

A Christmas Carol paragraph practice booklet



A booklet with questions you might find linked to the AQA GCSE specification on A Christmas Carol, with example paragraphs of how you might answer each question. The example paragraphs should be used as something to inspire you to write your own based on how you've been taught by your teacher. They may even be something you disagree with and wish to argue against! Each of the example paragraphs focus on 'bullet point one' and you may want to vary your own paragraphs with reference to 'bullet point two'-'elsewhere in the Novella.' This can be used as a way of practicing how you analyse language but does not provide sufficient space for you to fully explore your ideas in the necessary quantity required in a formal exam. Lastly, this booklet does not consider the entire structure of an essay with formal introductions and conclusions.

All questions used have been sourced from @Team_English1 on Twitter. Since they were downloaded over a year ago I am unable to credit the teacher who sourced them.

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Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read this extract from the start of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge has been asked to donate some money to charity – he has refused..

“Nothing!” Scrooge replied.

“You wish to be anonymous?”

“I wish to be left alone,” said Scrooge. “Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don’t make merry myself at Christmas and I can’t afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned—they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.”

“Many can’t go there; and many would rather die.”

“If they would rather die,” said Scrooge, “they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides—excuse me—I don’t know that.”

“But you might know it,” observed the gentleman.

“It’s not my business,” Scrooge returned. “It’s enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people’s. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!”

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

08

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens portray cruelty in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents Scrooge in this extract
- how Dickens presents cruelty and meanness in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read this extract from *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge tries to get rid of the light shining from the Ghost of Christmas Past.

“Spirit!” said Scrooge in a broken voice, “remove me from this place.”

“I told you these were shadows of the things that have been,” said the Ghost. “That they are what they are, do not blame me!”

“Remove me!” Scrooge exclaimed, “I cannot bear it!”

He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

“Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!”

In the struggle, if that can be called a struggle in which the Ghost with no visible resistance on its own part was undisturbed by any effort of its adversary, Scrooge observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head.

The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light: which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground.

He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own bedroom. He gave the cap a parting squeeze, in which his hand relaxed; and had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep.

08

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present shock and anger in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents Scrooge and his reactions in this extract
- how Dickens presents shock and/ or anger in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read this extract from *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge is meeting the Ghost of Christmas Present.

Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Present," said the Spirit. "Look upon me!"

Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.

08

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the ghosts in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents this ghost.
- how Dickens presents any of the ghosts in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

A Christmas Carol assessment

Read the following extract from Stave 3 and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, the Ghost of Christmas Present introduces Scrooge to Ignorance and Want.

"My life upon this globe, is very brief," replied the Ghost. "It ends to-night."
"To-night!" cried Scrooge.
"To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near."
The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven at that moment.
"Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask," said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, "but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?"
"It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it," was the Spirit's sorrowful reply. "Look here."
From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.
"Oh, Man, look here! Look, look, down here!" exclaimed the Ghost.
They were a boy and a girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.
Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.
"Spirit, are they yours?" Scrooge could say no more.
"They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. "And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!" cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end."
"Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge.
"Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. "Are there no workhouses?"
The bell struck twelve.
Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present social injustice?

Write about: -

- How Dickens presents social injustice in this extract
- How Dickens presents social injustice in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read this extract from *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge is reaching the end of his journey and the Ghost of Christmas yet to Come is about to leave..

“Spirit!” he cried, tight clutching at its robe, “hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope!”

For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

“Good Spirit,” he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it: “Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!”

The kind hand trembled.

“I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!”

In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him.

Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom’s hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.

08

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens show the changed attitude of Scrooge?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents Scrooge’s changed attitude in this extract
- how Dickens presents the attitudes of any other characters in the novel.

[30 marks]

Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read this extract from the end of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge has woken up a changed man on Christmas Day.

His hands were busy with his garments all this time; turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance.

“I don’t know what to do!” cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocoön of himself with his stockings. “I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!” He had frisked into the sitting-room, and was now standing there: perfectly winded.

“There’s the saucepan that the gruel was in!” cried Scrooge, starting off again, and going round the fireplace. “There’s the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered! There’s the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present, sat! There’s the window where I saw the wandering Spirits! It’s all right, it’s all true, it all happened. Ha ha ha!”

Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!

08

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present positivity and happiness in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents a changed Scrooge in this extract
- how Dickens presents happiness and happy times in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

A Christmas Carol assessment

Read the following extract from Stave 5 and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge begins to fully enter into the spirit of Christmas.

He had not gone far, when coming on towards him he beheld the portly gentleman, who had walked into his counting-house the day before, and said, "Scrooge and Marley's, I believe." It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

"My dear sir," said Scrooge, quickening his pace, and taking the old gentleman by both his hands. "How do you do. I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, sir!"

"Mr Scrooge?"

"Yes," said Scrooge. "That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness" -- here Scrooge whispered in his ear.

"Lord bless me!" cried the gentleman, as if his breath were taken away. "My dear Mr Scrooge, are you serious?"

"If you please," said Scrooge. "Not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour?"

"My dear sir," said the other, shaking hands with him. "I don't know what to say to such munificence."

"Don't say anything please," retorted Scrooge. "Come and see me. Will you come and see me?"

"I will!" cried the old gentleman. And it was clear he meant to do it.

"Thank you," said Scrooge. "I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!"

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk -- that anything -- could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew's house.

He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it:

"Is your master at home, my dear?" said Scrooge to the girl. Nice girl. Very.

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he, my love?" said Scrooge.

"He's in the dining-room, sir, along with mistress. I'll show you up-stairs, if you please."

"Thank you. He knows me," said Scrooge, with his hand already on the dining-room lock. "I'll go in here, my dear."

He turned it gently, and sidled his face in, round the door. They were looking at the table (which was spread out in great array); for these young housekeepers are always nervous on such points, and like to see that everything is right.

"Fred!" said Scrooge.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present redemption?

Write about: -

- How Dickens presents redemption in this extract
- How Dickens presents redemption in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

