

A Christmas Carol



By
Charles Dickens

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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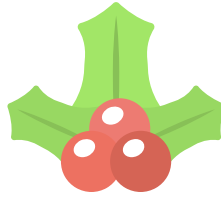


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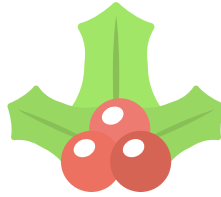
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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of *A Christmas Carol* and is comprised of four distinct sections:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (page 7) as well as a **Checklist** (page 6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases... including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story ... **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include redemption and transformation, social injustice, forgiveness, the power of change, the Christmas spirit.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Identify *anagrams*
3. Listing compound words
4. Identifying parts of speech
5. Identify *personification*
6. Identify *similes*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's and H Chart
4. Complete a Plot Outline for a Sequel
5. Identify the climax of the novel
6. Identify Chapter Elements

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

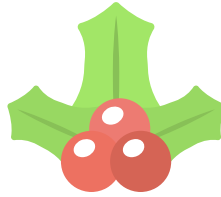
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Opinion Writing Chart
9. Plan a Book Talk
10. Create a friendly letter

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a movie poster
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

It's a snowy winter in London where we meet Ebenezer Scrooge, an old man who has become bitter with life, he is known for being cold and selfish. Scrooge profits from his impoverished community, financially benefiting from their labour whilst paying measly wages to his employees.

In the lead up towards Christmas, Scrooge is visited by the spirit of his former business partner Jacob Marley, who informs Scrooge to expect 3 ghosts.

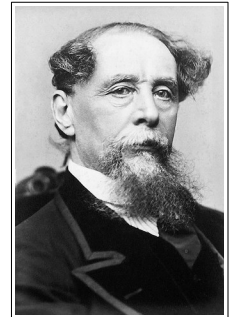
The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future, show Scrooge what he needs to see before it's too late, and we get to witness the mistakes of his past, the emptiness of his present and the dark future that awaits him.

Scrooge is considered one of the greatest redemption stories of all time. A magical story full of unforgettable moments, larger than life characters, a cautionary tale and a tale full of hope, expertly written by Charles Dickens. [Courtesy of the Publisher]

Author Biography

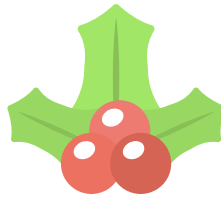
Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens was a nineteenth century prolific British author who penned many novels which are still extremely popular to this day, as well as short stories, comics and novellas. He produced some of the most famous books of his time, including *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens went to work in a factory at the age of 12. Dreaming of one day being an actor, he ended up writing his first novel at the age of 24. *A Christmas Carol* took Dickens only six weeks to write. By the time of his death in 1870 at the age of only 58, he was one of the most popular authors of his time.



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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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Name:

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Stave 1: Marley's Ghost



Before you read this section:

The protagonist of this novel (Ebenezer Scrooge) is one of the most memorable characters in English fiction. Do you think having a protagonist who isn't kind, noble and thoughtful would be easier for a novelist to create, or more difficult? Please defend your choice.



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

benevolent	incessant	palpable	replenish	proffer
venerated	facetious	misanthropic	relinquish	incredulous

1. The team was very upset when the league forced them to _____ the trophy.
2. The judge gave the accused an _____ look when the man offered his alibi.
3. Soon after the disaster, the church set up a _____ fund for the victims.
4. "Why don't you _____ your services to the caretaker?" Mrs. Albany suggested.
5. Upon winning a medal for courage, the soldier was _____ by everyone.
6. The smell of fear was almost _____ in the storm cellar during the hurricane.
7. "What is that _____ noise?" the teacher demanded shrilly.
8. The twins were asked to go to the storeroom and _____ the pencil supply.
9. The questions were _____, but Carol Burnett did not smile.
10. He was shunned because of his miserable _____ nature.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. Investigate: It says that Scrooge’s place of business was a **counting house**. Not many details are given as to what this business entailed. Using resources in your school library or the Internet, see if you can research additional details regarding what type of business was likely conducted there.

3. What would you say is Scrooge’s prime motivation for living? Describe your first impression of this man.

4. There is an old expression, *cutting off your nose to spite your face*. Find at least one example from this chapter to illustrate how Scrooge was guilty of doing just this.

5. What is ironic about Scrooge’s statement, “Nephew! Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.”

6. According to Scrooge's nephew, other than venerating the sacred name of Christ, what did he consider the best part of Christmas?

7. Describe how the clerk is contrasted with Scrooge in their encounter.

8. Where did Marley's ghost first make its appearance?

9. What was there about Marley's appearance that you found most startling?

10. Why was Marley condemned to wander throughout the world?

11. Why did Marley make his appearance before Scrooge that night?

12. What did Marley predict would happen during the next three nights?

Language Activities



A. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. Charles Dickens seemed to have loved using similes in this novel. One, in fact, crops up in the first paragraph, *Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail*. In this example, what is being compared?

a) Find two similes more in paragraph 6 of this chapter.

b) Create your own simile using a miser as your subject.

B. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in this section of **A Christmas Carol**.

Word	Anagram	Clue
passed		Digging tools.
spectre		Esteem.
swallow		Flounders.
heart		The world.
dread		A type of snake.
stairs		Long-necked lutes.

C. The Good Old Indispensable Adverb!

An **adverb** is a part of speech defined as *a modifier (or helper) of a verb* (usually an action word). Often an adverb will end in the letters **ly** (i.e. **slowly**). Our novel features a good many creative adverbs.



1. *You may talk vaguely about driving a coach-and-six up a good old flight of stairs ...*

→ In this sentence, which verb does **vaguely** modify? _____

2. *The hair was curiously stirred, as if by a breath of hot air ...*

→ In this sentence, what verb does **curiously** modify? _____

3. *But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle.*

→ In this sentence the adverb _____ modifies the verb _____

D. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here is an example from Chapter 1: *The ancient tower of the church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping shyly down at Scrooge ...*

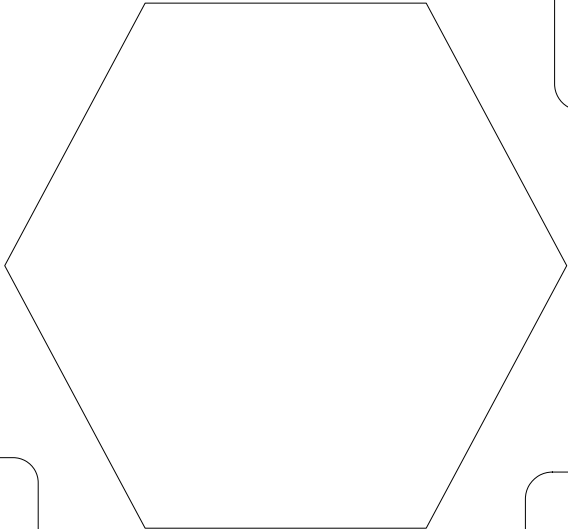
Explain what is being personified in this example and how the author gives it human qualities.

Be on the lookout for another example of this literary device. When you encounter one, return to this question and record it below.

E. How Much Do You Know About the Protagonist?

Character's Name _____

Sketch a picture of the protagonist in the middle hexagon. In the surrounding text boxes enter words that would describe the protagonist (either his/her personality traits or descriptive words about this person's appearance).



F. An Acrostic Poem

There are many forms of poetry available to the aspiring poet other than the rhyming poem. An ACROSTIC poem is one example. In an acrostic poem the first letters of each line are aligned vertically to form a word. The word often is the subject of the poem. Here is an example written by the acclaimed poet, Atrocious Halitosis:

The Firefly

Freaky-looking
Itches me when I touch
Restless at night
Early or late
Fearless
Little
Yellowfly



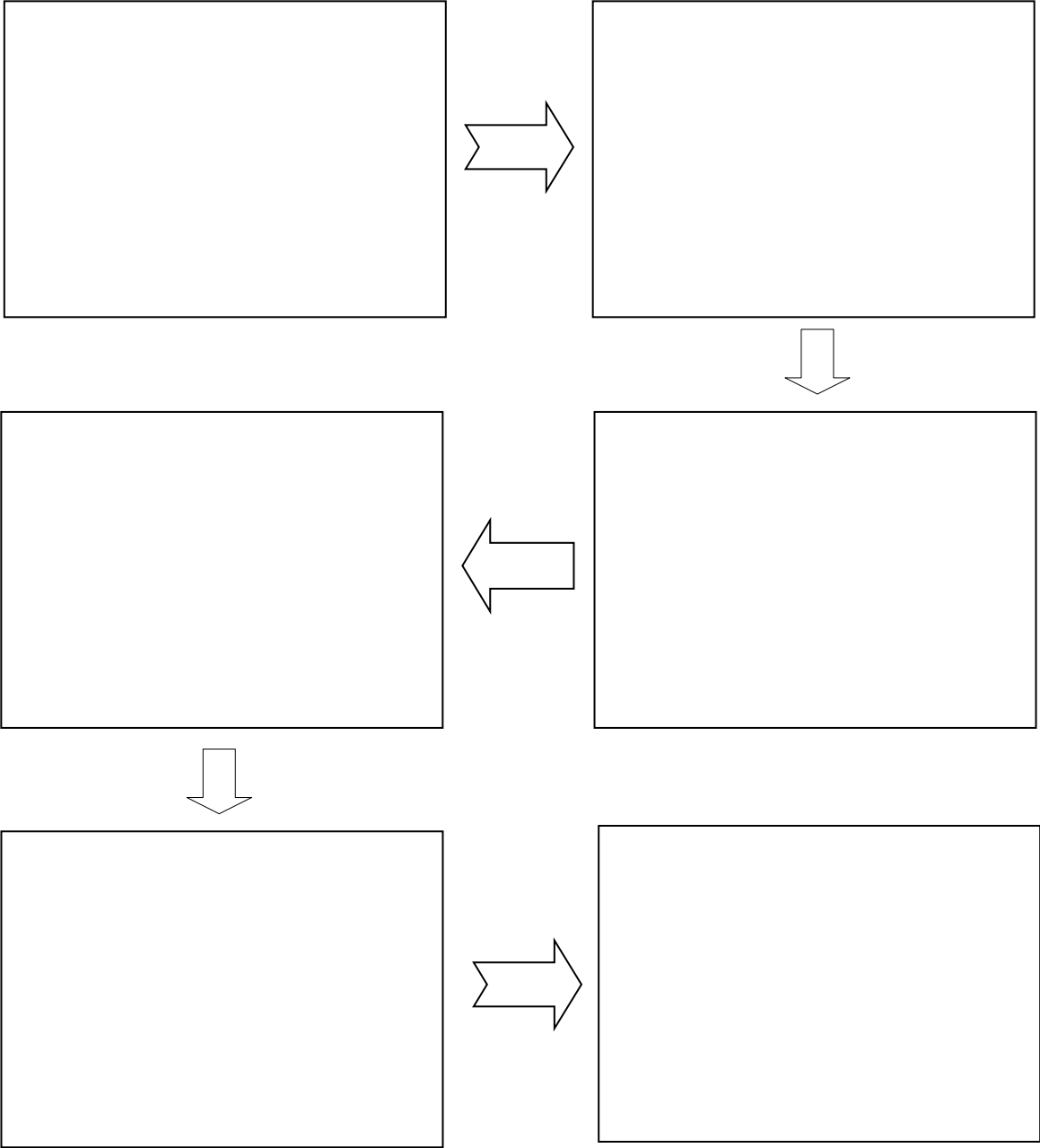
The Acrostic Poem

Now create your own Acrostic Poem on a subject featured in this novel. Your poem must have at least four lines (and doesn't need to rhyme).

Title: _____

G. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this chapter. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.



Extension Activity



A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words



Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of this section.

Beginning Picture:	Beginning:
Middle Picture:	Middle:
Concluding Picture:	Concluding: