

Long Stratton High School English Department

Pre 20th century novel- A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

Literary devices used

| Key Terms | Definitions |
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| Allegory | A story which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one. |
| Novella | A novella is longer than a short story, but not as long as a traditional novel. |
| Stave | In music, a set of five parallel lines on any one or between any adjacent two of which a note is written to indicate its pitch. |
| Omniscient narrator | A narrator that sees everything, including what a character is thinking and feeling. |
| Protagonist | The leading character in a novel. |
| Tone | How the narrator or a character speaks; can also be set through description. |
| Fairytale genre | A genre (type of story) that incorporates an element of the magical. |
| Pathetic fallacy | Where human feelings and responses are attributed to inanimate things or animals. |
| Contrast | The differences between two characters or settings etc. |
| Symbolism | The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities. |
| Foreboding | A feeling that something bad will happen. |
| Repetition | Saying the same thing more than once for emphasis. |
| Sensory language | Language that connects to the five senses to create an image or description. |
| Analepsis (flashback) | These are ways in which a narrative's dialogue re-order's a given story by "flashing back" to an earlier point in the story |
| Prolepsis (flashforward) | These are ways in which a narrative's dialogue re-order's a given story by "flashing forward" to a moment later in the chronological sequence of events |
| Mirroring | When a character, for example, resembles another character. |
| Parallel structures | Using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. |
| Tension and suspense | A building of extreme emotion / anticipation where the outcome is uncertain. |
| Dramatic Irony | Where the reader knows something that a character(s) are not aware of. |
| Cliff-hanger | A dramatic and exciting ending to an episode of a serial, leaving the audience in suspense and anxious not to miss the next episode. |
| Similes | A figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid.. |
| Circular structure | The reader reaches a sense of closure because the ending of the piece refers back to the beginning of the narrative. |
| Foil | Something or someone with opposite characteristics to the subject, used to balance them out and even to draw attention to their feelings. |
| Personification | Attributing a human characteristic to something non-human. |
| Exaggeration | A statement that represents something as better or worse than it really is. |
| Dialogue | A discussion or conversation, or simply the words spoken by a character. |
| Rhetorical questions | A question that is asked in order to make a point rather than elicit an answer. |
| Interrogative | A question that seeks to find something out. |
| Motif | An image that is repeated throughout a text showing the dominance of an idea. |
| Charactonym | A name which helps to give the reader an idea of a character's personality. |

KEY THEMES

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| Christmas spirit Redemption Poverty and Social Responsibility | Family Loneliness and isolation The Supernatural | Time Education Appearance and reality |
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| The context of the novel | |
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| Dickens' Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812 in Hampshire into a middle class family. • His dad was imprisoned for debt leading to poverty for the family. • A Christmas Carol was written in 1843 |
| Industrial Revolution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 1780 factory owners in Britain began to use coal-fired steam engines to power the machines in big factories, bringing great fortune. • People flocked from the countryside to the cities. London's population between 1800 and 1900 from 1 million to 6 million people. This led to over-crowding and hunger, disease and crime. There were no proper drainage / sewage systems. Many families had to share one tap / toilet. Children suffered the most and were exploited by factory owners who forced them to work long hours in dangerous conditions. |
| Malthus and the Poor Laws | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1798, Thomas Malthus wrote that the human population would grow faster than food supplies leading to famines and death. Malthus believed poverty was the result of overpopulation. • Malthus believed people should families in later life and not have too many children. • Dickens believed Malthus was wrong. He believed there was plenty of food to go around but only if the rich were more generous. Dickens felt it wrong the poor should suffer because the rich were too selfish to share their wealth. • Malthus thought existing poor laws in Britain were too charitable. Poverty relief, he believed, encouraged laziness in the poor and reduced the incentive to work hard and save money. • 1834 a new Poor Law was introduced to reduce the financial help available to the poor. It also ruled that all unemployed people would have to enter a workhouse in order to receive food and shelter. Conditions in workhouses were unpleasant to discourage the poor from relying on society to help them. |
| Charity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial revolution led to a gap between the rich and poor with many struggling to survive relying on the generosity of those better off than themselves. • Some philanthropists were keen to enhance the lives of the workers. Cadburys tried to provide quality homes and improve lifestyles of workers at their factory in Bournville. |
| Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dickens believed strongly in the importance of education. • In 1840s, Dickens became involved in the Ragged Schools. The aim was to provide poor children with basic education. Dickens believed that it is through education that one can leave poverty. |
| Religion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianity held a strong influence in Victorian Britain, especially amongst the middle / upper classes. • Good Christians believed in a strict moral code. Dicken's view on Christianity was different. He believed that to be a good Christian people should seek out opportunities to do good deeds for other people. • Sabbatarianism – when people spent Sunday going to church and resting. Dickens was opposed to this because it meant that working poorer people were denied any enjoyment on their one day off – everything was shut. Poorer people didn't have ovens at home so often food cooked by bakers. Sabbatarianism meant that many people couldn't get a hot meal on Sundays because the bakers were shut. |
| Christmas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of 19th century Christmas was hardly celebrated. By the end of the century it was the most important celebration of the year. • Traditions associated with Christmas became important: cards, crackers, carols, decorations, gifts and Christmas dinner. Prince Albert in 1840 brought a tree from Germany to Britain for the first time. Christmas Cards date back to 1843. • Christmas celebrations were becoming more secular (less religious) as feasts and games became a central part of the festivities. |

| SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL | |
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| Preface | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charles Dickens writes a note to his readers to explain that he wants to introduce an entertaining idea to them. |
| Stave One | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced to Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas Eve. He is a lonely miser obsessed with money. He won't pay to heat the office properly – meaning Bob Cratchit is very cold We learn Jacob Marley, Scrooge's business partner, died exactly 7 years earlier. Scrooge is irritated that Christmas Day seems to be interrupting his business. Scrooge is visited by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> his nephew Fred, who invites his uncle to Christmas dinner. Scrooge refuses. Scrooge is visited by two charity workers, asking for donations. Scrooge refuses and exclaims he wants to be left alone. Scrooge allows Bob to have Christmas Day off. Scrooge, when he is home, is visited by the Ghost of Jacob Marley – warning him he will be visited by three more ghosts to help him change his ways. |
| Stave Two | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Past who takes him to witness his past. Scrooge is taken first to his schoolboy years and he is reminded how his friends would go home from Christmas while he was left at school. We see him with his sister, who one year took him home for the holidays. Next we are shown Scrooge as a young apprentice, working for Fezziwig. Dickens describes the Christmas ball Fezziwig organised for his employees. Finally, Scrooge is taken to see his ex-fiancée, Belle. We see the scene when they break up, as money has taken over Scrooge's life. Scrooge cannot bear to see any more and struggles with the spirit. |
| Stave Three | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrooge is then visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present. The spirit shows Scrooge how the Cratchit family celebrate Christmas. Scrooge asked if Tiny Tim will live. The spirit explain unless there are changes, he will die. The spirit reminds Scrooge of his earlier words: 'If he is to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population' Scrooge is then taken to see how others celebrate Christmas: miners, lighthouse workers, sailors on a ship. He is then taken to Fred's house at Christmas, where they are playing games. The spirit then begins to age, and see under the spirit's robes two children: Want and Ignorance. The Ghost of Christmas Future then appears. |
| Stave Four | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ghost of Christmas Future is described. The spirit takes Scrooge to see a group of businessmen discussing someone who has died. Scrooge is then taken to see Old Joe, where he is in the process of buying property of the dead man – which have been stolen. Scrooge then returns to Bob Cratchit's house, where it is revealed Tiny Tim has died. Scrooge is then taken to the graveyard and is shown a grave stone and realises this is for him. Scrooge falls to his knees and begs that he will change his ways. |
| Stave Five | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrooge wakes up in his own bed. Scrooge wonders how much time has passed and calls to a boy. He then sends the boy to the poulterer for the prize turkey to give to Bob Cratchit, Scrooge meets one of the charity collectors from earlier and whispers to him that he will give a large donation. Scrooge then goes to Fred's house and is welcomed in. He enjoys the dinner and party. On Boxing Day, Scrooge arrives early to work, and plays a trick on Bob. Scrooge then tells him he is going to raise his salary and promises to help Bob's struggling family. Scrooge is described to have completely changed and becomes a 'second father' to Tiny Tim – 'who did not die.' |