



VIRGINIA
STAGE
COMPANY
AT THE
Wells Theatre



A
CHRISTMAS
CAROL



STUDY GUIDE

A Christmas Carol

Study Guide

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SOL Compatibilities

English

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TII.15

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Theater Etiquette

As a class brainstorm a list of rules for the theater. Discuss why these rules are important. Compare the list you made as a class with the list we have compiled below:

There are simple rules that all audience members should follow to make the play as enjoyable as possible. Remember, a live theater performance can be very exciting. All of the people involved in the production, both cast and crew, work very hard to be sure they give a great performance. It is the job of the audience members to help the performers give their best performance possible. The audience can do this by practicing the rules of theater etiquette.

- Arrive to the theater on time.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- Turn off your cell phone or, if it must be on, put it on vibrate. Do not speak on the phone OR text during the performance.
- Pay attention to announcements that are made prior to many shows about the rules of the theater you are attending and the location of the fire exits.
- Don't speak during the performance...whispering is still speaking, so only in an emergency.
- Remember that the Overture (introductory music) in Musical Theater is part of the performance, so be quiet when it begins.
- Do not take pictures during the performance. It is prohibited in this theatre and can be very distracting to the actors.
- Remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, wait for an appropriate break in the show. It is rude to get up in the middle of a quiet moment...rude to the actors and your fellow audience members.
- Do not eat or drink in the theater. If you must have a cough drop, or something of that nature, do not make noise with the wrapper.
- Do not put your feet up on the seats or balcony and do not kick the seat in front of you.
- Do not angle your head together with your "special someone" as you obstruct the view of the people behind you.
- Don't put or throw anything on the stage.
- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when it is appropriate during the performance.
- Do applaud when the performance is over...this tells the performers and crew that you appreciate their work.
- Stand and applaud if you really thought the show was great.
- Do not whistle or scream out to the performers.

Enjoy The Show!



Chronology

of Dickens' Life and Work

- 1812 Born February 7, in Landport, England, to John and Elizabeth Dickens
- 1815-17 Lived in London
- 1823 Moved to Chatham, Kent, where he received his early education
- 1826 Attended Wellington House Academy
- 1827-28 Employed as solicitor's clerk
- 1829-31 Employed as shorthand reporter
- 1833-34 First stories published in Monthly Magazine
- 1836 Married Catherine Hogarth and worked as a Reporter for the Morning Chronicle, sketches published, collected as *Sketches by Boz*; *Pickwick Papers* appears monthly
- 1839 Moved to Devonshire Terrace with his wife and three children
- 1840 *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* are published monthly
- 1841 Dickens's fourth child, Walter, is born
- 1843 *A Christmas Carol* is written and published in six weeks
- 1844 Lived in Italy; wrote *The Chimes*
- 1845 Planned, edited and contributed to Daily News; wrote *The Cricket on the Hearth*
- 1846 Lived in Switzerland; *Dombrey and Son* published monthly
- 1847 Lived in Paris; *The Battle of Life*
- 1848 Wrote *The Haunted Man*
- 1849 *David Copperfield* published monthly
- 1850 Edited and contributed to Household Words
- 1851 Moved to Tavistock House
- 1852 *Bleak House* published monthly
- 1854 *Hard Times* published weekly
- 1855 *Little Dorrit* published weekly
- 1859 *A Tale of Two Cities* published weekly
- 1860 *Great Expectations* published weekly
- 1864 *Our Mutual Friend* published weekly
- 1867 Public reading tour of USA
- 1869 Suffered a physical breakdown while on provincial reading tour
- 1870 Died June 8th, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* published monthly without an ending



Meet Mr. Charles Dickens

Born February 7, 1812 in Portsmouth, England to John and Elizabeth Dickens. Charles lived much of his early childhood in the coastal regions of Kent, England. Dickens' father, John, was a kind and likable man, but he was financially irresponsible, piling up tremendous debts throughout his life. In February 1824, Charles' father, was arrested for debt and imprisoned in the Marshalsea Prison. His wife and three of his children joined him there. Charles stayed with a friend of the family, Mrs. Roylance, in Camden Town. To support the family, the 12-year-old Charles was sent to work at Warren's Blacking warehouse, a factory which manufactures shoe polish. Dickens later describes this period of his life as one of "humiliation and neglect." Moreover, this experience "seemed to put a stain on the clever, sensitive boy that colored everything he accomplished, though he never told the story except obliquely through his fiction" (Perdue). Later that year, after coming into an inheritance from his mother, John Dickens is released from prison, allowing Charles to resume his schooling. Charles begins attending Wellington House Academy in North London, where he is an excellent student and begins to nurture an interest in theater.

At age 25, Dickens completed his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, which met with great success. This started his career as an English literary celebrity, during which he produced such masterpieces as *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Dickens' ability to capture the imagination of his audience, many of them new to fiction due to a rise in literacy during the industrial revolution, was due largely to his amazing power of observation, incredible wit, unforgettable characters, and a command of the English language probably second only to Shakespeare. His fiction provided a voice for the causes and frustrations of the poor and working classes helping to assure popularity across class boundaries.

Source: David Purdue's Charles Dickens Page <http://charlesdickenspage.com/index.html>

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Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*

A Christmas Carol has become synonymous with Christmas time and the holiday spirit. Why? On the surface the 1843 novella is rather simplistic, all of the action of the story stems from a central allegory that is easily decoded. Dickens' other works like *David Copperfield* are certainly more complex and more respected pieces of literature. However, the endearing characters he depicts in the yuletide classic create a strong emotional bond with the reader that has survived for decades. The human element in *A Christmas Carol* strengthens the novella's staying power and has made it an icon of what Christmas means.



The Story begins at the counting house of Scrooge and Marley on Christmas Eve. Scrooge and his employee, Bob Cratchit, are working when Scrooge's nephew Fred stops by to invite his uncle to Christmas dinner. Scrooge declines, believing Christmas to be a "humbug." After reluctantly giving Bob the next day off, Scrooge heads home for another evening alone. That evening, Scrooge is visited by the spirit of his dead business partner, Jacob Marley, who relates the terror of his afterlife. He informs Scrooge that three ghosts will visit him through the night. The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come take Scrooge on a journey during which he is forced to confront all aspects of his life. The morning after this incredible journey, Scrooge awakens with a fresh and positive outlook on the world.

Charles Dickens knew that the power of all literature comes from the impact it makes in society. In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens was making a conscious social critique about the plight of the industrial poor. It was important that people of all classes could read his story. All of his novels (including *A Christmas Carol*) were published serially, in monthly (or weekly) installments. A full length novel in 1836 cost more than a full week's salary. This serial system brought the costs of his novels down significantly allowing his work to be purchased and enjoyed by the lower classes of Industrial England.



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Dickens and Language

A Christmas Carol is primarily a dream story in that the majority of the action takes place in Scrooge's dreaming mind. Charles Dickens wrote the story in prose, but his writing style was highly dependent on poetical elements of:

alliteration: the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

assonance: in poetry, the repetition of the sound of a vowel or diphthong in nonrhyming stressed syllables near enough to each other for the echo to be discernible (e.g., penitence, reticence).

apostrophe: an exclamatory passage in a speech or poem addressed to a person (typically one who is dead or absent) or thing (typically one that is personified).

simile: a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid (e.g., as brave as a lion, crazy like a fox).

internal rhyme: a rhyme involving a word in the middle of a line and another at the end of the line or in the middle of the next.



Editing: Dickens constantly reworked *A Christmas Carol*, changing spelling, word choice, and larger phrasing from soon after its first publication in 1843 until his death in 1870. The "little Carol" to Dickens was always a work in progress!

Activity: Using the full text link for *A Christmas Carol* [<http://www.literature.org/authors/dickens-charles/christmas-carol/index.html>] have the class read through one of the Chapters or a shorter section to find examples of the literary elements listed above. You may also use the selection at the end of this study guide (page 26).

Vocabulary

apprentice: one learning a trade under a skilled master; most young workers were apprenticed to learn a trade.

brazier: large flat pan for holding coals, used as a heater

carol: a song or ballad of joy celebrating the birth of Christ

counting house: an office where business firms handle accounting

ignorance: unawareness, uneducated or unformed

melancholy: gloomy, sad

miser: a stingy person, one who hoards money

mortal: liable or subject to death

relents: softens in temper, becomes less severe or stubborn

Scrooge: a colloquial or vulgar word meaning to crowd or squeeze (also spelled scroodge, skrouge, or scrowdge)

shillings/crown/sixpence: English monetary coins

stave: an archaic form of "staff" meaning a stanza of a poem or song

surplus: in excess of what is needed

See page 35 for a vocabulary word search!

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Dickens Christmas Stories

Preface to the Original Edition
A Christmas Carol

I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.

Their faithful Friend and Servant,
C. D.
December, 1843.

Dickens began writing his "little carol" in October, 1843 finishing it in only six weeks and in time to be published for Christmas with illustrations by John Leech. Feuding with his publishers, Dickens devised an elaborate scheme of production. He paid all the costs of publishing the book himself, ordering lavish binding, gilt edging, and hand-colored illustrations, but insisted the low price of only 5 shillings so that everyone could afford it. This combination resulted in disappointingly low profits despite high sales. In the first few days of its release, the book sold 6,000 copies and its popularity continued to grow. The first and best of his Christmas Books, *A Christmas Carol* has become a Christmas tradition and easily Dickens' best known book (Perdue, "A Christmas Carol").

A Christmas Carol was not, however, the first instance where we find Dickens writing about Christmas. In *Sketches by Boz*, he wrote a short essay entitled "A Christmas Dinner," which described a family's Christmas party filled with music, dancing, a banquet of food and goodwill towards all. Furthermore, a remarkably similar storyline can also be found in a chapter in *The Pickwick Papers*. The idea of Scrooge and his journey might be found in a story entitled *The Goblin Who Stole a Sexton*. In this story a grave digger named Gabriel Grub digs a grave while drinking alone on Christmas Eve. He encounters a supernatural power to show him how Christmas is spent by both the rich and poor.

Starting in 1843 and continuing for five years, Dickens wrote an annual Christmas story. These included *A Christmas Carol*, *The Chimes*, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, *The Battle of Life*, and *The Haunted Man*. These shorter novels soon became favorites with the public and created a demand for more Holiday stories—a tradition that survives today.

Standard Structure of a Christmas Story:

- Resolution of a human problem through the intervention of a supernatural force, acting on the protagonist's psychology, generally through the agent of memory (Hearn 28).

Activity: In short essay or storyboard, go through the text or performance of *A Christmas Carol* and discuss specific elements that support this definition of a Christmas Story.

Discussion: What other Christmas Stories do you know? [Some examples: *Miracle on 34th Street*, *The Gift of the Magi*, *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*] Discuss how they fit this definition. Ask your students to choose a Christmas story and create a venn diagram comparing and contrasting their story with *A Christmas Carol*. This will help students visualize the commonalities between the two.

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Dickens and Christmas

In Dickens' day, the holiday season ran for twelve days, from Christmas Day to Epiphany, January 6. In the 1840s, Dickens was writing during a decline in Old Christmas traditions. He is even often credited with single-handedly reviving Christmas Holiday customs. But where did these customs come from?

The Origins of Christmas Celebrations



The Celebration of Christmas began in AD 601 when Pope Gregory instructed his missionary (St. Austin) in Canterbury, England—in order to convert the Anglo-Saxons—to change a local winter feast into a Christian festival. The result was a meshing of Pagan customs and Christian purposes. The pagan customs originated from the Roman Saturnalia, Yule (a Saxon feast for the return of the Sun) and the Druid Holiday. This Christmas holiday festival grew into twelve days of celebration and as early as 1170. Christmas plays (or

pageants) were performed in English courts during the season (adapted from Hearn, 1-5). Although Court traditions and celebrations ebbed and flowed with a changing political climate, the old traditions survived in the countryside. The focus for the holiday season turned to family, charity, and brotherhood between the poor and those more fortunate. In each home, groups of family and friends ate feasts, sang songs, and played games together - generally "making Merry."

When you come to The Wells theater to see *A Christmas Carol* you will get to hear some very traditional songs. The concept of going from house to house singing Christmas carols originates from a time when people went door to door with the wassail bowl. During Dickens' time carolers hit the street offering sips of a drink called wassail. Wassail was originally a drink made of mulled ale and spices. Singers went from door to door with their silver bowls decorated by sprig to rosemary and holy. During this time people of lower classes expected payment for their wassail from people of higher classes. The rich were expected to take care of the poor and would even invite the carolers into their homes.

Examples of Traditions - "Deck the Halls": the lyrics of this popular carol referred to countryside halls bedecked (draped) with holly, ivy, mistletoe, laurel and cypress; with great fires in the halls to keep the home warm in the winter.



Activity: Look at (or sing through) the lyrics of *Deck the Halls* with the class then have students either:

- 1) Draw an image of a holiday decorated fireside in a country home, or
- 2) Write a paragraph describing what holiday decorations are present in their homes (or favorite decorations at a city locale or mall).

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Christmas Then:



This picture shows a typical upper class Christmas in 1840.
Do you see a Christmas Tree? Decorations?

Christmas Now:



A typical middle class family Christmas in the early 1900s.
Notice the presents under the tree.

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The story of *A Christmas Carol* has become part of Christmas folklore where now all misers are “scrooges” and all Christmas feasts are the same as those found on Bob Cratchit’s table. Dickens had a talent for defining the holiday season with a highly entertaining narrative. Dickens more than anything depicts Christmas as a popular festival centered on goodwill and charity. We find in *A Christmas Carol* detailed descriptions of shops, festivities, and traditions of both rich and poor in Victorian Christmastime. What Dickens did for Christmas was not to revive a faltering festival, but rather to make a popular festival mean more by encouraging rituals already present such as:



- Giving hospitality
- Lighting Fires
- Making Punch
- Eating Turkey
- Roasting Beef
- Promoting good will
- Reevaluating ourselves
- Reaffirming relationships

Discussion:

What other characteristics do you use to define Christmas? What traditions does your family use to celebrate Christmas? i.e. advent calendar, cookies for Santa?

Activity: Prepare a class reading of a scene or segment from Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*. After reading the segment out loud think about how it could be presented as a play. As a class brainstorm ideas about what costumes/props/set/sound would be needed to make the section come to life. As a class rewrite the segment as a scene in a play.

Dickens often performed public readings of *A Christmas Carol* in England as well as America. These readings helped to sustain interest in old Christmas stories and traditions. Dickens pared down *A Christmas Carol* for his public readings to one that can be read in a single sitting! You can find the abridged version at http://charlesdickenspage.com/carol-dickens_reading_text.html



Charles Dickens at his last public reading. 1870.

Image Source: Leighton, George C.: "Illustrated London News Vol 56" (1870)

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Celebrations of Christmas

Fezziwig's Christmas Ball: One scene that is most representative of the Christmas Spirit that Dickens endeavored to present is the scene of Fezziwig's Ball. The mood of this scene in particular, "sports the active good-fellowship of old Christmas" (Hearn 12).



Original Illustration of Fezziwig's Ball by John Leech, 1843

There remains a tradition in many businesses today for employers to throw extravagant Christmas or Holiday parties in recognition of their employees' hard work. Prior to Dickens' day, holiday parties like these would include live music, dancing, as well as a host of popular party games, or *forfeits*, where a penalty is demanded of the player who misses his turn. Like other games of the day, payment of a coin could be replaced with a kiss or a candy. By the time *A Christmas Carol* was written, these games had fallen out of favor in London, but were often played in the rural communities of the English countryside.

Couples would spend much of the night dancing to social dances like the "Sir Roger" and other dance steps Dickens describes. Fine food and drinks, like spiced cider and mince-pies were also a staple of Christmas parties (as they are today).

Activity: Have the class work together to plan a modern "Fezziwig Ball" to celebrate all the teachers' hard work!

- Where would they hold the party?
- What music and games would they play?
- What fancy holiday foods or drinks would they serve?
- Would there be Wassail or Mince-pie?
- What old Christmas traditions would they include?
 - Students can also do research into additional Victorian Christmas traditions or Winter holiday traditions from other cultures.

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The Christmas Ghost Story: Before and during Dickens' day, one of the common traditions in celebrating the Christmas season was to tell a ghost story around the fireside on Christmas Eve. Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* describes several spirits of ghosts, both friendly and frightening. The first ghost that Scrooge sees is the one of his former business partner, Jacob Marley.

Question: Where does Scrooge see Marley first?



Answer: Scrooge first sees Marley in the door knocker of his home. Tradition holds that Dickens got the idea for the doorknocker's transforming into Marley's face from a particularly grotesque old doorknocker he spotted one night while walking along Craven Street. Apparently, the owner of the house on whose door it hung became somewhat alarmed when an enthusiastic photographer approached her and asked for permission to photograph it. She immediately had it taken down and placed in a bank vault since when its whereabouts are unknown. Locals still say, however, that even today Craven Street can at times have a decidedly sinister feel to it because it is lined with sturdy 18th century buildings, some of which still possess doorknockers.

Source: <http://www.the-magician.co.uk/tours-london.htm>

Activity 1:

- 1) Read the section of *A Christmas Carol* that describes the door knocker (Appendix A).
- 2) Have students walk through their neighborhood or a historic neighborhood nearby and try to find a door knocker that might inspire Charles Dickens today!
- 3) Draw the knocker
- 4) Write a paragraph in the style of Dickens describing the knocker you have drawn and how it would transform. How would you react to the knockers transformation? Who would the knocker turn into?

Activity 2: Describe in a short paragraph

- In what ways *A Christmas Carol* is a ghost story?
- What other supernatural or ghostly elements are present?
- What elements could you add to make it more of a ghost story?

After the play: Discuss as a class how different elements of stage magic happened during *A Christmas Carol* at the Wells. How do you think the knocker became Marley's face? How did the Ghost of Christmas Future fly? How did you feel when Marley appeared in Scrooge's bedroom?



VSC 'A Christmas Carol'
Photo by Sam Flint 2014

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Christmas Carols : During Dickens' day, there were dozens of broadside carol sheets published each year. These carols came from a long tradition in the English countryside where a storehouse of songs combined Christmas myth and tradition. The tradition of carols and caroling urges sociability, hospitality and merriness; and many of the old carols draw attention to the plight of the poor or depict the miraculous and marvels of Christmas myth. The Cornwall region of southern England was well known for its Christmas song tradition; several of which were cataloged in 1860 and, at that time, were over 300 years old!

Quick Fact: Dickens not only used the name "carol" in the title of this story, but also used the carol structure to shape the story - calling each chapter a "stave" or verse/stanza!

Probably the most widely sung Christmas Song of Dickens' era was "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen." It is this song that the caroler is singing in the first chapter of *A Christmas Carol* when Scrooge scares him away with a ruler:

...At the first sound of "God bless you merry, gentleman! May nothing you dismay!" Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action that the singer fled in terror, leaving the key hole to the fog and even more congenial frost.

Lyrics for Carols tended to "shift" through the years, even after publication. In the case of "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen", there are often several known melodies! A large number of parodies have developed over the years as well; many of which can be found at

www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/hymns_and_carols/notes_on_carols/god_rest_you_merry_notes.htm



VSC 'A Christmas Carol'
Photo by Sam Flint 2014

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Carol Activity: Review the lyrics and tune that the class knows for "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen." Then, using the lyrics below, have students create a modern day version of the carol. They can change the melody of lyrics, or both! Then have the students present their versions to the class and vote on the best one!

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God rest you merry, Gentlemen. (I.)

Traditional (16th Century)
The popular version of the Tune.

The musical score is written for piano in G major and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 108. The score consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

1. God rest you mer-ry, gentle-men, Let noth-ing you dis-may, For Je-sus Christ, our Sav-our, Was
born on Christ-mas Day, To save us all from Sa-tan's pow'r When we were gone a-stray; O
tid-ings of com-fort and joy, com-fort and joy, O tid-ings of com-fort and joy.

<p>2. In Bethlehem, in Jewry, This blessed Babe was born, And laid within a manger, Upon this blessed morn ; The which His mother, Mary, Did nothing take in scorn. <i>O tidings, etc.</i></p> <p>3. From God, our Heav'nly Father, A blessed Angel came, And unto certain shepherds Brought tidings of the same ; How that in Bethlehem was born The son of God by name. <i>O tidings, etc.</i></p> <p>4. "Fear not," then said the Angel, "Let nothing you affright, This day is born a Saviour Of virtue, pow'r, and might, So frequently to vanquish all The friends of Satan quite." <i>O tidings, etc.</i></p>	<p>5. The shepherds at these tidings Rejoicèd much in mind, And left their flocks a-feeding In tempest, storm, and wind ; And went to Bethlehem straightway, This blessed Babe to find. <i>O tidings, etc.</i></p> <p>6. But when to Bethlehem they came, Where our dear Saviour lay, They found Him in a manger, Where oxen feed on hay ; His mother Mary kneeling, Unto the Lord did pray. <i>O tidings, etc.</i></p> <p>7. Now to the Lord sing praises, All you within this place, And with true love and brotherhood Each other now embrace ; This Holy Tide of Christmas All others doth efface. <i>O tidings, etc.</i></p>
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Source: http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/god_rest_you_merry_gentlemen.htm

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Blindman's Buff: This is a popular parlor game, not exclusive to the holiday season, in which the contestant is blindfolded, buffed around ("buff" = "push"), and made to catch a guest and guess whom he has caught. The game is an ancient one; it was known to the Greeks and was popular during the Middle Ages when it was called "hoodman blind" because the player was blinded by a hood. By the 19th century, the blindman had the right to kiss his captive!



Picture of Adults playing Blind Man's Buff in the early 1800s



Children Playing Blind Man's Buff

This game, along with other *Forfeits* such as *Yes and No* or *How, When and Where* are played in the Christmas scene in Fred's home. What party games, if any, do your family or friends play?

Activity 1 : Lead the class in a game of Blindman's Buff (without the kissing option!)

Before beginning to play, the middle of the room should be cleared, the chairs placed against the wall, and all toys and footstools put out of the way. The child having been selected who is to be "Blind Man" or "Buff," is blindfolded. He is then asked the question, "How many horses has your father got?" The answer is "Three," and to the question: "What color are they?" he replies: "Black, white, and gray." All the players then cry: "Turn round three times and catch whom you may." Buff accordingly spins round and then the fun commences. He tries to catch the players, while they in their turn do their utmost to escape "Buff," all the time making little sounds to attract him.

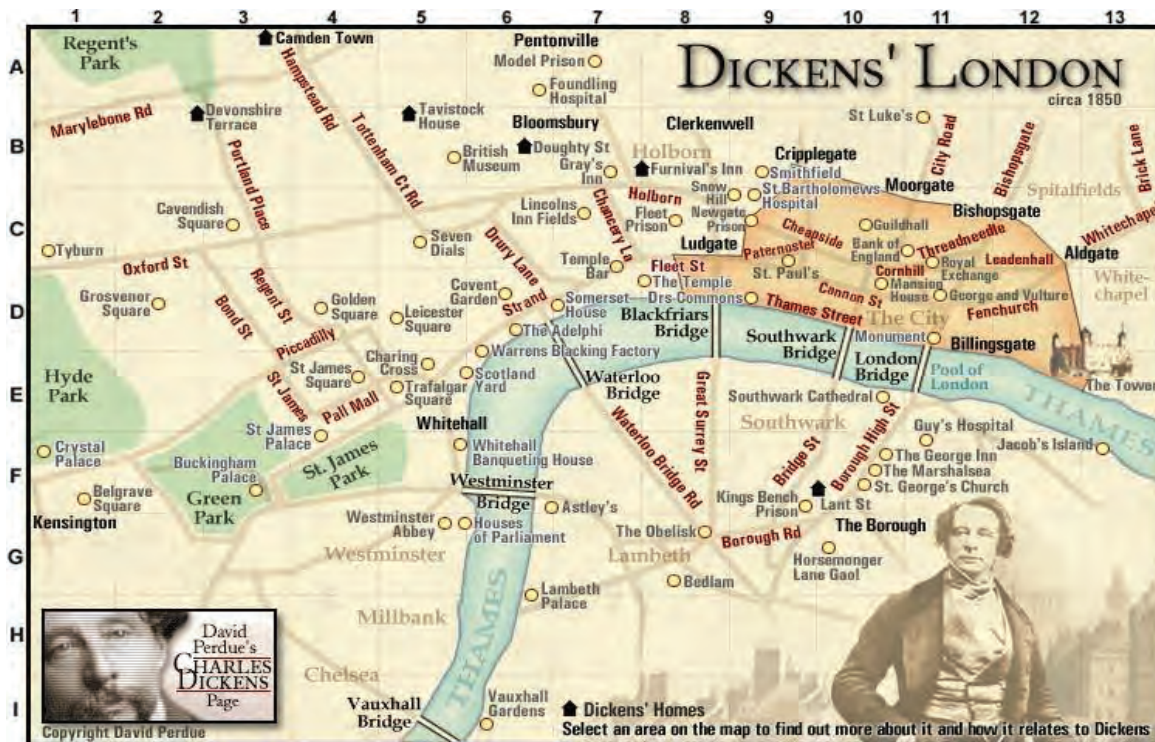
This goes on until one of the players is caught, when Buff, without having the bandage removed from his eyes, has to guess the name of the person he has secured. If the guess is a correct one, the player who has been caught takes the part of "Buff," and the former "Buff" joins the ranks of the players.

Source: Project Gutenberg E-Book: My Book of Indoor Games by Clarence Squareman.
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13022/13022-h/13022-h.htm>



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London in the 1840's – Social Issues and Economy



Source: http://charlesdickenspage.com/dickens_london_map.html

Victorian London was the largest, most spectacular city in the world. While Britain was experiencing the Industrial Revolution, its capital was both reaping the benefits and suffering the consequences. In 1800 the population of London was around a million souls. That number would swell to 4.5 million by 1880. While fashionable areas like Regent and Oxford streets were growing in the west, new docks supporting the city's place as the world's trade center were being built in the east. Perhaps the biggest impact on the growth of London was the coming of the railroad in the 1830s which displaced thousands and accelerated the expansion of the city.

The price of this explosive growth and domination of world trade was untold squalor and filth. Take a minute to imagine living in a city like this:

The homes of the upper and middle class exist in close proximity to areas of unbelievable poverty and filth. Rich and poor alike are thrown together in the crowded city streets. Street sweepers attempt to keep the streets clean of manure, the result of thousands of horse-drawn vehicles. The city's thousands of chimney pots are belching coal smoke, resulting in soot which seems to settle everywhere. In many parts of the city raw sewage flows in gutters that empty into the Thames. Street vendors hawking their wares add to the cacophony of street noises. Pick-pockets, prostitutes, drunks, beggars, and vagabonds of every description add to the colorful multitude.



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Poverty and Child Labor in Victorian England:

Poverty was an everyday part of many lives in Victorian London. Due to bad harvests, a bank crisis, layoffs, and high food prices, the 1840s were known as the "Hungry Forties" (Parker 163). The growth of cities created an industrial impoverished lower class. Families lived in urban slums where many families might share a two bedroom apartment with no plumbing. With the growing level of taxes and gap between the classes growing wider everyday, many political theorists of Dickens' day spouted opinions similar to those we hear from Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*:

- One's debt to society is paid through compulsory taxation - charity on ANY day is unnecessary.
- The poor are poor because they have made themselves so.
- All sentiment is humbug and any emotion that might hinder business is nonsense (Hearn 41-42)!

Scrooge as a parody of London's Business class is one that is in direct contrast to the Christmas Spirit Dickens evokes. At the same time, creating a protagonist like Scrooge allowed Dickens to communicate his opinions about the social issues of his day.

Two places of "refuges" that Scrooge mentions that were used in attempt to alleviate the "poor problem" were called The Union Workhouse and The Treadmill.



Source: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/workhouse.asp>

The Union Workhouse

If you were poverty-stricken, an unwanted orphan, an impoverished widow, too old to work, sick, or if you were a thief, you could end up in the dreaded union workhouse. After 1834, people in financial need often worked for room and board in a "ward" or grouping of houses formed by the Poor Law Union to contain the poor. Previously, these houses were managed by the local church parishes. The new system, formed by the Poor Law

Amendment Act in 1834, was expected to reduce expenditure, using a hard workhouse test. Claimants would be 'offered the house', but if they turned it down then the legal obligation to offer relief was considered to have been met.

The conditions inside of these workhouses were incredibly and intentionally bleak (as you would expect in Victorian/Industrial England). The terrible conditions were meant to dissuade people from being poor, however, they actually framed state assistance as an absolute last resort. Therefore rates of poverty related deaths, begging, prostitution and crime continued to increase as people cobbled together a living off of the street. Once at a workhouse families were split up, fed "prison food," and assigned monotonous and tedious tasks (breaking stones). The people who lived in the workhouses were required to wear uniforms and children were often "rented" out to mines and factories.

The Treadmill

A mill operated by persons walking on steps fastened to the circumference of a great and wide horizontal wheel - a form of criminal punishment introduced as hard labor in 1817 at Brixton Prison. Convicts were required to walk on the treadmill six hours at a time.



Poor Victorian Family.

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Dickens was particularly interested in the question of Child Labor. Child Labor had a long tradition in England, and London specifically, and was an issue that Charles Dickens knew personally from his days as a teenager in the Blacking Warehouse. In the 1840s he had even taken to writing a series of pamphlets on the subject. Orphans and children of poorer families were employed as early as seven to work fifteen to eighteen hour days in mines and factories under horrible conditions. As well as writing pamphlets, he expressed his opinions on the issues at public forums and championed the education of the poor.

Discussion: How do these themes and issues of poverty and child labor appear in the text of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*? How does it appear in Virginia Stage Company's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*?

Answer: Characters of Ignorance and Want appear as demon children at the end of the scene with the Ghost of Christmas Present. In the scene, they are presented "protected" in the folds of the ghost's vast robes. These two characters embody the fate of human indifference and the effect of the utilitarian mindset (such as Scrooge had) on society. It was Dickens' desire to express the living, breathing nature of these issues in London that inspired him to write *A Christmas Carol*. Through *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens offers a solution to the social condition, "a change of heart" (Hearn 43).

Below is a picture of Ignorance and Want with the Ghost of Christmas Present from our production of *A Christmas Carol*.



Christmas Present, Want and Ignorance. Photo by Sam Flint 2014

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Money in Victorian London

Since much of world currency has been standardized by decimalization, it is often hard to understand currency used in England before the country began “going decimal” (dividing by 100) in 1971. Currency in Victorian England, called the British pound sterling, was based on 240 divisions (fractions from halves to one-hundred twentieths!). Originally, a gold sovereign was made from gold and equal to £1. Money was divided into pounds, (£) shillings, (s. or /- and pennies (d).

Thus, four pounds, eight shillings and four pence would be written as £ 4/8/4d. or £ 4-8-4d.

There were:

- 20 shillings in £ 1 - a shilling was often called ‘bob,’ so ‘ten bob’ was 10/-
- 12 pennies in 1 shilling
- 240 pennies in £ 1

Pennies were broken down into other coins:

- a farthing (a fourth-thing) was a quarter of a penny
- a halfpenny (hay-p’ny) was half of a penny
- three farthings was three quarters of a penny



Source: Marjie Bloy Ph.D., Victorian Web
<http://www.victorianweb.org/economics/currency.html>

Other Monetary References in *A Christmas Carol*:

Half a crown: a crown was a silver coin used in early 19th century England, equal to five shillings, stamped with a crown, Half Crown = 2s 6d

Shilling: English coin equal to 12 pence

Farthing: equals one quarter of a penny

15 shillings a week: This was the common wage of clerical workers at the time. This was also referred to as “15 Bob a week”. This is both a pun on Bob Cratchit’s name as well as a Cockney phrase - a “bob” is Cockney for a shilling. It cost Cratchit a full week’s wages to buy the ingredients for his family’s Christmas Feast.

Here are some examples of typical incomes (annual) in Victorian England:

- Aristocrats £30,000
- Merchants, bankers £10,000
- Middle-class (doctors, lawyers, and clerks like Bob Cratchit) £300-800
- Lower middle-class (head teachers, journalists, shopkeepers, etc.) £150-300
- Skilled workers (carpenters, typesetters, etc.) £75-100
- Sailors and domestic staff £40-75
- Laborers, soldiers £25

Source: <http://www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm>

Activity: Cut out gold, silver, and bronze-colored coins labeled according to the terms above and hold a “Market Day” where students can use the coins to buy holiday gifts, food, and supplies!

STUDYGUIDE

John Leech's Original Illustrations for *A Christmas Carol*

John Leech provided eight illustrations, four woodcuts, and four hand colored etchings for *A Christmas Carol*, published in December 1843. Throughout the study guide, you have seen several of these illustrations. Below and on the next page, you will find all eight illustrations in color and black-and-white.

Activity 1: Consider the illustrations and answer the following questions:

- What do these drawings provide to the story?
- Compare and contrast these illustrations with the production of *A Christmas Carol* at the Wells Theatre - how are things similar or different?
- What other drawings of additional scenes from the play would you like to see?
- On a separate sheet of paper, draw an additional illustration for *A Christmas Carol* based on your favorite scene!

Activity 2: Match the Titles

Each one of Leech's colored illustrations had a title. We have added titles for the black and white illustrations. Match the list of the titles below to the illustrations on this page and the next.

- 1) Mr. Fezziwig's Ball
- 2) Ghost of Christmas Past
- 3) Scrooge's Third Visitor (hint: Ghost of Christmas Present)
- 4) Ignorance and Want
- 5) The Last of the Spirits
- 6) Marley's Ghost
- 7) Phantoms
- 8) Reformed Scrooge and Bob Cratchit



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Theatrical Design in *A Christmas Carol*

Designers create their costumes from the setting of the play as well as the words the playwright gives to describe each character - and what the characters say about themselves.

A Word from the Designer: Jeni Schaefer, Resident Costume Designer, Virginia Stage Company

My job as Costume Designer is to create clothes for the actors that depict the time period and character descriptions set forth by the playwright as well as help convey the concept given to the design team by the director.

With *A Christmas Carol* being such a familiar story I also have to keep in mind certain expectations the audience might have about the play.

Our production is set in the mid 1800s London so the main costume for each of the characters is designed within "the silhouette of the period" with many pieces building on top of one another to help the actors change between the many characters they play.

Within this period world, we create a more conceptual design with the world of "Ghosts that visit Scrooge." The director wanted these costumes to reflect a more ancient, pagan feel. So, I researched ancient Greek gods as well as a more medieval silhouette. Within this look I went back to the description that the author, Charles Dickens, gave in the story and added those elements to their costumes. For Marley and the wandering spirits the set designer and myself worked together to create an alternative underworld, if you will, by looking at ghost paintings and cemetery photos of tombstones.

Designing this production has been an exciting experience for me, I hope you enjoy the design!



Photos from *A Christmas Carol*
2014 by Sam Flint

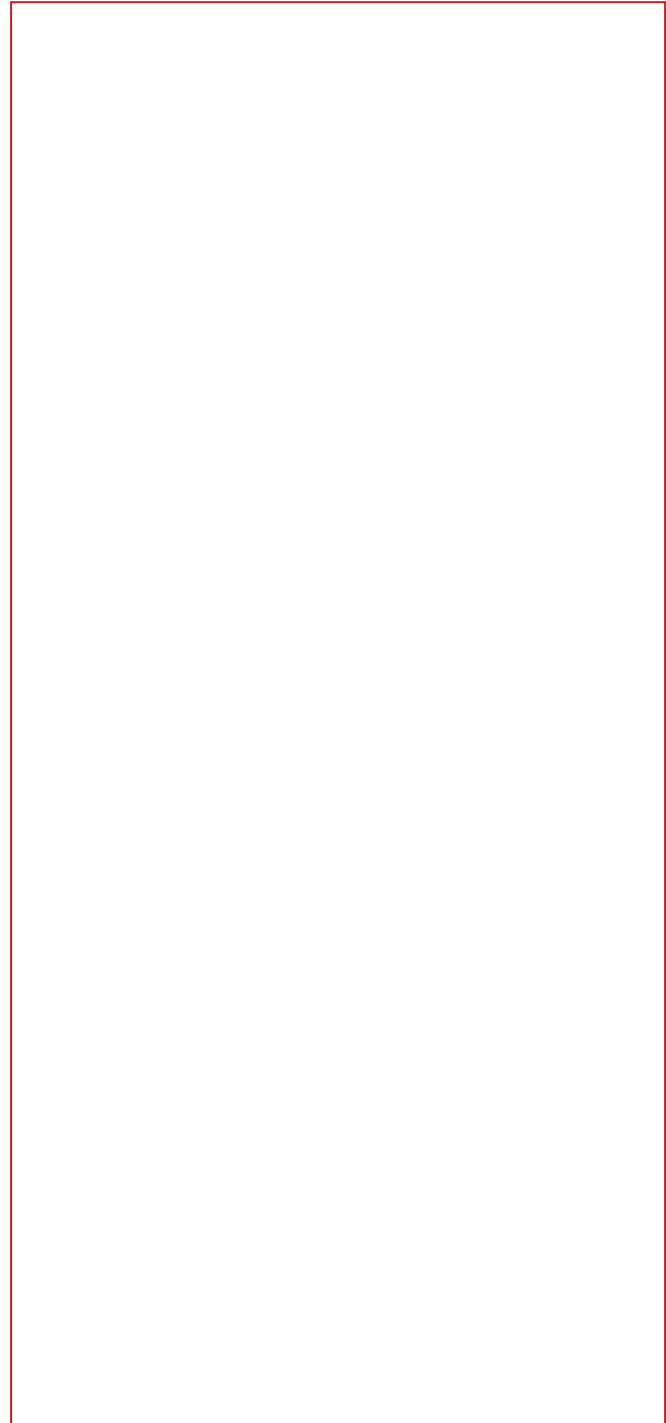
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Activity: Charles Dickens used very descriptive language in his novel *A Christmas Carol* to give the reader a clear, vivid image of the three spirits that visit Scrooge. Since this play is an adaptation of Dickens' story, designers can use these descriptions to aid in their designs. Use the descriptions below, taken from *A Christmas Carol* to draw your own costume design for the three spirits!

The Ghost of Christmas Past

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 has 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 were spring 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.

Even this, though, when Scrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, was not its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light on instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts, no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as ever.



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The Ghost of Christmas Present

From Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*

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, of 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 oyster, 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.

"My great ambition is to live in the hearts and homes of homeloving people, and to be connected with the truth of the truthful English life."
- Charles Dickens

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The Ghost of Christmas Future

From Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*

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.



Photo of The Ghost of Christmas Future from Virginia Stage Company's 2006 production of *A Christmas Carol*.

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Appendix A: An excerpt from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

STAVE ONE:

Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a doornail. Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a doornail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a doornail. Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnised it with an undoubted bargain. The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middleaged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot—say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance—literally to astonish his son's weak mind. Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him. Oh! But he was a tightfisted 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, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dogdays; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas. External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often came down handsomely, and Scrooge never did. Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you. When will you come to see me." No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blindmen's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!" 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. Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his countinghouse. 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 countinghouse 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 coalbox 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. "A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach. "Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!" He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath

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Appendix A Continued

smoked again. "Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said Scrooge's nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure." "I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? what reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough." "Come, then," returned the nephew gaily. "What right have you to be dismal? what reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough." Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, "Bah!" again; and followed it up with "Humbug." "Don't be cross, uncle," said the nephew. "What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools as this Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas. What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!" "Uncle!" pleaded the nephew. "Nephew!" returned the uncle, sternly, "keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine." "Keep it!" repeated Scrooge's nephew. "But you don't keep it." "Let me leave it alone, then," said Scrooge. "Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!" "There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew: "Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellowpassengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!" The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark for ever. "Let me hear another sound from you," said Scrooge, "and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation. You're quite a powerful speaker, sir," he added, turning to his nephew. "I wonder you don't go into Parliament." "Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow." Scrooge said that he would see him yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first. "But why?" cried Scrooge's nephew. "Why?" "Why did you get married?" said Scrooge. "Because I fell in love." "Because you fell in love!" growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. "Good afternoon!" "Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?" "Good afternoon," said Scrooge. "I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?" "Good afternoon," said Scrooge. "I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!" "Good afternoon!" said Scrooge. "And A Happy New Year!" "Good afternoon!" said Scrooge. His nephew left the room without an angry word, notwithstanding. He stopped at the outer door to bestow the greeting of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them cordially. "There's another fellow," muttered Scrooge; who overheard him: "my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam." This lunatic, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their hands, and bowed to him. "Scrooge and Marley's, I believe," said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr Scrooge, or Mr Marley?" "Mr Marley has been dead these seven years," Scrooge replied. "He died seven years ago, this very night." "We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner," said the gentleman, presenting his credentials. It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word "liberality", Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back. "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.

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Appendix A: Continued

"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." "But you might know it," observed the gentleman.

"It's not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him. Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at Scrooge out of a gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street, at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gaspipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The waterplug being left in solitude, its overflowings sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lampheat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed.

Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up tomorrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef. Foggier yet, and colder!

Piercing, searching, biting cold. If the good Saint Dunstan had but nipped the Evil Spirit's nose with a touch of such weather as that, instead of using his familiar weapons, then indeed he would have roared to lusty purpose. The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of God bless you, merry gentleman! May nothing you dismay!

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost. At length the hour of shutting up the countinghouse arrived. With an illwill Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat. "You'll want all day tomorrow, I suppose?" said Scrooge.

"If quite convenient, Sir."

"It's not convenient," said Scrooge, "and it's not fair. If I was to stop halfacrown for it, you'd think yourself illused, I'll be bound?" The clerk smiled faintly. "And yet," said Scrooge, "you don't think me illused, when I pay a day's wages for no work." The clerk observed that it was only once a year. "A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twentyfifth of December!" said Scrooge, buttoning his greatcoat to the chin. "But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning!" The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no greatcoat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's buff.

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Appendix A: Continued

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hideandseek with other houses, and have forgotten the way out again. It was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands. The fog and frost so hung about the black old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the City of London, even including which is a bold word the corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his sevenyears dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change: not a knocker, but Marley's face. Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up upon its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hotair; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid colour, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression. As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again.

To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle. He did pause,withamoment'sirresolution,beforeheshutthedoor;andhedid lookcautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on, so he said ``Pooh, pooh!" and closed it with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the winemerchant's cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stairs, slowly too: trimming his candle as he went.

You may talk vaguely about driving a coachandsix up a good old flight of stairs, or through a bad young Act of Parliament; but I mean to say you might have got a hearse up that staircase, and taken it broadwise, with the splinterbar towards the wall and the door towards the balustrades: and done it easy. There was plenty of width for that, and room to spare; which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought he saw a locomotive hearse going on before him in the gloom. Halfadozen gaslamps out of the street wouldn't have lighted the entry too well, so you may suppose that it was pretty dark with Scrooge's dip.

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for that: darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that. Sittingroom, bedroom, lumberroom. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little saucepan of gruel (Scrooge has a cold in his head) upon the hob. Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressinggown, which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall. Lumberroom as usual. Old fireguard, old shoes, two fishbaskets, washingstand on three legs, and a poker.

Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; doublelocked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his cravat; put on his dressinggown and slippers, and his nightcap; and sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the least sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was an old one, built by some Dutch merchant long ago, and paved all round with quaint Dutch tiles, designed to illustrate the Scriptures. There were Cains and Abels, Pharaoh's daughters, Queens of Sheba, Angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds like featherbeds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea in butterboats, hundreds of figures to attract his thoughts; and yet that face of Marley, seven years dead, came like the ancient Prophet's rod, and swallowed up the whole. If each smooth tile had been a blank at first, with power to shape some picture on its surface from the disjointed fragments of his thoughts, there would have been a copy of old Marley's head on every one.

STUDYGUIDE

Appendix A: Continued

"Humbug!" said Scrooge; and walked across the room.

After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room, and communicated for some purpose now forgotten with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

This might have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased as they had begun, together. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the winemerchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

The cellardoor flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

"It's humbug still!" said Scrooge. "I won't believe it."

His colour changed though, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried, "I know him! Marley's Ghost!" and fell again.

The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights, and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coatskirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cashboxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its deathcold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which wrapper he had not observed before; he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

"How now!" said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. "What do you want with me?"

"Much!" Marley's voice, no doubt about it.

Who are you?"

"Ask me who I was."

"Who were you then?" said Scrooge, raising his voice. "You're particular, for a shade." He was going to say "to a shade," but substituted this, as more appropriate.

"In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley."

"Can you can you sit down?" asked Scrooge, looking doubtfully at him.

"I can."

"Do it, then."

Scrooge asked the question, because he didn't know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a chair; and felt that in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarrassing explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it.

"You don't believe in me," observed the Ghost.

"I don't," said Scrooge.

"What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?"

"I don't know," said Scrooge.

"Why do you doubt your senses?"

"Because," said Scrooge, "a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!"

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by any means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre's voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.

To sit, staring at those fixed, glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt, the very deuce with him.

There was something very awful, too, in the spectre's being provided with an infernal atmosphere of its own. Scrooge could not feel it himself, but this was clearly the case; for though the Ghost sat perfectly motionless, its hair, and skirts, and tassels, were still agitated as by the hot vapour from an oven.

STUDYGUIDE

Appendix A: Continued

"You see this toothpick?" said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and wishing, though it were only for a second, to divert the vision's stony gaze from himself.

"I do," replied the Ghost.

"You are not looking at it," said Scrooge.

"But I see it," said the Ghost, "notwithstanding."

"Well!" returned Scrooge, "I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you; humbug!"

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear indoors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast!

Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.

"Mercy!" he said. "Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?"

"Man of the worldly mind!" replied the Ghost, "do you believe in me or not?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"

"It is required of every man," the Ghost returned, "that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world—oh, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!" Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain, and wrung its shadowy hands.

"You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why?"

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?" Scrooge trembled more and more.

"Or would you know," pursued the Ghost, "the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!"

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

"Jacob," he said, imploringly. "Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob."

"I have none to give," the Ghost replied. "It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more, is all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our countinghouse—mark me!—in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our moneychanging hole; and weary journeys lie before me!"

It was a habit with Scrooge, whenever he became thoughtful, to put his hands in his breeches pockets. Pondering on what the Ghost had said, he did so now, but without lifting up his eyes, or getting off his knees.

"You must have been very slow about it, Jacob," Scrooge observed, in a businesslike manner, though with humility and deference.

"Slow!" the Ghost repeated.

"Seven years dead," mused Scrooge. "And travelling all the time?"

"The whole time," said the Ghost. "No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse."

"You travel fast?" said Scrooge.

"On the wings of the wind," replied the Ghost.

"You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years," said Scrooge.

The Ghost, on hearing this, set up another cry, and clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.

"Oh! captive, bound, and doubleironed," 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.

STUDYGUIDE

Appendix A: Continued

"At this time of the rolling year," the spectre said, "I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellowbeings 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!"

"How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day." It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"That is no light part of my penance," pursued the Ghost. "I am here tonight to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer."

"You were always a good friend to me," said Scrooge. "Thank'ee!"

"You will be haunted," resumed the Ghost, "by Three Spirits."

Scrooge's countenance fell almost as low as the Ghost's had done.

"Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?" he demanded, in a faltering voice.

"It is."

"I - I think I'd rather not," said Scrooge.

"Without their visits," said the Ghost, "you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls One."

"Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?" hinted Scrooge.

"Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us."

When it had said these words, the spectre took its wrapper from the table, and bound it round its head, as before. Scrooge knew this, by the smart sound its teeth made, when the jaws were brought together by the bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect attitude, with its chain wound over and about its arm. The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took, the window raised itself a little, so that when the spectre reached it, it was wide open.

It beckoned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When they were within two paces of each other, Marley's Ghost held up its hand, warning him to come no nearer. Scrooge stopped.

Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand, he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and selfaccusatory. The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He looked out.

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a doorstep. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.

Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together; and the night became as it had been when he walked home.

Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was doublelocked, as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say "Humbug!" but stopped at the first syllable.

And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose; went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

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Further Resources and Works Consulted

Printed Resources

Hearn, Michael Patrick. Introduction and Notes. *The Annotated Christmas Carol: A Christmas Carol*. By Charles Dickens. New York: Clarkson N. Potter Inc./Publisher, 1976.

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Web Resources(Accessed October 2010)

[Charles Dickens' A CHRISTMAS CAROL](#)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL by Charles Dickens - The complete text from 1843

[Literature.org - The Online Literature Library](#)

Full text version of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

David Perdue's Charles Dickens Page

[David Perdue's Charles Dickens Page - A Christmas Carol](#)

Dedicated to Bringing the Genius of Dickens to a New Generation of Readers

[David Perdue's Charles Dickens Page - A Christmas Carol Reading Text](#)

Dedicated to Bringing the Genius of Dickens to a New Generation of Readers

[David Perdue's Charles Dickens Page - Dickens and Christmas](#)

Dedicated to Bringing the Genius of Dickens to a New Generation of Readers

[David Perdue's - Bibliography and Notes](#)

Dedicated to Bringing the Genius of Dickens to a New Generation of Readers

[David Perdue's Charles Dickens Page - Site Awards and Honors](#)

Dedicated to Bringing the Genius of Dickens to a New Generation of Readers

[A Gallery of John Leech's Illustrations for Dickens's A Christmas Carol](#)

[Masterpiece Theatre | Oliver Twist | A Dickens Timeline](#)

The Victorian Web <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/dickensbio2.html>

[Charles Dickens List | Art & Literature | Pub Quiz Help](#)

A list of publications written by Charles Dickens in chronological order

[The Charles Dickens Museum | Home](#)

The Charles Dickens Museum in London is the world's most important collection of material relating to the great Victorian novelist and social commentator. The only surviving London home of Dickens (from 1837 until 1839) was opened as a Museum in 1925.

[The Charles Dickens Museum - Virtual Tour](#)

[Charles Dickens: An Overview](#)

[File:Charles Dickens by Daniel Maclise.jpg - Wikimedia Commons](#)

[London Tours Treasure Hunt.](#)

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Your London treasure hunt continues to a location from Charles Dickens A Christmas Carol and to the Sherlock Holmes Pub.

About Victorian Christmas

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/victorianchristmas/history.shtml>

About Wassail

<http://www.whychristmas.com/customs/wassailing.shtm>

About workhouses

<http://studymore.org.uk/ssh1840s.htm> <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/1834poorlaw/>

[2010 NORFOLK JAYCEES/SALVATION ARMY CHRISTMAS SHOPPING TOUR: Norfolk Jaycees Opportunity - VolunteerMatch](#)

Each year, the Norfolk Jaycees take 20 less fortunate children (selected by the Salvation Army) on a Christmas shopping spree for their families. According to the Salvation Army, many of these.

[Host Your Own Food and Fund Drive for the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia](#)

The Foodbank promotes food recovery; acquires and distributes food, clothing and related products; provides community leadership and education on issues of hunger and poverty throughout the Southeastern Virginia region.

[Samaritan's Purse | Operation Christmas Child | Pack a Shoe Box](#)

[The union workhouse, a history & resource](#)

Union poor law workhouse in England in 19th century

[The National Archives | DocumentsOnline | Poor Law Union and Workhouse records](#)

Poor Law Union and Workhouse records available from The National Archives' "DocumentsOnline" service

[Wages and Cost of Living in the Victorian Era](#)

[Victorian England](#)

[The Holly And The Ivy](#)

[God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen - Notes](#)

[God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen - Version 1](#)

[The Project Gutenberg eBook of My Book of Indoor Games, by Clarence Squareman](#)

Detailed Timelines for Dickens' Life

Charles Dickens Museum <http://dickensmuseum.com/vtour/groundfloor/fronthallway/dickenslife.php>

PBS Masterpiece Theatre Online

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/olivertwist/dickens_timeline_text.html

The Victorian Web <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/dickensbio2.html>

Fezziwig's Vocabulary Mix Up

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

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