

Name:

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

Date:

Mrs. Seemayer



Unit Objectives

Know

-Students will know the literary terms.

Understand

-Students will understand the societal impact of *A Christmas Carol*.

-Students will understand how to relate to a piece of text targeting a specific group.

-Students will understand how to connect Biblical themes to a secular text.

-Students will understand how to analyze literary terms within a text.

Do

-Students will be able to read and discuss *A Christmas Carol* as a literary piece.

-Students will be able to relate themes from *A Christmas Carol* to themselves.

-Students will be able to identify and discuss the importance of literary terms within a text.

Anticipatory Guide

True or False

_____ Money can buy happiness.

_____ People can truly change.

_____ Everyone deserves a second chance.

_____ Children are unimportant to society as a whole.

_____ A person can change the future.

_____ It is the job of those who have enough to take care of those who don't.

What are the characteristics of a good person?

Did you know?



The very first Christmas card (*see a picture of it on the left*) was designed in 1843 when Henry Cole commissioned an artist named John Calcott Horsley to design a card for Christmas. It was a simple illustration with a seasonal greeting. The first cards were expensive, but by the late Victorian period Christmas cards became more affordable, creating both a tradition and an industry that continues to this day.

Another commercial Christmas industry was borne by Victorians in 1848 when a British confectioner, Tom Smith, invented a bold new way to sell sweets. Inspired by a trip to Paris where he saw bon bons – sugared almonds wrapped in twists of paper – he came up with the idea of the Christmas cracker: a simple package filled with sweets that snapped when pulled apart. The sweets were replaced by small gifts and paper hats in the late Victorian period, and remain in this form as a part of many Christmas celebrations today.



Gift giving had traditionally occurred at the New Year, but moved as Christmas became more important to the Victorians. Initially, people gave each other small gifts like fruit, nuts, sweets, and small handmade trinkets. These gifts were usually hung on the Christmas tree; however, as gift giving became more central to the festival, and the gifts became bigger and shop-bought, people started placing the gifts under the tree.

Weighed Down by Chains

Discuss: What are the purposes of chains?

Excerpt from *A Christmas Carol*:

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

Scrooge trembled more and more.

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

Psalm 107:10-14

Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High ...Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains. (NIV)

Today's Inspiring Thought: My Chains Are Gone

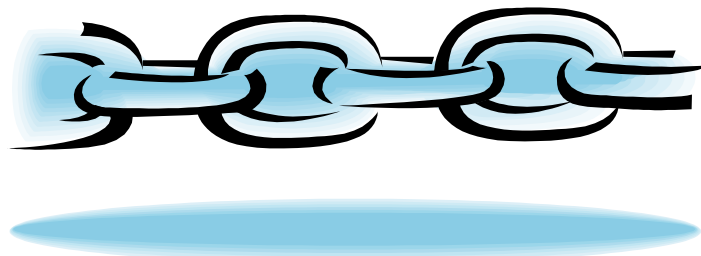
J.A. Lacy said, " The cross we carry is never so heavy as the chains from which we were freed."

When I think back to my "pre-salvation" days, I remember all too well the terrible weight of sin and shame that held me in bondage like iron chains. Nothing compares to that light and wonderful feeling I experienced the moment I realized my chains were gone, my sins were forgiven, and my conscience was free!

For this reason I can't hold back the tears and the flood of relief when I hear the chorus to Chris Tomlin's version of "Amazing Grace:"

*My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love,
Amazing grace*

What chains are weighing you down?



Stave One: Using a Character Chart

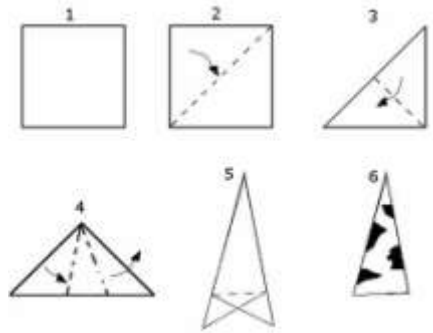
The actions of every character in a novel contribute to the story. Furthermore, every character has at least one unique personality trait that sets him or her apart.

Keep track of the characters you meet in Stave One by completing this chart. Next to each character's name, make some notes about the character's personality and actions.

Character	Characterization (says, does, thinks, etc.)
Ebenezer Scrooge	
Bob Cratchit (the clerk)	
Fred	
The two portly gentlemen	
Marley's Ghost	

Christmas Memories

Directions: Use the bottom of the paper below to cut out a snowflake. Once you are finished, write your favorite Christmas memory on it. Be prepared to share it with the class.



Stave Two: Comparing and Contrasting

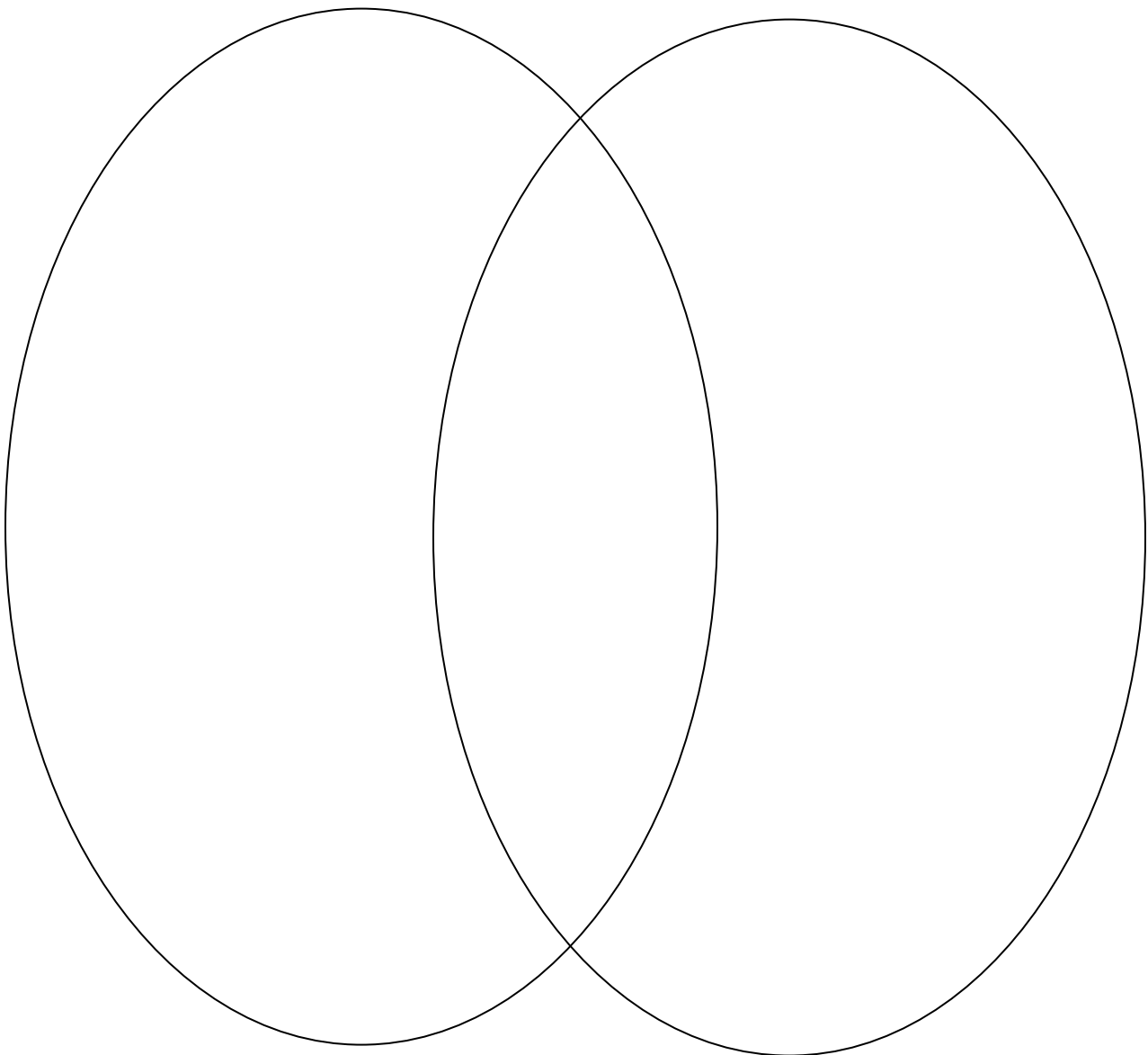
Visiting the past, Scrooge begins to see how his personality has changed over the years.

Select details from Stave Two to compare and contrast Scrooge, as a young man in the past, with the older Scrooge of the present. Note those details in the diagram. Where the ovals overlap, note some ways in which the “two Scrooges” are alike.

The Past Scrooge

How they are alike

The Present Scrooge



Stave Three: Noting Values

Scrooge observes many people in Stave Three—people on the streets of London, the Cratchit family, Fred and his guests, and more. Despite the differences in their lives, however, these people have much in common on Christmas Day.

To get a better idea about the values that they share (and Scrooge does not), answer the following questions.

1. Which of the people seem to have little reason to celebrate on Christmas Day? Why?
2. How do they treat the people around them?
3. Which of the people sing, and why?
4. Why do you think so many of them dress in their best clothing?
5. Why do some of them go to church?
6. How do the people talk about Christmas?
7. In what ways do they show a spirit of thankfulness?

Staves Four and Five: Sequencing Events

(Many small but important events take place in Staves Four and Five.)

Read the following list of events from this last part of *A Christmas Carol*.

Use the numbers 1–15 to put them in the order in which they take place, from first (1) to last (15). (You will need to refer to the book to complete this activity.)

- _____ A. Scrooge gives a generous gift to a fund for the poor.
- _____ B. Scrooge attends a party at his nephew's home.
- _____ C. Scrooge hires a boy to buy a turkey.
- _____ D. Scrooge and the Phantom enter the city.
- _____ E. A couple in debt are relieved to hear about the death of their creditor.
- _____ F. Several merchants joke about a funeral.
- _____ G. Scrooge laughs "a splendid laugh."
- _____ H. The Cratchits mourn the death of Tiny Tim.
- _____ I. Bob Cratchit receives a raise in salary.
- _____ J. Scrooge cannot lift the sheet that covers a corpse, even though he is desperate to know whose corpse it is.
- _____ K. Joe buys the items that three thieves have snatched from a dead man's house.
- _____ L. The Phantom takes Scrooge to a churchyard.
- _____ M. Scrooge sees his own name upon a tombstone.
- _____ N. Scrooge awakens on Christmas Day in his own bed.
- _____ O. Scrooge promises to honor Christmas in his heart and keep it all year long.

Characterization

A writer makes many choices when deciding how to **characterize** a person—that is, how to reveal the character's personality. Sometimes the characterization is **direct**: The writer may say, straight out, that a character has a certain appearance and certain personality traits. At other times, the writer may use **indirect characterization**, dropping clues through what the character does, says, or thinks or through other characters' reactions to that character. Dickens characterizes Ebenezer Scrooge in all of these ways.

Complete the chart by listing text evidence that reveal Scrooge's personality—and how it changes.

	Stave One	Stave Five
His physical appearance		
What he does		
What he says		
What he thinks		
How others react to him		

Mood

A Christmas Carol is packed with richly detailed descriptions of the scenes that Scrooge observes in his travels through time. At each stop, text details work together to create a particular “feeling”—a special atmosphere, or mood.

SETTING DETAILS For each setting below, list three details that help to create that place’s mood.

**Scrooge’s house
(Stave One)**

**Old Fezziwig’s
warehouse (Stave
Two)**

**The Cratchits’
home (Stave
Three)**

**The junk dealer’s
shop (Stave Four)**

Theme

A central **theme** of *A Christmas Carol* is inner transformation—that people can change their own lives and make the world a better place for others.

In the chart below, show how the novel develops this theme, by jotting down plot details or other ideas from the story that suggest change, especially change that leads to helping others.

Theme: Inner transformation

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the author's purpose for writing *A Christmas Carol*? Using your background knowledge, consider the time period and develop a conclusion about this story's historical significance.
2. Why is this story still relevant today? Why does it still speak to its readers/viewers?

A Christmas Carol Project

Task: Write a pastiche of *A Christmas Carol* about your own life.

- 1,000 words or more (about 3 pages).
- 12 point, Times New Roman font
- Heading including Name, Due Date, Class, Assignment Title
- Has similar structure, language, and elements to *A Christmas Carol*

Prompts: If you were given the chance to see your past, present, and future in one night, what would you see? How do you think this experience would change you?

Past: Think of a pivotal moment in your life. This moment was dominant in molding you into who you are right now. Write down this moment in detail, so that it can be experienced by a reader.

Present: Choose a person who is close to you. Peer into their life for a moment. When they are reflecting on their relationship with you, what is said? What positive things do they say about you? What negative things do they have to say when you're not around? What do they wish would change about you?

Future: Take a moment to honestly consider where your future is headed. Are you becoming the person you want to be? Write down what you think your future will look like if you remain static. What do you want your future to look like? Consider what changes you may need to make in your life or character to improve your future.

Due Date: _____