

A Christmas Carol

Characters	Plot breakdown
<p>Ebenezer Scrooge: Protagonist of the story. Isolated from the world of his own doing. Presented as the antithesis of the Christmas spirit. Heartless advocate of everything that Dickens was opposed to e.g. the poor laws. Resistant to typical external influence. Disliked by most people. Despite his flaws, is still able to change. Treats people badly e.g. Bob Cratchit.</p> <p>Bob Cratchit: Underpaid clerk working for Scrooge. Represents the suffering and poor working conditions of the lower classes. Dedicated and humble worker who endures his job with little complaint. A loving father and husband. Overall kind man. Morally good; lack of bitterness and has a willingness to forgive. Aware that family is more important than wealth. Bob is poor but rich in other ways. Promotes traditional Christian values.</p> <p>Tiny Tim: Disabled child of Bob Cratchit. Representation of the less fortunate. Maintains a positive attitude and commitment to Christian ideals despite his failing health. It's made clear that Tim is suffering due to Scrooge's greed. He is the antithesis of Scrooge.</p> <p>• Jacob Marley: Scrooge's former business partner and the closest thing Scrooge had to a friend. Appears at the beginning of the story as a ghost to issue Scrooge with a warning. Marley has to spend the afterlife in suffering as a punishment for the sins he committed in life and warns Scrooge to change his ways or he will experience the same fate. Marley's presence is the catalyst for Scrooge's transformation. He is weighed down by the chains of his sins; the links are forged of cashboxes, padlocks, ledgers and steel purses which represent the things he valued most highly in life.</p> <p>The Ghost of Christmas Past: compassionate and softly spoken. Has a strange and fluid appearance (appearing to be both childlike and like an old man) which indicates the constantly shifting state of remembering. Has a light emitting from its head and its flickering appearance likens it to a candle. He uses a cap to dim the light, like a candle snuffer. The light it emits is indicative of enlightenment.</p> <p>The Ghost of Christmas Present: A jovial manifestation of the Christmas spirit. His power grows with the festivities. Has a youthful appearance to symbolise and personify the here and now. Appears to Scrooge as a majestic giant in green robes with a booming voice. The spirit lives as long as the Christmas season and is reborn again each year.</p> <p>Ignorance and Want: The Ghost of Christmas Present reveals to Scrooge two emaciated children, subhuman in appearance and loathsome to behold, clinging to his robes, and naming the boy as 'Ignorance' and the girl as 'Want'. By naming them 'Ignorance' and 'Want', Dickens is drawing attention to two of the societal ills of the time which contributed to many people being in extreme poverty at the time.</p> <p>The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come: A silent figure clad in a hooded black robe, almost indistinguishable from the surrounding darkness, is deliberately described in a similar way to the Grim Reaper. The ghost is as mysterious and unknowable as the future itself. Does not speak, answers no questions and only points. Personifies the inevitability of death. Shows Scrooge that he will be mourned by no one.</p> <p>Fred: Scrooge's nephew. Fred serves as a foil to his greedy, disagreeable, and hateful uncle, offering best wishes and kind words despite the fact that Scrooge sneers at them and refuses Fred's yearly invitation to celebrate Christmas with him. As Scrooge's nephew, Fred provides Scrooge with a connection to family; the Ghost of Christmas Past reminds him that he loved his sister Fan. Fred's mother, and it's possible part of the reason Scrooge scorns Fred is because his presence reminds him of the long-dead Fan, and the pain he associates with her passing.</p>	<p>On Christmas Eve, Scrooge makes his clerk, Bob Cratchit, work in the cold.</p> <p>Scrooge refuses an invitation to his nephew Fred's Christmas party and will not give money to the charity collectors.</p> <p>At home he is visited by the ghost of his old business partner, Marley.</p> <p>The Ghost of Christmas Past wakes Scrooge and shows him moments from his childhood, his apprenticeship and his failed engagement.</p> <p>The Ghost of Christmas Present takes Scrooge to the Cratchits' home, where he is saddened by the ill, but kind, Tiny Tim. He is also shown how Fred celebrates Christmas with friends and how others celebrate Christmas together.</p> <p>The final ghost is the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come who terrifies Scrooge with visions of his death.</p> <p>Scrooge awakes on Christmas Day and is delighted to find he has the chance to repent of his miserly ways. He buys a turkey for the Cratchits and attends his nephews party.</p> <p>Scrooge becomes like a second father to Tiny Tim and gains a reputation for knowing how to celebrate Christmas.</p> <p>Key words</p> <p>Novella: a novel that is less than 50,000 words.</p> <p>Stave: in musical notation, a stave is a set of five parallel lines. In a Christmas Carol, a stave is the name used for each chapter. There are five chapters/staves. This links to the novella's name as a Christmas carol is a song.</p> <p>Ignorance: the state or fact of being ignorant e.g. lack of knowledge, education, or awareness.</p> <p>Want: the desire to obtain something.</p> <p>Motif: a dominant or recurring idea in an artistic work.</p> <p>Redemption: the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil.</p> <p>Sinner: a person who transgresses against divine law by committing an immoral act or acts.</p> <p>Solitary: done or existing alone.</p> <p>Poverty: the state of being extremely poor.</p> <p>Condemned: sentenced to a particular punishment, especially death.</p> <p>Jovial: cheerful and friendly.</p> <p>Spectre: a ghost.</p> <p>Structure: The way in which the text is organised.</p> <p>Narrative: The plot of the story.</p> <p>Empathy: The ability to understand the feelings of others.</p> <p>Cyclical structure: Where the ending of a story can be linked to the beginning with characters and themes.</p> <p>Diatribes: a forceful and bitter verbal attack against someone or something.</p> <p>Covetous: having or showing a great desire to possess something belonging to someone else.</p>
<p>Background information</p> <p>'A Christmas Carol' was published in 1843.</p> <p>It was written by Charles Dickens.</p> <p>Charles Dickens had to work in harsh conditions as a child when his father was sent to debtor's prison.</p> <p>Dickens wanted to criticise a new change to The Poor Law which happened in 1834 and created more workhouses and show how hard life was for poor people.</p>	