

A Christmas Carol: Practice Exam Questions

Plan then answer this question.

To guarantee clear understanding:

- Focus on the whole text and task
- Context used to explain meanings, reader/audience response and writer's ideas
- Write about the text as a construct: characters, events, settings are not real
- Refer to the writer's ideas - that are explored or presented through these constructs
- Show HOW the methods (characterisation, plot events, settings, language, structure, techniques etc.) create the ideas and effects. What do readers/audiences think/feel/imagine?
- Subject terms to explain effects on readers
- **L5+** Explore alternative interpretations, detailed, begins to evaluate writer's methods by examining their effects and linking to contexts of production and reception and writer's ideas.
- **L6** Conceptualised by a thesis statement which structures the response to the whole task and text, evaluates alternative interpretations using judicious examples of language, form and structure, explores links between contexts, ideas and text.

Read the following extract from Stave One then answer the question that follows. Here, we are introduced to Ebenezer Scrooge.

1 Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was
2 signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And
3 Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to.
4 Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.
5 Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners
6 for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his
7 sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up
8 by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and
9 solemnised it with an undoubted bargain. The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I
10 started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing
11 wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate.
12 Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse
13 door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the
14 business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the
15 same to him.
16 **Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind- stone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping,**
17 **scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck**
18 **out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.** The cold within him froze his old
19 features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips
20 blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and
21 his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dogdays;
22 and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.
23 External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. **No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill**
24 **him.** No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting
25 rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and
26 hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often 'came down'
27 handsomely, and Scrooge never did.
28 Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, 'My dear Scrooge, how are you?
29 When will you come to see me?' No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it
30 was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of
31 Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug
32 their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, 'No eye at
33 all is better than an evil eye, dark master!'
34 But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life,
warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call 'nuts' to Scrooge.

How is Scrooge presented in A Christmas Carol?

Write about:

- How Scrooge is presented in this extract
- How Scrooge is presented in the novel as a whole.

Read the following extract from Stave Five then answer the question that follows. Here, we are told about Scrooge at the end of the novel.

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not |
| 2 | die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as |
| 3 | the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some |
| 4 | people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he |
| 5 | was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some |
| 6 | people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be |
| 7 | blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the |
| 8 | malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him. |
| 9 | |
| 10 | He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever |
| 11 | afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man |
| 12 | alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim |
| 13 | observed, God bless Us, Every One! |

How is Scrooge presented in A Christmas Carol?

Write about:

- How Scrooge is presented in this extract
- How Scrooge is presented in the novel as a whole.

Read this extract from Stave One of the novella then answer the question that follows.

Scrooge and Bob Cratchit are in the counting house on Christmas Eve.

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.

The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens create atmosphere in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens creates atmosphere in this extract
- how Dickens creates atmosphere in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read the following extract from Stave One of *A Christmas Carol*.

It is Christmas Eve and two portly gentlemen have arrived collecting for charity for the poor and homeless.

“At this festive season of the year, Mr Scrooge,” said the gentleman, taking up a pen, “it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.”

“Are there no prisons?” asked Scrooge.

“Plenty of prisons,” said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

“And the Union workhouses?” demanded Scrooge. “Are they still in operation?”

“They are. Still,” returned the gentleman, “I wish I could say they were not.”

“The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?” said Scrooge.

“Both very busy, sir.”

“Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course,” said Scrooge. “I’m very glad to hear it.”

“Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude,” returned the gentleman, “a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?”

“Nothing!” Scrooge replied.

“You wish to be anonymous?”

“I wish to be left alone,” said Scrooge. “Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don’t make merry myself at Christmas and I can’t afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned: they cost enough: and those who are badly off must go there.”

“Many can’t go there; and many would rather die.”

“If they would rather die,” said Scrooge, “they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides -- excuse me -- I don’t know that.”

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present attitudes towards poverty in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents attitudes towards poverty in this extract
- how Dickens presents attitudes towards poverty in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from Stave One of the novella then answer the question that follows.

The ghost of Jacob Marley has appeared to Scrooge. Marley reflects on his time on earth.

“Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed,” cried the phantom, “not to know, that ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life’s opportunities misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!”

“But you were always a good man of business, Jacob,” faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

“Business!” cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!”

It held up its chain at arm’s length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.

“At this time of the rolling year,” the spectre said, “I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me!”

Scrooge was very much dismayed to hear the spectre going on at this rate, and began to quake exceedingly.

“Hear me!” cried the Ghost. “My time is nearly gone.”

“I will,” said Scrooge. “But don’t be hard upon me! Don’t be flowery, Jacob! Pray!”

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the idea of redemption in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents the idea of redemption in this extract
- how Dickens presents the idea of redemption in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from Stave Two of the novella then answer the question that follows.

The Ghost of Christmas Past has just appeared to Scrooge whilst was is in bed.

It was a strange figure -- like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the supernatural in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents the supernatural in this extract
- how Dickens presents the supernatural in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from Stave Two of the novella then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge is watching his former self as an apprentice for his previous employer, Mr. Fezziwig. Accompanied by the ghost of Christmas Past, he observes the celebrations and becomes caught up in the excitement.

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (an artful dog, mind! The sort of man who knew his business better than you or I could have told it him!) struck up 'Sir Roger de Coverley'. Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who **would** dance, and had no notion of walking.

But if they had been twice as many — ah, four times — old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to **her**, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that's not high praise, tell me higher, and I'll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn't have predicted, at any given time, what would become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curtsy, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place: Fezziwig 'cut' — cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens create an atmosphere of celebration?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents a celebratory atmosphere in this extract
- how Dickens presents a celebratory atmosphere in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from Stave Three of the novella then answer the question that follows.

Scrooge is woken to find the Ghost of Christmas Present in his living room.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's, or for many and many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see: who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

``Come in!" exclaimed the Ghost. ``Come in. and know me better, man!"

Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

``I am the Ghost of Christmas Present," said the Spirit. ``Look upon me!"

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present Christmas ?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents Christmas in this extract
- how Dickens presents Christmas in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from **Stave Three** of the novella then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, **Scrooge is observing the Cratchit family during Christmas dinner, accompanied by the Ghost of Christmas Present.**

Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a milliner's, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch, and how she meant to lie a-bed to-morrow morning for a good long rest; to-morrow being a holiday she passed at home. Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord ``was much about as tall as Peter;" at which Peter pulled up his collars so high that you couldn't have seen his head if you had been there. All this time the chestnuts and the jug went round and round; and bye and bye they had a song, about a lost child travelling in the snow, from Tiny Tim; who had a plaintive little voice, and sang it very well indeed.

There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present family?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents family in this extract
- how Dickens presents family in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from Stave Three of the novella then answer the question that follows.

Scrooge has come to the end of his journey with The Ghost of Christmas Present when he notices something beneath the spirit's robes.

``Oh, Man! look here. Look, look, down here!" exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

``Spirit! are they yours?" Scrooge could say no more.

``They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. ``And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!" cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. ``Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse! And bide the end!"

``Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge.

``Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words.

``Are there no workhouses?"

The bell struck twelve.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present social injustice in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents social injustice in this extract
- how Dickens presents social injustice in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from Stave Four of the novella then answer the question that follows.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come has appeared before Scrooge.

The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached. When it came, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.

It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded.

He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.

“I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?” said Scrooge.

The Spirit answered not, but pointed onward with its hand.

“You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us,” Scrooge pursued. “Is that so, Spirit?”

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens use the supernatural to create atmosphere?

Write about:

- how Dickens uses the supernatural in this extract
- how Dickens uses the supernatural in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from Stave Four of the novella then answer the question that follows.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come takes Scrooge to the Royal Exchange.

The Spirit stopped beside one little knot of business men. Observing that the hand was pointed to them, Scrooge advanced to listen to their talk.

“No,” said a great fat man with a monstrous chin, “I don't know much about it, either way. I only know he's dead.”

“When did he die?” inquired another.

“Last night, I believe.”

“Why, what was the matter with him?” asked a third, taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box. “I thought he'd never die.”

“God knows,” said the first, with a yawn.

“What has he done with his money?” asked a red-faced gentleman with a pendulous excrescence on the end of his nose, that shook like the gills of a turkey-cock.

“I haven't heard,” said the man with the large chin, yawning again. “Left it to his Company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know.”

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh.

“It's likely to be a very cheap funeral,” said the same speaker; “for upon my life I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?”

“I don't mind going if a lunch is provided,” observed the gentleman with the excrescence on his nose. “But I must be fed, if I make one.”

Another laugh.

“Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all,” said the first speaker, “for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Bye, bye!”

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present business and commerce in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents business and commerce in this extract
- how Dickens presents business and commerce in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from Stave Four of the novella then answer the question that follows.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come shows Scrooge a vision of the Cratchit's in the future. They have been discussing how Scrooge's nephew, Fred, has helped the family and is likely to secure a job for their son, Peter.

But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim -- shall we -- or this first parting that there was among us?"

``Never, father!" cried they all.

``And I know," said Bob, ``I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it."

``No, never, father!" they all cried again.

``I am very happy," said little Bob, ``I am very happy!"

Mrs Cratchit kissed him, his daughters kissed him, the two young Cratchits kissed him, and Peter and himself shok hands. Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God!

``Spectre," said Scrooge, ``something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?"

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present death in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents death in this extract
- how Dickens presents death in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Read this extract from Stave Five of the novella then answer the question that follows.

It is the day after Christmas day and Scrooge is at his counting house.

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes, he did. The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

"Hallo," growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?"

"I'm very sorry, sir," said Bob. "I *am* behind my time."

"You are?" repeated Scrooge. "Yes. I think you are. Step this way, if you please."

"It's only once a year, sir," pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. "It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir."

"Now, I'll tell you what, my friend," said Scrooge, "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore," he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again; "and therefore I am about to raise your salary."

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the transformation of Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*?

How does Dickens present Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents the transformation of Scrooge in this extract
- how Dickens presents the transformation of Scrooge in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]