and survive the horror of being visited by three supernatural beings (external goal). This is CONFLICT, the essence of story telling.
 - ◆ External: _____
 - ◆ Internal: _____
- ◆ You can think of a plot as an arch or hill that involves:
 - ◆ Exposition. The beginning of the story or the ordinary world for the protagonist before the 'adventure' begins.
 - ◆ Rising action. Something that challenges the protagonist experiences in trying to get what he or she wants.
 - ◆ Problem or goal. What your protagonist wishes to achieve or avoid.
 - ◆ Climax. The most interesting part of the story. This doesn't mean explosions and

Task: Look at this plot structure graph. Either print it off or copy it out, and write in the information for 'A Christmas Carol', as you understand the story, characters, plot, setting, and themes, etc.

Plot Structure Diagram

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

CHARACTERS* ①	
Protagonist and Main Character(s) _____	
Antagonist _____	
SETTING*	
Time _____	
Place _____	

*Characters, Setting, Conflict and Mood (how the story makes you feel) combine to create the EXPOSITION which helps you "get into" the story, novel or movie from the very beginning.

⑥ RISING ACTION
(The major events that lead to the turning point.)

②

③ CONFLICT*
(What's the problem between the protagonist and the antagonist?)

TURNING POINT

(The main event between the protagonist and the antagonist or the moment for which the reader has been waiting.)

⑤

⑦ FALLING ACTION
(The major events that lead to the resolution.)

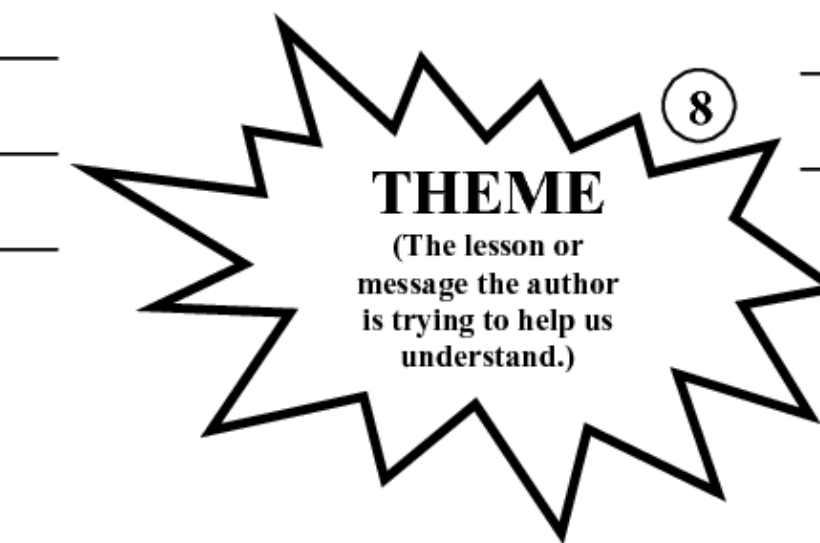
④ RESOLUTION
(How was the conflict solved?)

Title _____

Author _____

Genre _____

⑧ THEME
(The lesson or message the author is trying to help us understand.)



How To Figure Out the Theme

1. Actively read the text.
2. Fill out the Plot Structure Diagram (follow the circled numbers)
3. Examine the conflict, resolution and turning points.
4. Ask yourself, "What is the lesson the protagonist learned?"
5. Reword #4 so that it can apply to anyone who reads the story.

Task: Now fill in the graph for your story, noting what you have written so far and developing it further.

Plot Structure Diagram

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

CHARACTERS*

Protagonist and Main Character(s)

Antagonist

SETTING*

Time

Place

TURNING POINT

(The main event between the protagonist and the antagonist or the moment for which the reader has been waiting.)

5

RISING ACTION 6

(The major events that lead to the turning point.)

6

FALLING ACTION 7

(The major events that lead to the resolution.)

7

4

RESOLUTION

(How was the conflict solved?)

8

1

2

3

8

THEME

(The lesson or message the author is trying to help us understand.)

How To Figure Out the Theme

1. Actively read the text.

2. Fill out the Plot Structure Diagram (follow the circled numbers)

3. Examine the conflict, resolution and turning points.

4. Ask yourself, "What is the lesson the protagonist learned?"

5. Reword #4 so that it can apply to anyone who reads the story.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

CHARACTERS*

Protagonist and Main Character(s)

Antagonist

SETTING*

Time

Place

TURNING POINT

(The main event between the protagonist and the antagonist or the moment for which the reader has been waiting.)

RISING ACTION 6

(The major events that lead to the turning point.)

FALLING ACTION 7

(The major events that lead to the resolution.)

4

RESOLUTION

(How was the conflict solved?)

1

2

3

8

THEME

(The lesson or message the author is trying to help us understand.)

How To Figure Out the Theme

1. Actively read the text.

2. Fill out the Plot Structure Diagram (follow the circled numbers)

3. Examine the conflict, resolution and turning points.

4. Ask yourself, "What is the lesson the protagonist learned?"

5. Reword #4 so that it can apply to anyone who reads the story.

Task:

- Take a new page or note-book and write your first draft.
- Redraft focusing on the character you have created. Now note down:
 - What is their goal?
 - What is the conflict?
 - How have you resolved this?

More links and Resources

Classic books to listen to on line (including The Secret Garden, Peter Pan, Great Expectations, The Wizard of Oz): <https://kidsread2kids.com/abridged-classics>

Tes full lesson resource for GCSE: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/a-christmas-carol-full-scheme-and-resources-11084728>

Quotes: [http://westderbyschool.co.uk/userfiles/files/Knowledge%20Organisers/A-Christmas-Carol-Knowledge-Organiser-Y11- English Literature -Paper 1.pdf](http://westderbyschool.co.uk/userfiles/files/Knowledge%20Organisers/A-Christmas-Carol-Knowledge-Organiser-Y11-English%20Literature-Paper%201.pdf)

Related words Site: <https://relatedwords.org>

Visual Dictionary: <https://visuwords.com>