

GCSE Literature

Self-Study Guide

To be completed by:

'A Christmas Carol'

by
Charles Dickens

Name: _____



Task 1

Look carefully at the opening to Stave One of 'A Christmas Carol'.

Definition of a miser:

A miser is

Task 2

The language used to describe Scrooge

Key language terms: simile, metaphor, adjective, powerful verbs

Choose a **key quotation** illustrating the writer's use of:

Simile: _____

Metaphor: _____

Adjectives: _____

Powerful verbs: _____

Task 3

Consider the bold quotations and fill in the table below and on the next page:

Oh! But he was a **tight-fisted hand at the grindstone**, Scrooge! a **squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner!** **Hard and sharp as flint**, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and **solitary as an oyster**. The **cold within him froze his old features**, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. **A frosty rime was on his head**, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

QUOTATION	EXPLANATION
Hard and sharp as flint	
Solitary as an oyster.	This shows that Scrooge spends lots of time on his own. Like an oyster he is locked in his shell away from everyone.

A frosty rime was on his head	
He carried his own low temperature	

TASK 4

What is revealed about Scrooge through his actions towards other characters?

Key terms:

- **Structure**
- **Contrast**
- **Dialogue**

Structure

Dickens allows the reader to gain more understanding of Scrooge's character through his reactions to a number of different characters:

- His nephew
- His employee the clerk Bob Cratchit
- The charitable gentleman
- The carol singer

Contrast: Dickens contrasts Scrooge's reactions and attributes with those of the other characters. How?

Scrooge	Nephew
"thin lips blue"	
"grating voice"	
"his wiry chin"	
"pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek"	
"eyes red"	

“A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!” cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

“Bah!” said Scrooge, “Humbug!”

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

“Christmas a humbug, uncle!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “You don’t mean that, I am sure.”

“I do,” said Scrooge. “Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? what reason have you to be merry? You’re poor enough.”

“Come, then,” returned the nephew gaily. “What right have you to be dismal? what reason have you to be morose? You’re rich enough.”

TASK 5

Find and write down quotations about the other characters:

The charitable gentlemen	
The carol singers	
Bob Cratchit.	

TASK 6

How descriptions of settings enhance the idea of Scrooge as a miser.

Key ideas:

- Christmas time
- Scrooge’s surroundings

Key Question

What is the contrast between the setting of Christmas and Scrooge’s attitude?

Christmas is a time of _____

However, Scrooge is _____

Quotations

Scrooge's Surroundings

Find three details showing the poverty and meanness of Scrooge's office, even though Scrooge is rich:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

TASK 7

What we learn of 19th century working life and how this further illustrates Scrooge's meanness

Key ideas:

- Poverty/attitudes to the poor e.g Bob Cratchit/carol singer/destitute people
- Low wages/working conditions
- Prisons
- Work houses } Scrooge's attitude to these
- Charity – how Scrooge reacts to the idea of helping others

Research the various areas of 19th Century Life and jot your notes below, then find a quotation from the text to show Scrooge's attitude:

Poverty in 19th Century	Attitudes to the poor in 19th Century
Scrooge's attitude:	Scrooge's attitude:

Low wages in 19th century	Prisons in the 19th century
Scrooge's attitude:	Scrooge's attitude:
Workhouses in the 19th century	Charity in the 19th century
Scrooge's attitude:	Scrooge's attitude: