

written by CHARLES DICKENS
adapted by PATRICK MULLINS



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 23, 2018
at the historic WELLS THEATRE



CELEBRATING 40 SEASONS

VIRGINIA
STAGE
COMPANY
— AT THE —
WELLS THEATRE

SEASON SPONSORS



RADIO PARTNER



PUBLIC MEDIA PARTNER



TV PARTNER

get your tickets online at

VASTAGE.ORG

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM VSC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Our Teaching Philosophy

We've witnessed firsthand what the creative process nurtures in children, teens and all lifelong learners:

- excitement, enthusiasm, and openness to explore their own creativity
- critical-thinking and problem solving skills
- enthusiasm for teamwork
- empathy and support toward peers
- strength in their ability to listen and express themselves effectively
- healthy self-image and awareness

Because it has such positive and far-reaching outcomes for our students, VSC's education model emphasizes process over product. We believe that students will emerge from their time with VSC's educational programs with skills that will serve them well in all areas of life.

Benefits for Students

Students enrolled in VSC's education programs will:

- develop leadership qualities
- enhance communication skills
- develop an appreciation for the creative process
- learn to take ownership of their own ideas and concepts
- increase their knowledge of theatre terms
- develop greater confidence through the creative play experience
- develop a spirit of curiosity
- learn to develop and appreciate the value of kindness
- develop or expand spatial awareness
- use dramatic prompts to create imaginative movement
- cooperate with others in group sessions
- learn how to use their voice safely and effectively
- learn how to use their bodies effectively with character development
- work with peers to write scripts
- explore characters and settings
- rehearse in a positive, supportive environment
- practice respectful critique of others' work
- put it all together to create original theatre for others.

Virginia Stage Company's production adheres to the following Virginia's English Standards of Learning requirements for grades 5-12:

Reading and Writing – 5.4, 5.5., 5.7, 5.8, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.8, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.8, 8.5, 8.5, 8.7, 8.8, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7

Theatre Arts – 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.20, 6.21, 6.23, 6.24, 6.25, 7.17, 7.18, 7.19, 7.20, 7.21, 7.22, 7.23, 8.15, 8.16, 7.17, 8.18, 8.19, 8.20, 8.21, 8.22, 8.23, 8.24, 8.25

Introduction to Theatre – TI. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

Theatre Arts II Dramatic Literature and Theatre History – TII. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS GUIDE

Fun Facts

Quotes



Vocabulary Building Block terms and definitions; terms used in context will be **bolded**.



Info about supplemental video content



Info about online supplemental and reference material

CONTENTS

4 Theatre Etiquette	
4	Activity
5 About the Author: Charles Dickens	
5	Dickens Timeline
6 About the Author: Dickens and Theater	
7 About the Author: Dickens Christmas Stories	
7	Activity
7	Discussion
8 About the Author: Dickens and Language	
8	Activities
8	Vocabulary
9 About the Times: The Victorian Age	
9	Vocabulary
10 About the Times: Victorian London	
11 About the Times: The Victorian Poor	
12	Discussion
13 About the Times: Money in the Victorian Age	
13	Activity
14 About the Times: A Victorian Christmas	
16	Activities
16	Discussion
17 About the Times: Carol Activity	
18 About the Story: A Christmas Carol	
19	Activity
19	Discussion
19	Synopsis
20	Vocabulary
21 About the Story: An Illustrated Carol	
22	Activities
23 About the Play: Adapting a Classic	
23	Activity
23	Post-Performance Discussion
24 About the Play: Scenic Design	
25 About the Play: Costume Design	
26 About the Play: Costume Design Activity	
26	Jacob Marley
27	Ghost of Christmas Past
28	Ghost of Christmas Present
29	Ghost of Christmas Future
30 About the Play: Word Search Activity	
31 A Christmas Carol Coloring Page	
32 A Christmas Carol Coloring Page	
33 A Christmas Carol 2018 at Virginia Stage Company	
34 Resources and Further Reading	

Content

Researched & Written by

Leigh Brooks

Lauren Hobbs Sexton, PhD.

Kat Martin

Edited and Updated by

Domenick Danza

Crystal Tuxhorn

Layout by

Crystal Tuxhorn

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

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 at 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 by law 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.

ACTIVITY

Talk to your students about the differences between watching television or a movie and coming to a live theatrical performance.



Virginia Stage Company's 2017 production of A Christmas Carol

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Charles Dickens

CHRONOLOGY OF DICKENS' LIFE & 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** Marries Catherine Hogarth and works as a Reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*, sketches published, collected as *Sketches by Boz*; *Pickwick Papers* appears monthly
- 1839** Moves 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
- 1842** Dickens and his wife embark on a 5-month lecture tour in America
- 1843** *A Christmas Carol* written and published in six weeks
- 1844** Lived in Italy; wrote *The Chimes*
- 1845** Planning, editing and contributing to *Daily News*; wrote *The Cricket on the Hearth*
- 1846** Living in Switzerland; *Dombrey and Son* published monthly
- 1847** Living in Paris; wrote *The Battle of Life*
- 1848** Wrote *The Haunted Man*
- 1849** *David Copperfield* published monthly
- 1850** Edits and contributes to *Household Words*
- 1851** Moves 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** Suffers a physical breakdown while on provincial reading tour
- 1870** *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* published; Dickens died on June 9 of a stroke

Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, and spent the first nine years of his life living in the coastal regions of Kent, in southeast England. Dickens' father, John, was a clerk in the Navy. That job allowed Charles to attend a few years of private school, where he became a voracious reader.

When Dickens was nine, his family moved to Camden Town London. Though John Dickens was a kind and likable man, he was financially irresponsible, piling up tremendous debts throughout his life. When Charles was twelve, his father was arrested and set to debtors' prison. Dickens' mother and his youngest siblings moved into prison with their father (as was common at the time) but arranged for Charles to board with a family friend outside the prison, working with the other child laborers putting labels on pots at a boot-blackening factory. The months Charles spent apart from his family were severely traumatic. He viewed his job as a miserable trap—he considered himself too good for it, spurring the contempt of his worker-companions. Looking back on the experience, Dickens saw it as the moment he said goodbye to his youthful innocence, stating that he wondered “how [he] could be so easily cast away at such a young age.”

After coming into an inheritance from his mother, John Dickens paid his debts and was released from prison, allowing Charles to resume his schooling. Charles began attending Wellington House Academy in North London, where he was an excellent student and began to nurture an interest in theater. In 1827, he had to drop out of school and work as a law clerk to contribute to his family's income before serving as a court reporter. As it turned out, the jobs became an early launching point for his writing career.

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*, eventually becoming one of the most popular English novelists of his time.

One factor contributing to Dickens' meteoric rise in popularity was the way in which he and his publishers, Chapman and Hall, chose to publish his books. All of Dickens' major novels were published serially, in monthly (or weekly) installments. A full length novel was out of the price range of most of his readers (a novel cost 31 shillings in 1836, average worker earned 6 to 20 shillings per week) but a monthly installment, 32 pages with 2 illustrations and advertisements, could be sold for a shilling. In total, Dickens would have almost as many children as he had novels – 10 children and 17 novels!

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.

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.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Dickens and Theater



Dickens as Captain Bodadill, a boastful but cowardly soldier, in a production of Every Man in His Humour by Ben Jonson. Dickens acted the part in amateur productions he organized in 1845, 1847, 1848, and 1850.

Most people readily classify Dickens as a novelist, a few more add journalist, and fewer still would consider him a playwright. But the theater was Dickens' first love. He once wrote, "I was an actor and a speaker as a baby." With no television to watch or radio to listen to, Dickens greatly enjoyed the family nights of amateur theatrical productions. As a schoolboy he formed a small dramatic company of his friends.

At the age of twenty, he applied for and was granted an audition at one of the leading theaters in London, the Covent Garden theater. Fortunately for his future literary fans, he was not able to make his audition having suddenly come down with a bad cold, combined with a toothache. He never applied again.

However, Dickens did not forget his love for the theater. Though a committed journalist, he dabbled in theater whenever he had an opportunity. At the age of 24, while on his

honeymoon, he wrote his first play as entertainment for his bride. *The Strange Gentleman* was a farce that eventually went on to be performed at the St. James Theatre for a long run, despite mixed reviews. His next theatrical venture was an operetta called *The Village Coquettes* for which he wrote the book, lyrics and music.

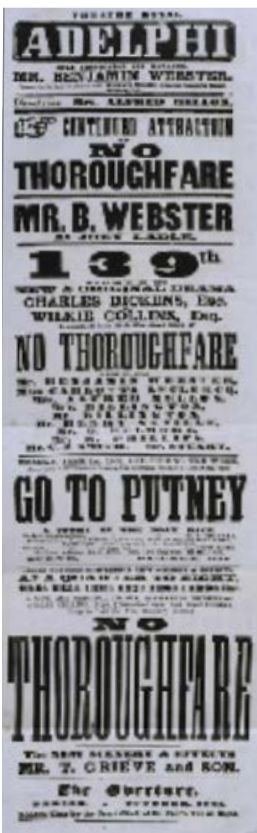
After years away from the stage, Dickens agreed to direct and perform in three plays while in Montreal, Canada in 1842. The success of the Montreal plays provided the spark that rekindled Dickens' love of the footlights. Back home in London Dickens gathered friends to perform Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* for charity, which was a huge success.

Throughout his career as a novelist, Dickens continued to write plays, direct and act in his spare time. While most famous for staged readings of his own work (primarily *A Christmas Carol*), Dickens wrote and directed three other farces, *A Roland for an Oliver*, *A Good Night's Rest*, and *Deaf as a Post*, which received high-quality amateur productions.

Beginning in 1850 Dickens' amateur acting troupe performed Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Not so Bad as We Seem* for the benefit of the Guild of Literature and Art, founded by Lytton and Dickens to help support indigent and deserving artists and writers. In London they performed before Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, afterwards taking the show on the road in the north of England, where the troupe performed at the newly built Lyceum Theatre in Sunderland on August 28, 1852 under anxiety that the entire new building would collapse under the cheers of the crowd (Perdue, "Dickens on Stage").

These amateur theatricals continued throughout the middle years of Dickens' career as a world famous author. He worked tirelessly as actor and stage manager and, as his friend John Forster remarked, often adjusted scenes, assisted carpenters, invented costumes, devised playbills and generally oversaw the entire production of the performances. This close association with the theater had an important impact on Dickens the author. Theatrical characters abound in the novels and the stories are told in such a visual way that they easily lent themselves first to illustrations in the novels, stage dramatizations, and finally to film.

Later in his career Dickens' theatrical training contributed to the success of public readings of his works.



Program announcing Dickens' play No Thoroughfare, considered his best play.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Dickens' Christmas Stories



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. John Winterich observed in his preface to *Five Christmas Novels*:

In writing his Christmas books, Dickens never had to worry about deadlines. The sharp sword of serialization did not dangle over his head. He knew exactly what he wanted to say.....He took the work in stride; it was not work, but play. He wrote with immense verve and gusto, and communicated these qualities to his friends.

While these qualities are apparent in all of the Christmas books, it was *A Christmas Carol*, his first, that became Dickens' most well known work.

But *A Christmas Carol* was not Dickens' first story about the holiday season. In *Sketches by Boz*, he wrote a short essay entitled "A Christmas Dinner," which described a family's Christmas party lled 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.

Holiday stories have become a time-honored tradition that still 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, Michael Patrick. *Introduction and Notes. The Annotated Christmas Carol: A Christmas Carol.* By Charles Dickens. New York: Clarkson N. Potter Inc./Publisher, 1976.

ACTIVITY

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



Daniel Maclise (1843)
Full-page illustration for Dickens's
The Cricket on the Hearth

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Dickens and Language



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

"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers."

assonance: 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: a figure of speech in which a person not present or a personified nonhuman object is spoken to.

e.g. "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star"

simile: a comparison using like or as.

e.g. "as good as gold."

hypocritical: behaving in a way that suggests one has higher standards or more noble beliefs than is the case.

quixotic: exceedingly idealistic; unrealistic and impractical.

vapid: offering nothing that is stimulating or challenging.

Dickensian /dr'kɛnzɪən/ ● **adj.** reminiscent of the novels of Charles Dickens, especially in terms of the poverty and squalor that they portray.

LITERARY TOOLBOX

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

assonance

apostrophe

simile

internal rhyme

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.

CHARACTERS & CHARACTERIZATION

His characters were often so memorable that they took on a life of their own outside his books. "Gamp" became a slang expression for an umbrella from the character Mrs Gamp, and "Pickwickian", "Pecksniffian", and "Gradgrind" all entered dictionaries due to Dickens's original portraits of such characters who were, respectively, **quixotic**, **hypocritical**, and **vapidly** factual.

Dickens worked intensively on developing arresting names for his characters that would reverberate with associations for his readers...To cite one of numerous examples, the name Mr. Murdstone in *David Copperfield* conjures up twin allusions to "murder" and stony coldness.

wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens

ACTIVITY

As a group, come up with varied characters for a short story. Describe their particular characteristics and come up with names that reflect their personalities.

ACTIVITIES

Write a short narrative about growing up in your family. What events in your childhood affected you the most? What were the best times and the worst times? Why?

Think about how your childhood shaped who you are today: what you believe, how you behave, what kind of activities you enjoy, etc. How has your real life influenced the things you say, create and do on a daily basis? What about Charles Dickens? Did his childhood influence his writing and how he acted as an adult? As you read or watch *A Christmas Carol*, think about which events in Dickens' life may have affected how he created the characters and story.

ABOUT THE TIMES *The Victorian Age*



Queen Victoria (1882) Photo by Alexander Bassa The National Portrait Gallery History of the Kings and Queens of England by David Williamson

During the Victorian Era (1830-1901) England was the world's superpower. During Queen Victoria's reign England enjoyed a long period of peace known as the Pax Britannica. The population of London more than doubled as the rural poor moved into cities. Although there was a growing disparity between classes within England, the growth of industry ensured economic dominance. During this time the belief in the cultural and "natural" superiority of all things British led to new fields of pseudo science as well and an imperial imperative.

Victorian England was a time of intense social **stratification** as society shifted from an **agrarian** economy of the countryside to an industrialized economy of a slum-filled city. Upper class homes existed literally side by side with slum houses that were occupied by several struggling poor families. The wealthy, like Scrooge, lived and interacted with the impoverished on a daily basis (at times literally stepping over beggars in the street). However, the opinion that, "God has put people in their place in life and this must not be interfered with" justified the blissful ignorance of the wealthy to the condition of the poor.

Victorian history at a glance:

- The Victorian era was a period of dramatic change that brought England to its highest point of development as a world power.
- The early Victorian period (1830–48) saw the opening of Britain's first railway and its first Reform Parliament, but it was also a time of economic distress.
- Although the mid-Victorian period (1848–70) was not free of harassing problems, it was a time of prosperity, optimism, and stability.
- At the start of the Victorian age, few children attended school. Almost all children from lower class families had to work instead of going to school because. Rich, upper class families could afford to pay for schools for their male children, but some schools did give out free places to lower class boys. At the beginning of the Victorian age, girls from poor families didn't go to school, and girls from wealthy families were taught in their homes by governesses or went to boarding school. Girls and boys were taught very differently in school; boys were taught technology, woodworking, mathematics, and technical drawing because they were believed to be the more masculine subjects. Girls were taught things like cooking, sewing, drawing and music because they symbolized femininity.



Regent Street, Oxford Circus. [London, England] by Valentine Blanchard, approx. 1868 [source: The J. Paul Getty Museum Open Content Program, getty.edu]

- In the later period (1870–1901) the costs of Empire became increasingly apparent, and England was confronted with growing threats to its military and economic preeminence.
- At home on English soil the growth of cities and factory based industry created an environment where culture struggled to catch up to technological advancement. The English middle class began to slowly grow as the gap between the wealthy and the masses grew. During Victorian times cities crammed together the very poor and the very wealthy into a geographically small and polluted space.
- The streets of Victorian London were horribly crowded with horses pulling omnibuses, cabs, carriages, and carts. Agriculture in rural England had gone down since the 1800s and many of the farmers left and came to the city. In a twelve-hour day, between the hours of 9 am and 9 pm, an average of 125,859 vehicles passed through the streets. In the 1830s London Bridge was finished by a man named John Rennie, making it possible for people to cross over the Thames River. The steam engine became a popular mode of transportation and by the 1860s the people of England were riding trains everywhere.

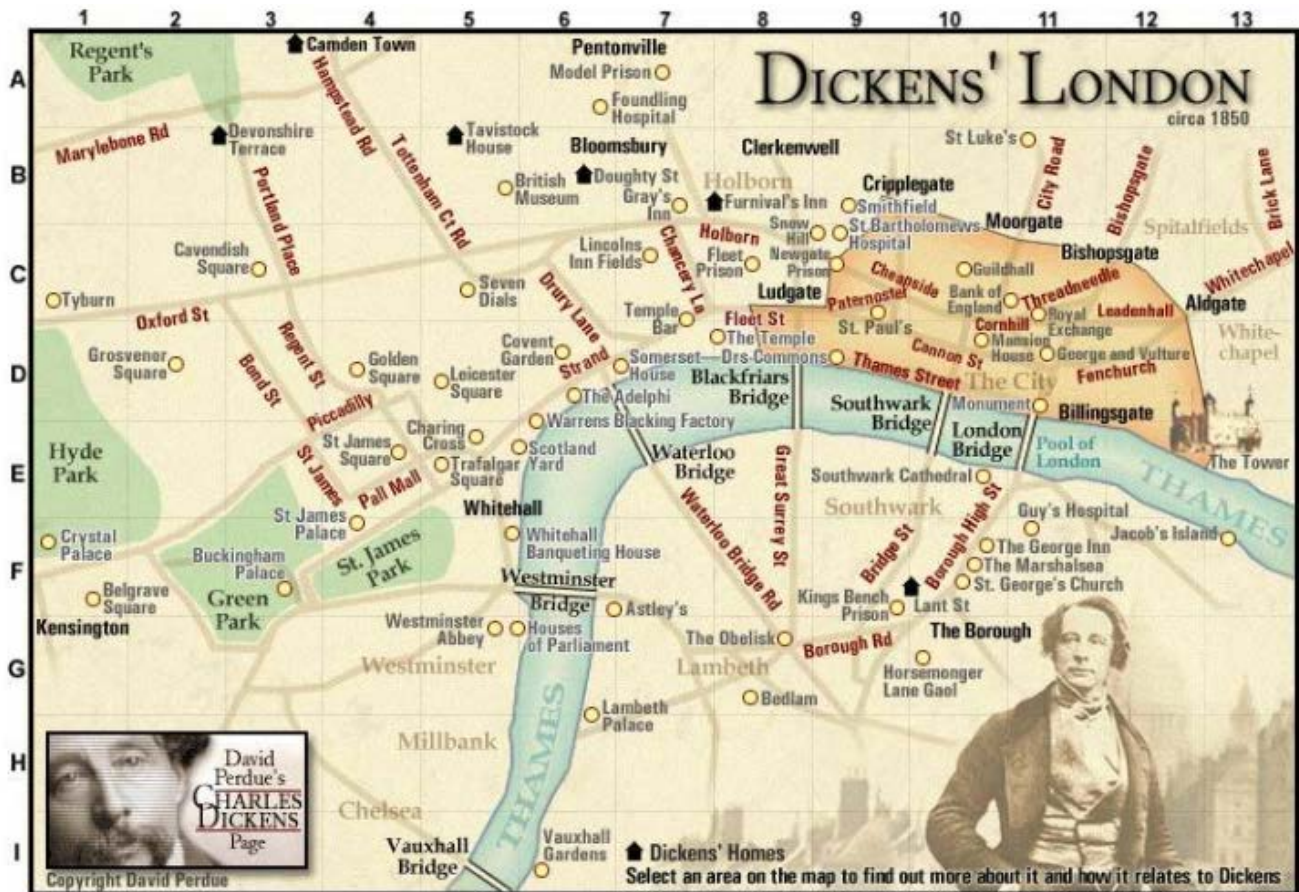


stratification: the arrangement or classification of something into different groups.

agrarian: relating to a social system upon which agriculture is the sustaining foundation.

squalor: a state of being extremely dirty as a result of poverty or neglect.

ABOUT THE TIMES Victorian London



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.

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



<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/photographs-of-old-london>

ABOUT THE TIMES *The Victorian Poor*

POVERTY AND CHILD LABOR IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

Poverty was an everyday part of many lives in Victorian London. Due to bad harvests, bank crisis, layoff, and high food prices, the 1840s were known as the "Hungry Forties". With the growing level of taxes and gap between the classes growing wider every day, 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!



Poor Victorian Family.

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.

THE UNION WORKHOUSE

If you were poverty-stricken, or an unwanted orphan, or an impoverished widow, if you were too old to work, or if you were a thief or sick, 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 harsh 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.



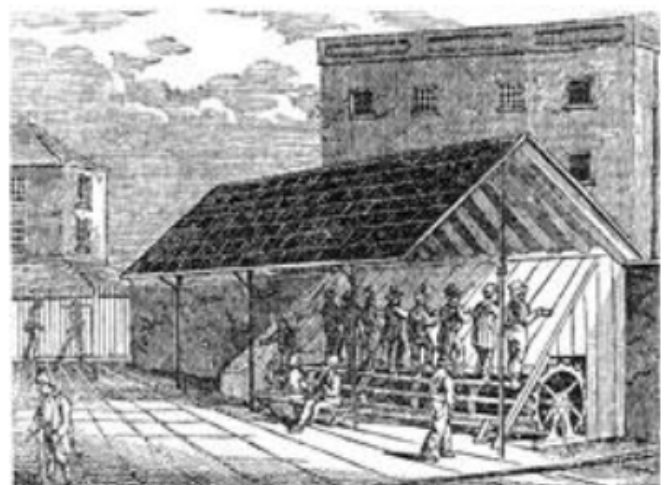
Source: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/workhouse.asp>

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.

(Source: Hearn, *Annotated Christmas Carol*. 65)

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 1840's 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.



ABOUT THE TIMES *The Victorian Poor*



The Cratchit Family in Virginia Stage Company's 2017 production of *A Christmas Carol*

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 VSC's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*?

IN THE PLAY: Characters of Ignorance and Want appear 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 of Christmas Present'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 his London that inspired Dickens to write *A Christmas Carol*. Through *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens offers a solution to the social condition, "a change of heart".



Virginia Stage Company's 2017 production of *A Christmas Carol*



Virginia Stage Company's 2007 production of *A Christmas Carol*

ABOUT THE TIMES Money in the Victorian Age

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, 4 pounds, eight shillings and fourpence 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 1/4 of a penny
- a **halfpenny** (hay-p'ny) was 1/2 of a penny
- three farthings was 3/4 of a penny



Monetary References in A Christmas Carol

Half a crown – A crown was a silver coin used in the early 19th century England, equal to 5 shillings, stamped with a crown; Half Crown = 2s 6d

Shilling – English coin equal to 12 pence

Farthing – 1/4 of a penny

15 shillings a week – This was the common wage of clerical workers at the time. This wage 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 shilling. It cost Cratchit a full week's wages to buy the ingredients for his family's Christmas Feast.

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

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!

ABOUT THE TIMES *A Victorian Christmas*

It is hard to imagine, but at the beginning of the 19th century Christmas in England was not a big deal. Believe it or not, it was not recognized as a national Holiday and would pale in comparison to the extravaganza we expect from Christmas today. In the 1840s, Dickens was writing during a decline in Old Christmas traditions. The Industrial Revolution allowed workers little time for the celebration of Christmas. The publication of Dickens' novella, *A Christmas Carol*, is often credited with giving rise to the warm communal feeling we now call the "Holiday Spirit" and he is even often credited with single-handedly reviving Christmas Holiday customs. The story of Ebenezer Scrooge and his festive redemption has become a central pillar of what Christmas means in American culture.

In Dickens' day, the holiday season ran for twelve days, from Christmas Day to Epiphany, January 6. 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 families and communities where 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."

EXAMPLES OF TRADITIONS

DECKING THE HALLS

Countryside halls and homes were bedecked (draped) with holly, ivy, mistletoe, laurel and cypress; with great fires in the halls to keep the home warm in the winter. Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, brought the German custom of decorating the Christmas tree to England.

WASSAIL

In Victorian England, Christmas was a time when the bottom of the barrel became the top through the tradition of "Wassail". The definition of a wassail is drinking plentiful amounts of alcohol and enjoying oneself with others in a noisy, lively way and going from house to house singing Christmas Carols. Wassail is a mulled wine beverage that is sometimes known as "lamb's wool" because it is so frothy. Most of the wassailers were from middle and lower classes. So the romping through the streets quickly adopted the characteristics of a traditional day of misrule. During this time, the poor and the rich basically switched places temporarily and the poor were entitled to drink the master's beers and demand entrance into his large home and payment from him. Wassailing started as a private New Year's tradition before becoming a very raucous public party for Christmas. Originally, wassail was served in large decorated pewter bowls and carried from room to room as guest sung hymns. But that wasn't nearly rowdy enough. Around 1600, Carolers hit the streets offering sips from their silver bowls to people on the street in exchange for a small payment. The concept of going from house to house singing Christmas Carols originates from this time when people went door to door with the wassail bowl.

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!



The famous plum pudding that Mrs Cratchit makes to crown the Cratchit Christmas dinner was not made of plums, but raisins. The 'copper' used to boil the pudding was used the rest of the year for the Cratchit family laundry thus the Cratchit children help Tiny Tim to the wash-house 'that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper'.

ABOVE: Virginia Stage's 2011 *A Christmas Carol*



ABOVE: Wassailing circa 1840

ABOUT THE TIMES *A Victorian Christmas*

Probably the most widely sung Christmas Song of Dickens' era was "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen." It is this song that the caroler in 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 keyhole 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 even several known melodies!

HOLIDAY PARTIES

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" 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 foods and drinks, like spiced cider and mincepies were also a staple of Christmas parties (as they are today).



PARLOR GAMES

We, along with Scrooge and his ghostly guide, are able to experience Victorian party games at nephew Fred's Christmas celebration. Games like *Yes and No* (an earlier version of 20 Questions) or *How, When and Where* and *Blindman's Bluff*.

"Blindman's Bluff," a popular parlor game, not exclusive to the holiday season, is played when the contestant is blindfolded, buffeted around ("buff" = "push"), and made to catch a guest and guess whom he has caught. Once blindfolded, he is 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." The player accordingly spins round and then the fun commences. He tries to catch the other players, while they in their turn do their utmost to escape him all the time making little sounds to attract him. This goes on until one of the players is caught, and the blindfolded player 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.



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!

BOXING DAY

The day after Christmas is celebrated in many countries as Boxing Day or the Day of St. Stephen. On this day, gratuities, or Christmas Boxes, are given to those who have provided services during the year (postman, gardener, paperboy, grocer, etc.) In addition, in England, this public holiday was traditionally celebrated with fox hunts, shopping, and family visits.

The Christmas boxes were, in the earliest days, actual wooden or clay containers, often blessed by priests, which functioned similarly to a wishing well. Sailors on long voyages would deposit money in these boxes for good luck in a safe journey. The tradition of the Christmas box is more often associated with boxes used to collect change for the poor. Many schools, churches, and community organizations today use this tradition of Boxing Day and Christmas Boxes to gather small gifts to give to those less fortunate.

ABOUT THE TIMES *A Victorian Christmas*

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' Carol describes several spirits or ghosts, both friendly and frightening! The first Ghost that Scrooge sees is one of his former business partner, Jacob Marley.

According to tradition, it was the doorknocker on a house in Craven Street that gave Charles Dickens the idea for this memorable scene. 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, lined as it is with sturdy 18th century buildings, some of which still possess doorknockers.

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

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.

ACTIVITIES

Write a paragraph describing what holiday decorations are present in their homes (or favorite decorations at a city locale or mall).

Help to organize a Christmas Box drive in your class or school! Many organizations offer lists of gift ideas or needs for local families or children in other countries. Gather together gifts and put them in shoe boxes or other small boxes and wrap them (lid separately) in colorful holiday paper! (Links to local organizations can be found in the Resources section of this guide.

DISCUSSION

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?

Discuss with your students different views on holiday traditions, including views of different religions or cultures. Encourage your students to notice the similarities and differences between their traditions and those found in other cultures.



ABOUT THE TIMES Carol Activity

ACTIVITY

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

86

God rest you merry, Gentlemen. (I.)

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

$\text{♩} = 108$

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 108. The score is divided into three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "1. God rest you mer-ry, gentle-men, Let noth-ing you dis-may, For Je-sus Christ, our Sav-four, 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."

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.

O tidings, etc.

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.

O tidings, etc.

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."

O tidings, etc.

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.

O tidings, etc.

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.

O tidings, etc.

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.

O tidings, etc.

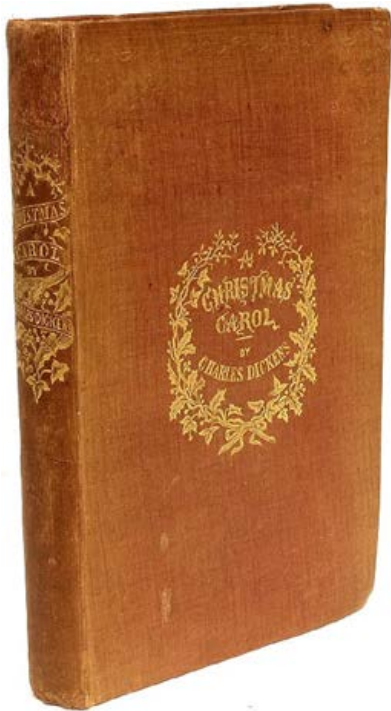
ABOUT THE STORY *A Christmas Carol*

Did you know that *A Christmas Carol* has never gone out of print since 1843?

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.

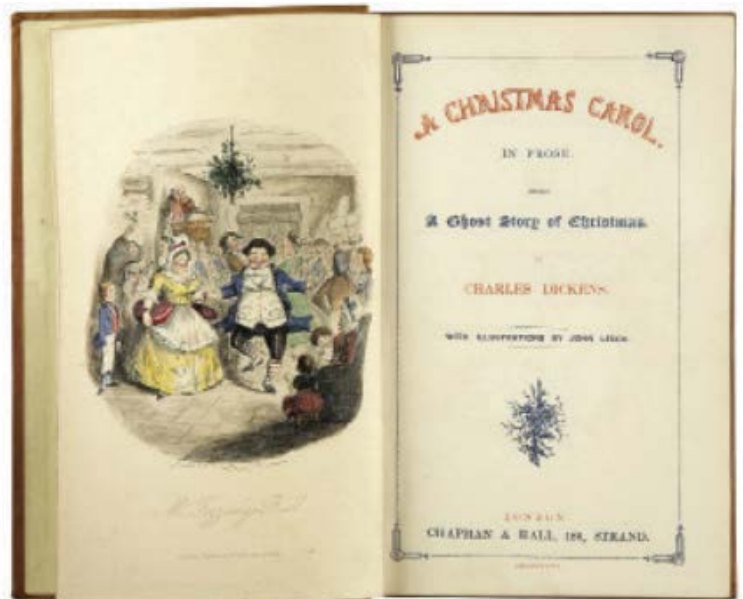
A Christmas Carol became an immediate success. Within the first week over 6,000 copies were sold and orders were set for 3,000 more. The book’s title was lettered in gold on the cover, the pages had gold edges, many of which were hand-colored. Dickens had made a literary comeback. *A Christmas Carol* was loved by critics as well as the public, but at five shillings a copy (one-third of Bob Cratchit’s weekly wages), many people could not afford it.

To people familiar with *A Christmas Carol* today, the most recognizable character is probably Scrooge. But when the story was first published, the readers identified most strongly with the Cratchit family. While the Cratchits might seem quaint and sentimental to modern readers, they were a familiar portrait of the lower middle-class families who were likely to read the book.

The high cost of the book led to many illegal copies of the story and subsequent financial trouble for Dickens. It was among these unsanctioned copies that the first theatrical production of *A Christmas Carol* was born. Despite these early financial difficulties, Dickens’ Christmas tale of human redemption has endured beyond even Dickens’ own vivid imagination. It was a favorite during Dickens’ public readings of his works late in his lifetime and is known today

primarily due to the dozens of film versions and dramatizations which continue to be produced every year.

A Christmas Carol takes the form of a relatively simplistic allegory—it is seldom considered one of Dickens’ important literary contributions, though it may be his most famous tale. It was written in 1843, with the intention of drawing readers’ attention to the plight of England’s poor. The ups and downs of Dickens’ life help to illuminate the author’s commitment to social progress. (Social criticism, a recurring theme in Dickens’ work, resounds most strongly in his novel *Hard Times*.) In the tale, Dickens stealthily combines a somewhat indirect description of hardships faced by the poor with a heart-rendering, sentimental celebration of the Christmas season. The calloused character of the apathetic penny-pinching Ebenezer Scrooge, who opens his heart after being confronted by three spirits, remains one of Dickens’ most widely recognized and popular creations. The novel’s emotional depth, brilliant narration and endearing characters, however, offer plenty of rewards for students, Cratchits, and Grinches alike.



ABOVE and RIGHT: photos of the original edition printings of *A Christmas Carol*.

ABOUT THE STORY *A Christmas Carol*



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

His original prompt book contains a significant number of handwritten words and phrases in the margins, intended to remind him of the tone he should take on when reading a particular passage. Audiences at these readings reported that the first few minutes of the performances were somewhat dull and unenergetic, but that Dickens transformed when the character of Scrooge began to speak. They were amazed at his ability to transform himself into each of his characters.

The Hartford Stage A Christmas Carol Study Guide

Charles Dickens at his last Public reading, 1870. Image Source: Leighton, George C.: "Illustrated London News Vol 56" (1870)

ACTIVITY

Prepare a class reading of a scene or segment from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

DISCUSSION

Dickens publishing plan for *A Christmas Carol* was revolutionary at the time. How do you think his life experiences played a part in his plan?

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!



Virginia Stage Company's 2017 production of A Christmas Carol

SYNOPSIS

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.

ABOUT THE STORY *A Christmas Carol*



VOCABULARY TERMS

- apparition:** a supernatural appearance of a person or thing; a ghost.
- apprentice:** one learning a trade under a skilled master; most young workers were apprenticed to learn a trade.
- aspiration:** a hope or ambition of achieving something.
- Bedlam:** an institution for the care of mentally ill people.
- benevolence:** the quality of being well meaning; kindness.
- brazier:** large flat pan for holding coals, used as a heater.
- cant:** hypocritical and sanctimonious talk.
- carol:** a song or ballad of joy celebrating the birth of Christ.
- celestial:** part of the heavens.
- charity:** generous actions or donations given to those in need; goodwill or kindly feelings towards those in need.
- counting house:** an office where business firms handle accounting.
- emphatically:** in a forceful way.
- faction:** relating or inclined to a state of faction.
- fettered:** restrain with chains or manacles, typically around the ankles.
- forbearance:** holding back from enforcing a right paltry insultingly small.
- ignorance:** unawareness, uneducated or unformed.
- incessant:** continuing without pause or interruption.
- ironmongery:** the manufacture of iron goods.
- liberality:** the quality of being generous or bountiful.
- malady:** an illness.
- melancholy:** gloomy, sad.
- mercy:** an act of kindness or compassion towards someone who has committed an offense.
- miser:** a stingy person, one who hoards money.
- mortal:** liable or subject to death.
- munificence:** the quality of showing unusual generosity phantoms: spirits or illusions.
- penance:** self-punishment inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong.
- quarrel:** a fight or argument.
- reconcile:** restore friendly relations between.
- 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).
- shroud:** a burial wrapping.
- spectre:** ghost or vision.
- supplication:** earnest begging.
- 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.
- tarry:** to delay or be late.
- undertaker:** a person who oversees the burial of the dead.
- vestige:** a small trace of something that is no longer here.
- withal:** as a further factor or consideration.



LEFT: Virginia Stage Company's 2017 production of *A Christmas Carol*



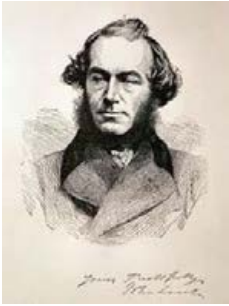
RIGHT: Virginia Stage Company's 2006 production of *A Christmas Carol*

ABOUT THE STORY *An Illustrated Carol*

Artist **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 are all 8 illustrations in color and black-and-white.



ABOUT THE STORY *An Illustrated Carol*



John Leech (1817-1864) was an English caricaturist notable for his contributions to *Punch* magazine and often credited for creating the first political cartoon.

ACTIVITIES

Consider the illustrations and answer the following questions:

What do these drawings provide to this story?

Compare and contrast these illustrations with the production of *A Christmas Carol* at the Wells Theatre – how are the images 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!

Each one of Leech's colored illustrations had a title and I have added titles for the other illustrations. Match the list of titles below to the illustrations on the previous page.

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



Virginia Stage Company's 2017 production of *A Christmas Carol*



Virginia Stage Company's 2006 production of *A Christmas Carol*

ABOUT THE PLAY *Adapting a Classic*

A theatrical adaptation is the playwright's interpretation of the existing story. In other words, the play you will be seeing may not follow Charles Dickens's story exactly. Rather, character names, places, chronology and other elements of the original story may be altered to fit the playwright's vision for the theatrical production. It has always remained the artistic license of the playwright, throughout the history of theater, to do so. There have been many adaptations of Dickens' classic story.

A Christmas Carol at Virginia Stage Company was adapted for the stage by Patrick Mullins. While at Virginia Stage, Patrick has also adapted *Oliver Twist*, *The Jungle Book*, Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* with Jake Hull. This is his fourth adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*, with music by Roy George.

Shortly after the novella's publishing in 1843, Dickens authorized a theatrical production that opened in London on February 5, 1844. Several unauthorized adaptations were developed during the same time, and by the end of February, 1844, there were eight competing productions of Dickens's tale playing in the city.

from The Hartford Stage A Christmas Carol Study guide



Visit the following link to see a detailed comparison chart of various film versions of *A Christmas Carol* that shows characters and ideas included in each adaptation.

<http://www.cedmagic.com/featured/christmas-carol/christmas-carol.html>

ACTIVITY

Select a scene from *A Christmas Carol* or another well known story. Make your own adaptation to share with the class.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Who are the main characters in the piece?
2. Where is the story set?
3. Describe the basic plot in a few sentences.
4. What are some themes of the original piece?
5. Which theme would you like to focus on?
6. What medium do you think tells the story the best and highlights your theme? Theatre? Comic? Poetry? Painting?

POST-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION

Discuss how the Virginia Stage Company's production of *A Christmas Carol* was different from the book. What things were similar?

Discuss scenery, costumes, lighting, and special effects as well as the acting. How do all these elements contribute to the production?

Talk about the transformation of Scrooge and what the students think made him change. Discuss their ability to change things about their own personality.

Take a look at the Comparison Chart linked to above. How does the Virginia Stage production measure up?



Scrooge or Marley's Ghost (1901),

British 1901 silent film directed by Walter R. Booth and produced by Robert W. Paul

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Scrooge_or_Marley%27s_Ghost_\(1901\)_-_yt.webm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Scrooge_or_Marley%27s_Ghost_(1901)_-_yt.webm)

ABOUT THE PLAY *Scenic Design*

Set design is an important part of almost any theatre production, as almost every show will utilize some sort of set, however minimal. Sets can be abstract, highly realistic, or anything in between, and they are a chance for a designer to showcase interesting concepts, new techniques, and unusual materials. The primary function of a set, of course, is to provide the audience with some context for the play, but it can also be a chance to create something stunning to draw in the audience.

Source: *Harvard Student Technical Theatre Handbook*, www.hcs.harvard.edu/~htag/handbook/

When designing a set, you must incorporate description given by the playwright, the director's vision, and the physical demands of the show.



Virginia Stage Company's 2013 production of *A Christmas Carol*, designed by Terry S. Flint



Virginia Stage Company's 2006 production of *A Christmas Carol*, designed by Anita Tripathi Easterling



Virginia Stage Company's 2017 production of *A Christmas Carol*, designed by Matthew Alar

The set designer has to come up with creative ways to achieve various supernatural effects within *A Christmas Carol*. Here are a few ways that Marley's ghostly face appeared on Scrooge's doorknocker:



Virginia Stage Company's 2004 production of *A Christmas Carol*, designed by Anita Tripathi Easterling



Virginia Stage Company's 2007 production of *A Christmas Carol*, designed by Anita Tripathi Easterling



Virginia Stage Company's 2015 production of *A Christmas Carol*, designed by Terry S. Flint

ABOUT THE PLAY **Costume Design**

ABOUT COSTUME DESIGN

Jeni Schaefer, VSC's Resident Costume Designer

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 convey the concept given to the Design team by the Director.

As a Costume Designer, I often look for things around me that inspire how a character feels, which can be anything from Art to Music, sounds I hear, or things I see walking down the street. After reading the script, I try to put a feeling or emotion to each character and then search for things that express that to me.

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 of *A Christmas Carol* is set in the mid 1800's in London so the main costume for each of the characters is designed within, what we call in costume land, 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 the ghosts that visit Scrooge. The Director gave his ideas about the overall look or feel he wanted them to have. With this look in mind, I went back to the descriptions that the author, Charles Dickens, gave in the story and added those elements to the costumes.

After coming up with all of these ideas, the challenge then becomes mixing everything together to create a piece of clothing that conveys all those things to an audience member through the use of fabrics, colors, and silhouette.

The Ghost of Christmas Past



2018

designed by Jeni Schaefer



2006

designed by Jeni Schaefer



2014

designed by Jeni Schaefer



2005

designed by Jeni Schaefer



2004

designed by Jeni Schaefer



2010

designed by Jeni Schaefer

The Ghost of Jacob Marley



2014

designed by Jeni Schaefer



2018

designed by Meg Murray



2005

designed by Jeni Schaefer



2015

designed by Jeni Schaefer

ABOUT THE PLAY Costume Design Activity

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 Sprits!

MARLEY'S GHOST

From Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*

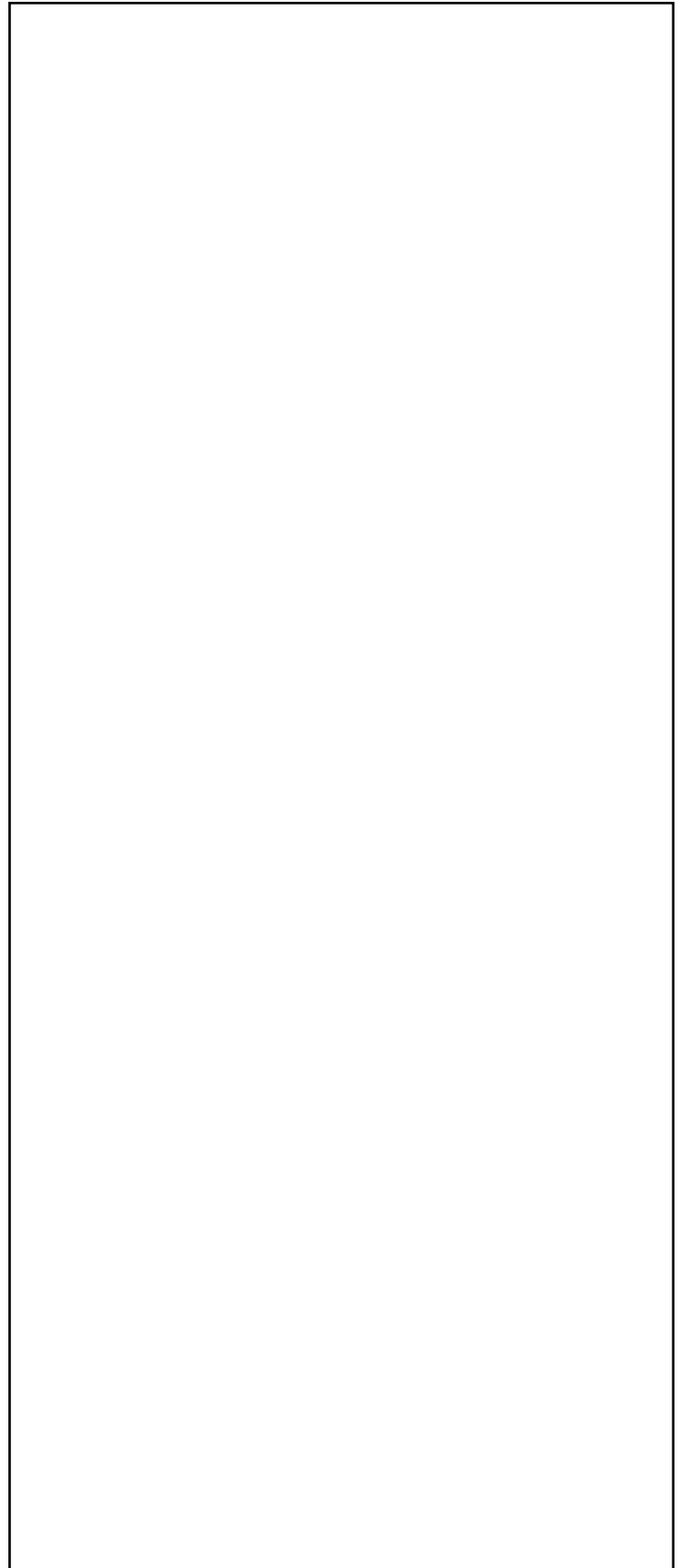
The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, 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 death-cold 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.

... for though the Ghost sat perfectly motionless, its hair, and skirts, and tassels, were still agitated as by the hot vapour from an oven.

... 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!



ABOUT THE PLAY *Costume Design Activity*

ACTIVITY

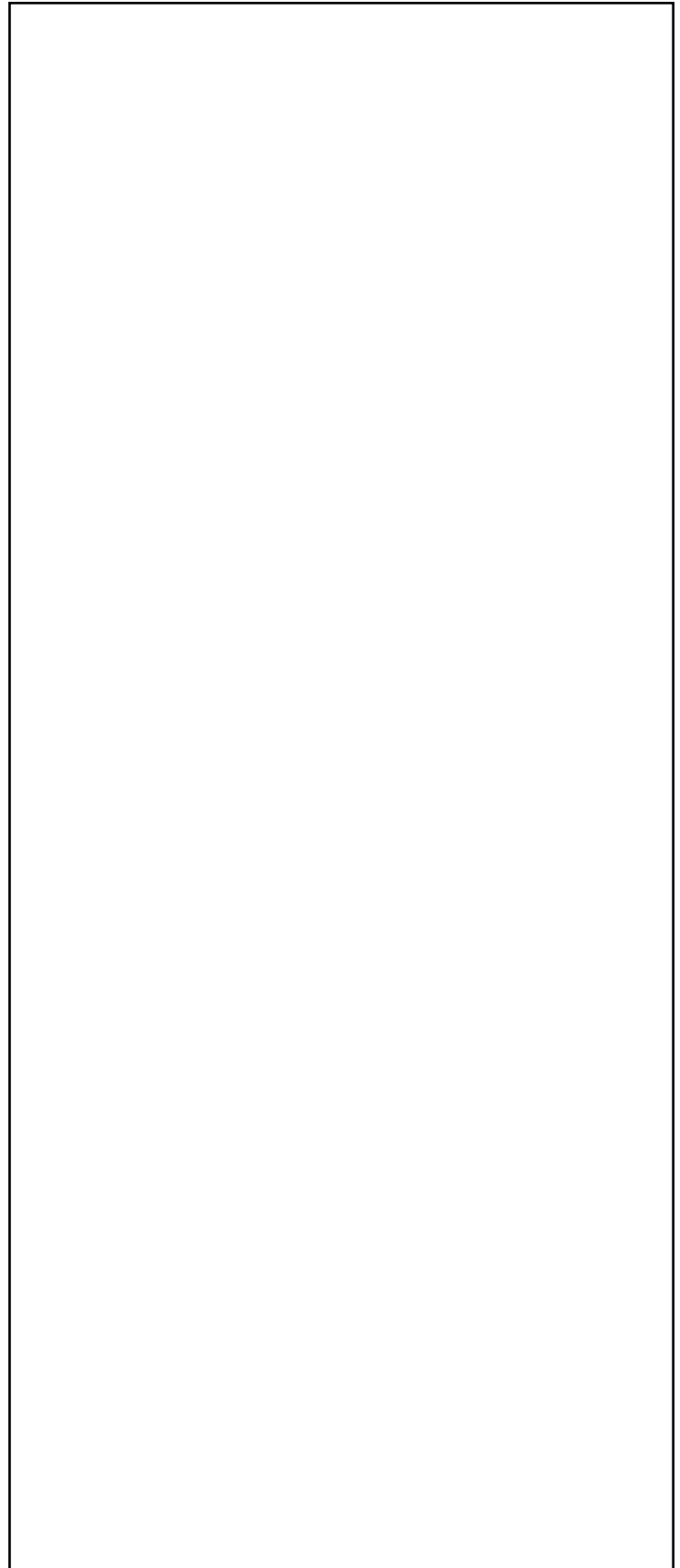
Charles Dickens used very descriptive language in his novel *A Christmas Carol* to give the reader a clear, vivid image of the three Spirits that visit Scrooge. Since this play is an adaptation of Dickens' story, designers can use these descriptions to aid in their designs. Use the descriptions below,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

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

From Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*

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.

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 one 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.



ABOUT THE PLAY *Costume Design Activity*

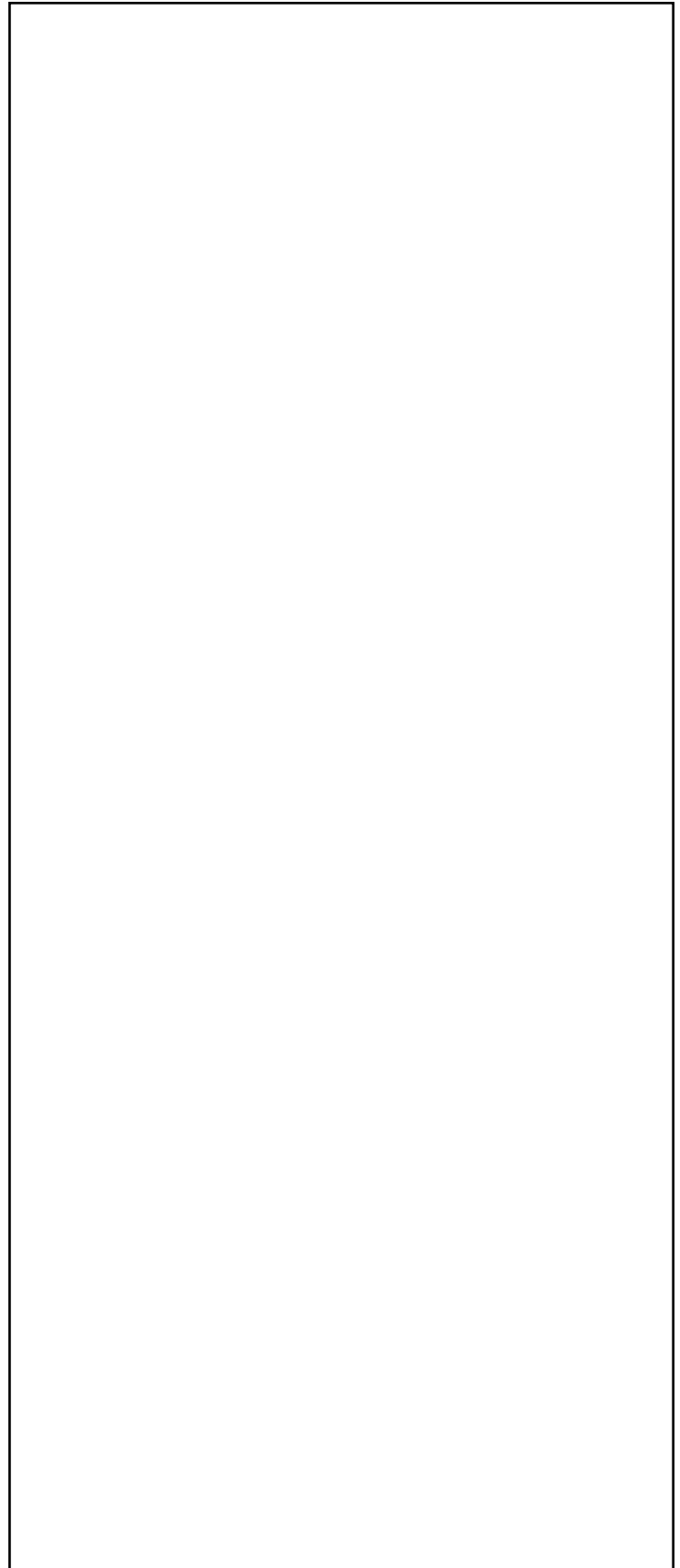
ACTIVITY

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 Sprits!

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, 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 chesnuts, 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.



ABOUT THE PLAY *Costume Design Activity*

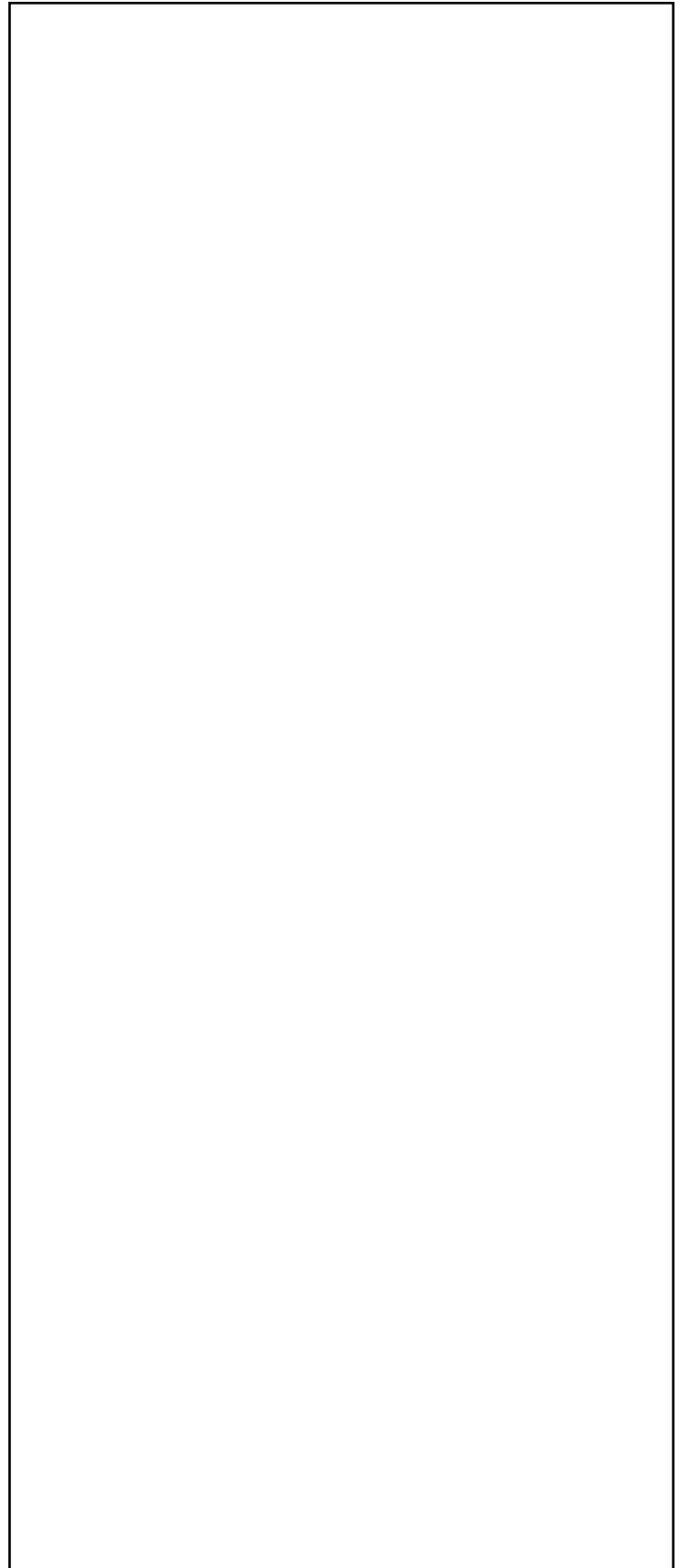
ACTIVITY

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 Sprits!

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.



ABOUT THE PLAY Word Search Activity

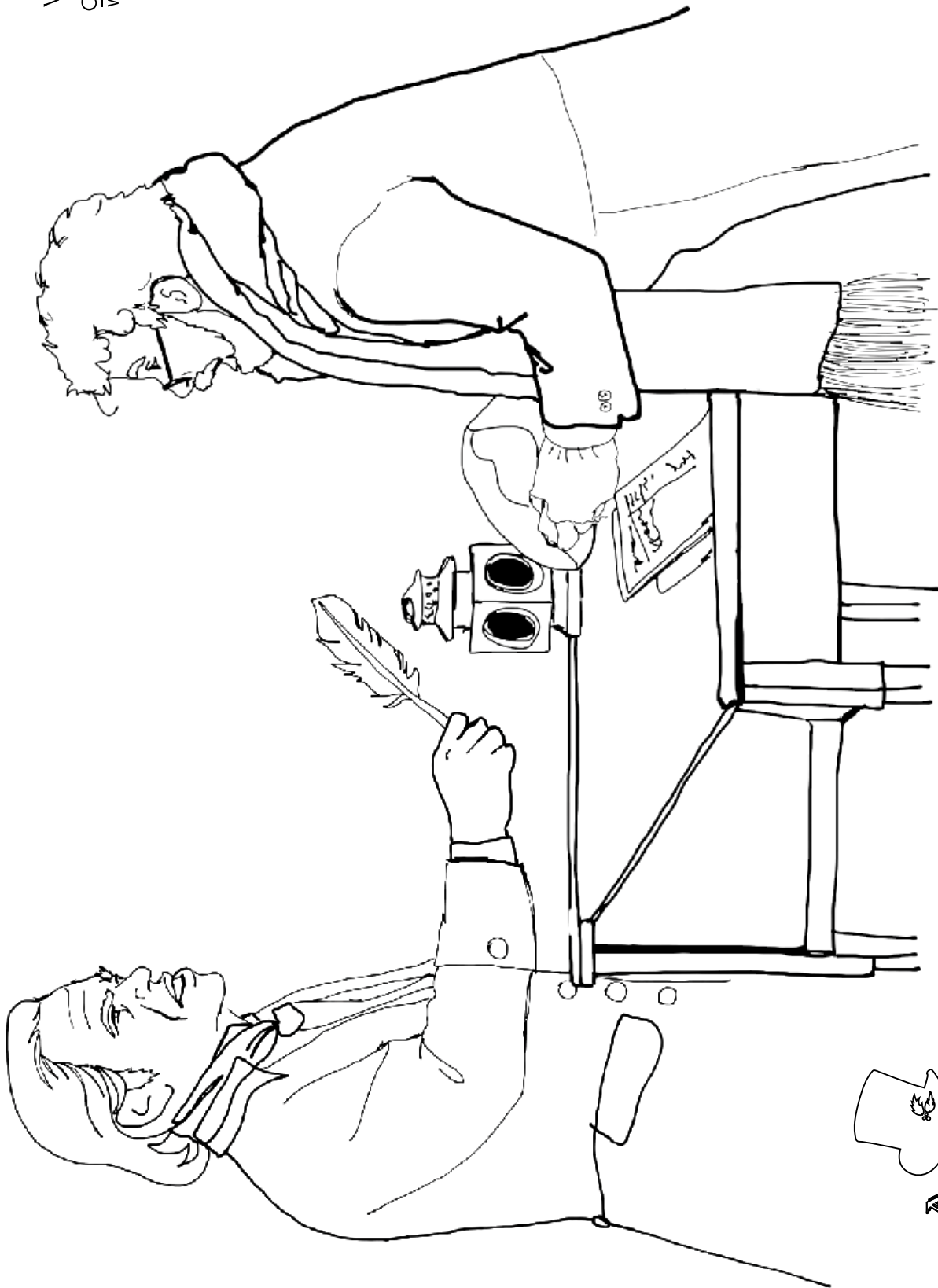
U K G Z K I H H E N I J X V B K I G G V O J G R L F H
 P Y D E Z O R P R C J G Q W V Z C M K A B P I J T I O
 Q T B M L Q L E U S K H R J C E H E T Y E U W I C K L
 P W J I A V K F T F C I R I O V A V J F U J I N O N C
 U T D J P T Y S U B X U J U Y I R Z I J D V Z K K K X
 S A G W A G G H F M R U V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

BELLE
CAROLS
CHARITY
CHARLES DICKENS
CHRISTMAS
CRATCHIT
EBENEZER

FEZZIWIG
FRED
FUTURE
GHOST
HOLIDAY
LONDON
MARLEY
MISER

PAST
PRESENT
SCROOGE
SPIRIT
STAVES
TINY TIM
WASSAIL

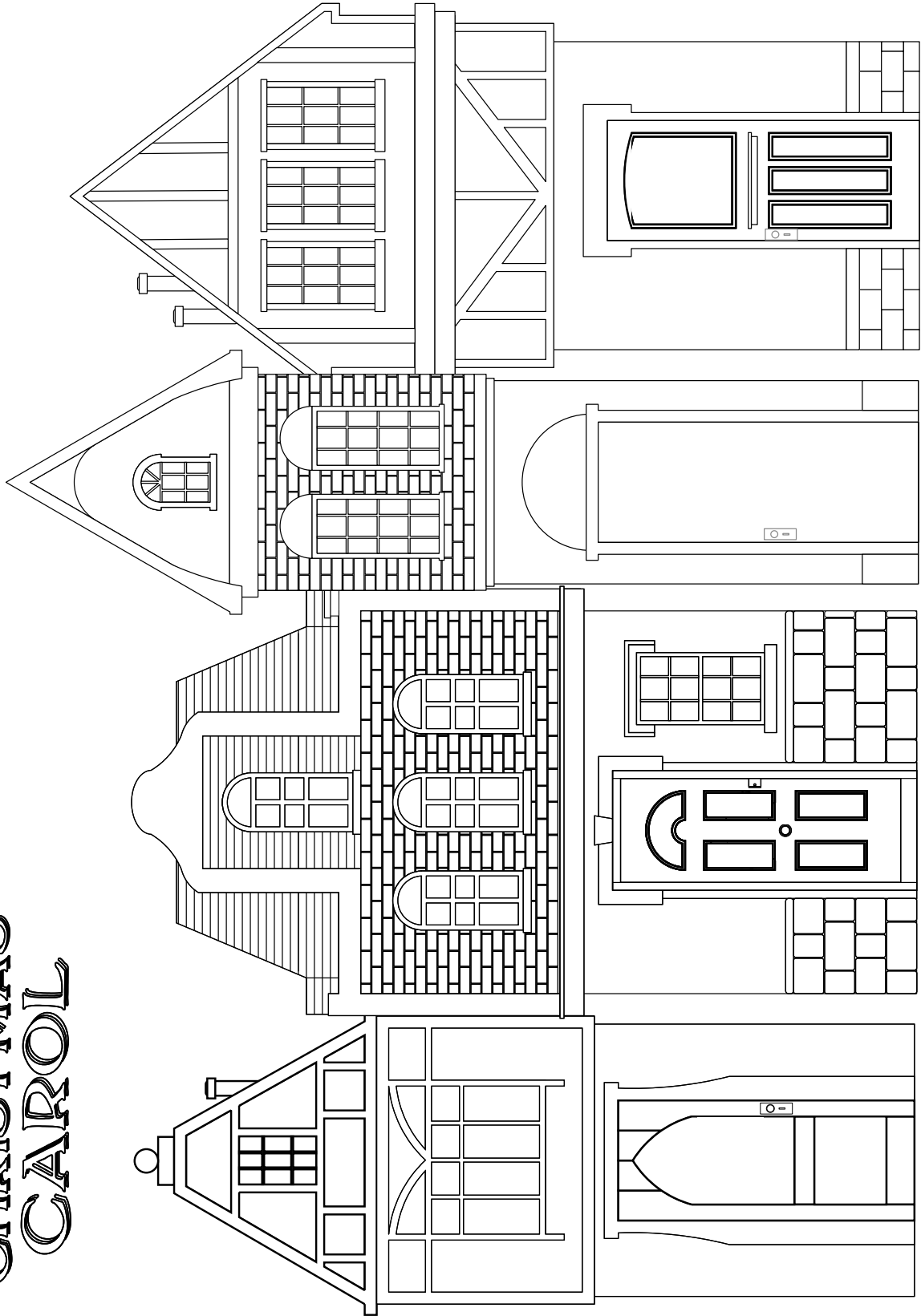

Virginia Stage Company's Production of *A Christmas Carol*, 2017. Clark Scott Carmichael as Ebenezer Scrooge, John Forkner as Bob Cratchit. Scenic Design by Matthew Allard, Costume Design by Jeni Schaefer, Production Photos by Samuel W. Flint, Coloring Page by Crystal Tuxhorn



A CHRISTMAS CAROL



Virginia Stage Company's Production of *A Christmas Carol*, 2017
 Scenic Design by Matthew Allar

A
**CHRISTMAS
 CAROL**

A CHRISTMAS CAROL **Cast & Crew 2018**

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Tom Quaintance



MANAGING DIRECTOR
David B. Byrd

CELEBRATING 40 SEASONS
VIRGINIA
STAGE
COMPANY
— AT THE
WELLS THEATRE

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

BY CHARLES DICKENS

ADAPTED BY PATRICK MULLINS

SET DESIGNER
MATTHEW ALLAR ‡

COSTUME DESIGNER
JENI SCHAEFER

LIGHTING DESIGNER
AKIN RITCHIE

SOUND DESIGNER
RYAN HICKEY

MUSIC DIRECTOR AND ARRANGER
ROY GEORGE

PROJECTIONS DESIGNER
SAMUEL W. FLINT

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
LAUREN WIDNER †

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
KAREN CURRIE *

DIRECTED BY

PATRICK MULLINS

VIRGINIA STAGE COMPANY

The Wells Theatre | Norfolk, Virginia

November 30-December 23, 2018

Ebenezer Scrooge	CLARK SCOTT CARMICHAEL *	Ghost of Christmas Present/Ensemble	AMMA OSEI *
Tiny Tim/Ignorance	AIDAN CLARKSON	Ghost of Christmas Past/Ensemble	LILY ROUSE
Boy Scrooge/Ensemble	ETHAN CLARKSON	Jacob Marley/Ensemble	ANTHONY MARK STOCKARD *
Undertaker/Ensemble	TREY CLARKSON	Keyboard	ROY GEORGE
Charity Man/Ensemble	RYAN CLEMENS	Bass	OTIS BROOKS
Mrs. Cratchit/Charwoman/Ensemble	KATE CLEMONS	Percussion	PATRICK DERMODY
Belle/Ensemble	TREZURE COLES	All musical arrangements by Roy George	
Bob Cratchit	JOHN FORKNER *	Dialect Coach	ERIC HARRELL *
Dick Wilkins/Ensemble	TOBIN GAMBLE	Production Stage Manager	KAREN CURRIE *
Fan/Ensemble	ANN GRAY GOLPIRA	Assistant Stage Manager	BRITTANY LAMB *
Belinda Cratchit	KAYLA GROSS	Assistant Stage Manager	MELISSA TARDUNO
Ghost of Christmas Future	LEVONTE HERBERT		
Fred/Mr. Caroline	JADON JENKINS		
Young Scrooge/Ensemble	TYLER JONES *		
Martha Cratchit/Ensemble	NYOKA MUAWAD		

* Member of Actors' Equity Association the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

† Member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent labor union.

‡ Member of the The United Scenic Artists

Virginia Stage Company is funded in part by grants from The Business Consortium for Arts Support, Virginia Commission for the Arts, the City of Norfolk and the National Endowment for the Arts.

RESOURCES & FURTHER READING

BOOKS

The Annotated Christmas Carol
by Michael Patrick Hearn

Charles Dickens and the Great Theatre of the World
by Simon Callow

Charles Dickens A to Z : The Essential Reference to His Life & Work
by Paul Davis

The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge
by Paul Davis

Dickens's Working Notes For His Novels
by Harry Stone

The Oxford Reader's Companion to Dickens
edited by Paul Schlicke

Christmas and Charles Dickens
by David Parker

Dickens Dramatized
by H. Philip Bolton

Dinner with Dickens: Recipes Inspired by the Life and Work of Charles Dickens
by Pen Vogler

Daily Life in Victorian England
by Sally Mitchell

Charles Dickens
by G.K. Chesterton

<http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/CD-Chesterton-CD.html>

The Life of Charles Dickens
by John Forster

<http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/CD-Forster.html>

My Book of Indoor Games
by Clarence Squareman

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13022/13022-h/13022-h.htm>

ONLINE RESOURCES

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

Charles Dickens' A CHRISTMAS CAROL complete text from 1843 | <http://www.stormfax.com/dickens.htm>

A Gallery of John Leech's Illustrations for Dickens's A Christmas Carol

<http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/carol/gallery.html>

PBS Masterpiece Theatre Online's Dickens' Timeline | http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/olivertwist/dickens_timeline_text.html

Charles Dickens Bio on The Victorian Web | <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/dickensbio2.html>

Charles Dickens: An Overview | <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/index.html>

The Charles Dickens Museum | <https://dickensmuseum.com>

Charles Dickens by Daniel Maclise, painting | commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Charles_Dickens_by_Daniel_Maclise.jpg

Hartford Stage A Christmas Carol Study Guide

https://hartfordstage-fz6ppvdezcnkhub.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ACC_StudyGuide.pdf

London Tours Treasure Hunt | <https://www.the-magician.co.uk/tours-london.htm>

Interactive BBC site about children in Victorian England, designed for children from 9–11

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/victorians/index.shtml

The union workhouse, a history & resource | <http://www.judandk.force9.co.uk/workhouse.html>

The National Archives: Poor Law Union and Workhouse records | <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C10855?v=h>

A Timeline of workhouses | <http://studymore.org.uk/ssh1840s.htm>

About workhouses and the poor law | <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/1834poorlaw/>

Wages and Cost of Living in the Victorian Era Victorian England | <http://www.victorianweb.org/economics/wages2.html>

VICTORIAN CAROLS

The Holly And The Ivy | hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/holly_and_the_ivy.htm

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen - Notes | hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Notes_On_Carols/god_rest_you_merry_notes.htm

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen - Version 1 | hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/god_rest_you_merry_gentlemen.htm

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

About Victorian Christmas | <http://bbc.co.uk/victorianchristmas/history.shtml>

About Wassail | <http://www.whychristmas.com/customs/wassailing.shtml>

The Christmas Archives History of Christmas Decorations | <http://www.christmasarchives.org/decorations.php>

A Victorian Christmas | <http://www.bbc.co.uk/victorianchristmas/history.shtml>

What is Boxing Day? | <http://projectbritain.com/Xmas/boxingday.html>

WAYS TO MAKE THE HOLIDAYS BRIGHT

Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia | <https://foodbankonline.org/how-to-help/>

Operation Christmas Child | <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

Salvation Army Angel Tree | <http://virginiasalvationarmy.org/hrva/programs/angel-tree/>