

## English Literature - A Christmas Carol

50 (or so) things you need to know about 'A Christmas Carol'	
1. Where is Scrooge when we first see him and why is this significant to understanding Dickens' protagonist?	Scrooge is in his counting house, which allows Dickens to demonstrate Scrooge's obsession with his business and his money.
2. In the opening stave, we learn that this character has died. What was his connection to Scrooge?	Jacob Marley died (seven years ago); he is Scrooge's business partner.
3. Which relation to Scrooge visits him and how does Scrooge react?	Scrooge's nephew, Fred, visits to invite Scrooge over for Christmas. Scrooge rejects the invitation. He is hostile.
4. Which two characters, introduced by the second spirit, does Dickens use to symbolise the suffering of the poor?	Ignorance and Want symbolise the suffering of the poor.
5. What might Tiny Tim's illness tell us about life for the poor in the Victorian era?	Tiny Tim's illness is most likely to be rickets or tuberculosis, both of which were more likely to be suffered by people living in poverty due to their poor diets and cramped conditions. Dickens suggests that we might reduce the incidence of these diseases if we gave poorer people more support.
6. The Cratchits still celebrate Christmas despite the fact they have so little money. Why does Dickens include this episode?	Dickens shows us the Cratchits' Christmas celebrations to remind us that family and love can still be celebrated, even in the midst of poverty. They are more important than money.
7. How does Dickens use the present to teach Scrooge about other people? What does he learn?	Seeing the present makes Scrooge notice other people and how they live. He realises there are more important things in life than money.
8. What sins does Dickens suggest Scrooge has committed against Bob Cratchit?	Scrooge has treated Bob Cratchit badly by demanding so much of him, speaking disrespectfully to him and underpaying him. He has even denied him the warmth of a proper fire.
9. What sins does Dickens suggest Scrooge has committed against people living in poverty?	Scrooge refuses to give money to charities which support people living in poverty.
10. What important values, associated with Christmas, does the novella suggest we should all live by?	The values of kindness, generosity and forgiveness are probably the most important in the novella. Redemption is also important.

11. Why did Dickens set the story so that it takes place at Christmas time?	Dickens wanted us to take the Christian values we associate with Christmas and live by them every single day. It starts at Christmas but Scrooge's change in character lasts forever and he expresses kindness and generosity every day.
12. Why did Dickens call the novella, A Christmas Carol?	It is called, A Christmas Carol, because Dickens meant for it to be shared and passed on, like a song (perhaps even like the gospels of the Bible).
13. Why does Dickens include the episode where Fred visits Scrooge at the start of the novella?	Fred visits Scrooge, as he does every year, to invite him to spend Christmas with him. He keeps doing this even though Scrooge always refuses.
14. Why does Dickens write that Fred drinks to Scrooge's health even though he dislikes Scrooge's behaviour? What does it say about Fred?	He drinks to Scrooge's health because Dickens is using Fred as an example of a kind and generous person. He displays good Christian values of forgiveness and kindness at all times, even when it is difficult.
15. How does Dickens have Fred react when Scrooge turns up to celebrate Christmas with him at the end of the novella, and what does that say about him as a person?	Fred welcomes Scrooge and accepts him as a reformed character. This is because he is constructed by Dickens to exemplify good Christian behaviour.
16. What does Scrooge do at the end of the novella that allows Dickens to show Scrooge is a reformed character?	Scrooge buys the Cratchit family a turkey. He also raises Bob's salary.
17. Which line does Dickens include to show that Scrooge's change was permanent and he never went back to his old ways?	Dickens writes, 'Scrooge was as good as his word', which tells us his change was genuine.
18. How does Dickens characterise Bob's behaviour toward his children?	Bob is very kind to his children. He is Dickens' example of an excellent, loving father.
19. Scrooge is described as being 'as solitary as an _____. ' Why does Dickens use this simile?	Scrooge is described as being, 'as solitary as an oyster.' The simile, 'as solitary as an oyster' portrays Scrooge as appearing hard, like an oyster shell, but also hints that there may be a pearl of goodness or wisdom hidden behind Scrooge's aloofness.
20. How does Dickens characterise Bob's behaviour towards Scrooge?	Bob is submissive to his employer. He has to cope with Scrooge's behaviour because he cannot afford to lose his job.
21. What does Dickens use light to symbolise? (The Ghost of Christmas Past)	The light symbolises the enlightenment the spirit brings to Scrooge.

22. Why does Dickens make the Ghost of Christmas Past appear to flicker and change?	The ghost may flicker to suggest time passing, or to suggest that each of us is made up of a whole history and many possible futures. We continue to carry the child in us throughout our lives and it influences who we become; time connects all our different 'selves' together. Or perhaps it just means that one life is really lots of different lives because we change so much over time.
23. Why does Dickens write that Scrooge tries to extinguish the The Ghost of Christmas Past's light at the end of the stove?	Dickens has Scrooge try to extinguish the spirit's light at the end of the stove because it suggests he does not want to confront the powerful truth it shows him about his life.
24. Why Does Dickens depict The Ghost of Christmas Present celebrating a great feast?	The Ghost of Christmas Present reminds us of the importance of connecting with others. His bounty symbolises the rich joy of a life spent in close harmony with other people.
25. What does Dickens use the torch to symbolise? 26. (The Ghost of Christmas Present)	He carries a torch because light symbolises truth and goodness. It looks like a cornucopia to symbolise that living a life of kindness and generosity makes us feel rich; we do not need actual wealth as much as we need love and kindness.
27. Why does The Ghost of Christmas Present only survive for the duration of the Christmas period?	The ghost symbolises the present so it cannot survive for long. Dickens suggests we should be conscious of each moment instead of letting life pass us by.
28. Why does Dickens give The Ghost of Christmas Present a scabbard but no sword?	The scabbard without a sword symbolises lasting peace.
29. Why does Dickens present The Ghost of Christmas Future as such a dark character, shrouded in mystery?	The spirit probably represents death; the Grim Reaper and is mysterious because death itself is a mystery to us.
30. What does Dickens use The Ghost of Christmas Future's hand to symbolise?	The spirit's hand is initially pointing, suggesting he is commanding Scrooge and that he has formidable power. Hands also often symbolise action; the spirit wants Scrooge to act, to make a change in his own life.
31. What does The Ghost of Christmas Future show Scrooge?	The spirit shows Scrooge a gravestone with 'Ebenezer Scrooge' written on it.
32. Why does Dickens have The Ghost of Christmas Future remain silent?	The spirit may remain silent to add to its air of mystery, or its silence may symbolise that it is time for Scrooge to start listening to himself, to his own inner conscience.
33. What does Dickens use the children, Ignorance and Want, to represent?	We are told that we should fear ignorance the most.
34. Why might it be that Dickens characterises Ignorance and	They represent the poor and downtrodden in Victorian society.

Want as children rather than adults?	
35. Which of the two children, ignorance and want, does Dickens suggest we should fear the most?	They are characterised as children to encourage us to have greater sympathy for the poor and downtrodden. We are reminded that even dangerous criminals start off as innocent children who are only trying to survive.
36. How does Dickens suggest Scrooge first reacts to Marley's ghost?	At first, Scrooge thinks his mind is playing tricks on him.
37. Complete the quotation: 'I wear the _____ I forged in life.'	Marley says, 'I wear the chains I forged in life'.
38. What messages does Dickens create for Marley to give to Scrooge?	Marley tells Scrooge that he must change or he too will end up suffering in the afterlife. He also tells him he will be visited by three spirits who will help him.
39. What does Tiny Tim use to help him get around?	Tiny Tim uses a crutch to help him walk.
40. How does Dickens use Tiny Tim to teach us about poor people in Victorian society?	Dickens uses his characterisation of Tiny Tim to remind us that the poor were particularly vulnerable to illnesses like rickets and tuberculosis. Tiny Tim may even represent child labourers who sometimes lost limbs in industrial accidents.
41. How does Dickens characterise Tiny Tim's behaviour?	Tiny Tim is described as being, 'as good as gold' so that we see him as a lovely, likeable character, which creates more sympathy for his situation.
42. Complete the description of Scrooge as a boy: 'a _____ boy ... reading near a _____ fire.'	Scrooge is described as, 'a lonely boy... reading near a feeble fire'.
43. Which character sent Scrooge away to school?	Dickens writes that Scrooge's father sent him away to boarding school to help create sympathy for the character.
44. How does Dickens describe Scrooge's schoolmaster?	The schoolmaster had a 'terrible voice' and 'glared'.
45. What was the nature of Scrooge's relationship with Belle?	Dickens tells us that Scrooge and Belle were engaged.
46. Why, does Dickens suggest, does Belle end her relationship with Scrooge?	Belle says that 'another idol has displaced' her. She means that Scrooge has become obsessed with money.
47. What does Dickens tell us about how Belle's life turned out in the end?	Belle is shown happily married with a family.

48. What is the connection between Scrooge and Fezziwig	Fezziwig is Scrooge's former employer.
49. How does Dickens suggest Scrooge reacts to seeing Fezziwig again?	Scrooge is very pleased to see Fezziwig again, exclaiming, 'why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart'.
50. How does Dickens use Fezziwig to teach us about how an employer should treat his employees?	Fezziwig is presented as a very different kind of employer to Scrooge. He is kind and generous to his employees.
51. What is Scrooge's sister called?	Fan (It did not used to mean what it means today and was often a nickname for Frances.)
52. What clues does Dickens give us that Scrooge's father was a difficult man?	When Scrooge is shown his memory of Fanny visiting him at school, she says, 'father is so much kinder than he used to be'. It suggests Scrooge's father had mistreated them in the past.
53. Where did Scrooge's father send him and how does this help Dickens to construct Scrooge's character? How do we feel about Scrooge here?	Scrooge's father sent him away to boarding school. Constructive this background for Scrooge helps to create sympathy for the character.