

A Christmas Carol



I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book to raise the Ghost of an Idea which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no-one wish to lay it. Their faithful Friend and Servant

C.D

December 1843

How to listen or watch:

[A Christmas Carol](#) has been abridged in 9 episodes, each approximately 15 minutes long. Each episode displays the text on screen while you listen. If you would prefer to use the audio only you can [download the episodes here](#).

On the website you will also find transcripts of each episode which can be printed out, copied and distributed as you wish.

Credits:

Reader: Alan Smith

Original music: Martin Medina

Teacher's Notes: Caroline Garland

For the BBC: Andrew Barnes

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Introduction:

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth on 7 February 1812, to John and Elizabeth Dickens.

His schooling from the age of nine was limited due to his father being imprisoned for bad debt. Separated from his family, the young Dickens was sent to work in a blacking factory where he worked in appalling conditions. This must have been a traumatic experience for a young boy and Dickens would have endured great loneliness, pain and hardship. He eventually returned to school after three years of labour and his experiences became particularly immortalised in his novels *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*.

Dickens eventually succeeded in becoming a journalist, writing for *The Mirror of Parliament* and *The True Sun* and then for *The Morning Chronicle* where he started in 1833. It was at this time he published his sketches under the pseudonym of 'Boz'.

In 1836 Dickens married Catherine Hogarth and they went on to have ten children. In the same year of his marriage *Pickwick Papers* was published. His work was often serialised in the newspaper at this time and would have been the 'soap opera' of the day. Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 in order to promote good will and charity at Christmas time.

Dickens died of a stroke in 1870. He is buried at Westminster Abbey.

The real *A Christmas Carol* of the time:

A Christmas Carol was immensely popular in 1843. Eight stage productions had been put in to production within two months of the book's publication. It continues to be as popular today over 150 years later.

Dickens himself was involved with many charities and social issues throughout his life. At the time he wrote *A Christmas Carol* he was very concerned with the plight of impoverished children who often turned to crime in order to survive.

He saw education as a way in which children could eventually lead a better life and The Ragged School movement of the time put this thinking in motion.

See also the Victorians Audio Clips library by copying and pasting the following link into your browser:

www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/victorians

Assessment Focus for Reading Levels 4 and 5, selected for relevance to the text:

AF2 – understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to text

Level 4

- some relevant points identified
- comments supported by some generally relevant textual reference or quotation, *e.g. reference is made to appropriate section of text but is unselective and lacks focus*

Level 5

- most relevant points clearly identified, including those selected from different places in the text
- comments generally supported by relevant textual reference quotation, even when points made are not always accurate

AF3 – deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts

Level 4

- comments make inferences based on evidence from different points in the text, *e.g. interpreting a character's motive from their actions at different points*
- inferences often correct, but comments are not always rooted securely in the text or repeat narrative or content

Level 5

- comments develop explanation of inferred meanings drawing on evidence across the text, *e.g. 'you know her dad was lying because earlier she saw him take the letter'*



- comments make inferences and deductions based on textual evidence, *e.g. in drawing conclusions about a character's feelings on the basis of their speech and actions*

AF4 – identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts, including grammatical and presentational features at text level

Level 4

- some structural choices identified with simple comment, *e.g. 'he describes the accident first and then goes back to tell you why the child was in the road'*

Level 5

- comments on structural choices show some general awareness of author's craft, *e.g. 'it tells you all things burglars can do to your house and then the last section explains how the alarm protects you'*

AF5 – explain and comment on writers' use of language, including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level

Level 4

- some basic features of writer's use of language identified, *e.g. 'all the questions make you want to find out what happens next'*
- simple comments on writer's choices, *e.g. "'disgraceful' is a good word to use to show he is upset'*

Level 5

- various features of writer's use of language identified, with some explanation, *e.g. 'when it gets to the climax they speak in short sentences and quickly which makes it more tense'*
- comments show some awareness of the effect of writer's language choices, *e.g. "'inked up" is a good way of describing how the blackberries go a bluey black colour as they ripen'*

AF6 – identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect of the text on the reader

Level 4

- main purpose identified, *e.g. 'it's all about why going to the dentist is important and how you should look after your teeth'*
- simple comments show some awareness of writer's viewpoint, *e.g. 'he only tells you good things about the farm and makes the shop sound boring'*

- simple comment on overall effect on reader, *e.g. 'the way she describes him as "ratlike" and "shifty" makes you think he's disgusting'*

Level 5

- main purpose clearly identified, often through general overview, *e.g. 'the writer is strongly against war and wants to persuade the reader to agree'*
- viewpoint in texts clearly identified, with some, often limited, explanation, *e.g. 'at the end he knows he's done wrong and makes the snake sound attractive and mysterious'*
- general awareness of effect on the reader, with some, often limited, explanation, *e.g. 'you'd be persuaded to sign up because 25p a week doesn't seem that much to help someone see'*

AF7 – relate texts to their social, cultural and historical traditions

Level 4

- features common to different texts or versions of the same text identified, with simple comment, *e.g. characters, settings, presentational features*
- simple comment on the effect that the reader's or writer's context has on the meaning of texts, *e.g. historical context, place, social relationships*

Level 5

- comments identify similarities and differences between texts, or versions, with some explanation, *e.g. narrative conventions in traditional tales or stories from different cultures, ballads, newspaper reports*
- some explanation of how the contexts in which texts are written and read contribute to meaning, *e.g. how historical context influenced adverts or war reports from different times/ places; or how a novel relates to when/where it was written*



Framework for Literacy - Objectives for Years 5 and 6 selected for relevance to the text:

Framework for Literacy Learning objectives:

1 Speaking

Y5

- Present a spoken argument, sequencing points logically, defending views with evidence and making use of persuasive language

Y6

- Use a range of oral techniques to present persuasive arguments and engaging narratives
- Participate in whole-class debate using the conventions and language of debate, including standard English
- Use the techniques of dialogic talk to explore ideas, topics or issues

2 Listening and responding

Y5

- Analyse the use of persuasive language

Y6

- Make notes when listening for a sustained period and discuss how note-taking varies depending on context and purpose
- Identify the ways spoken language varies according to differences in the context and purpose of its use

3 Group discussion and interaction

Y5

- Understand different ways to take the lead and support others in groups

Y6

- Consider examples of conflict and resolution, exploring the language used
- Understand and use a variety of ways to criticise constructively and respond to criticism

4 Drama

Y5

- Reflect on how working in role helps to explore complex issues
- Perform a scripted scene making use of dramatic conventions
- Use and recognise the impact of theatrical effects in drama

Y6

- Improvise using a range of drama strategies and conventions to explore themes such as hopes, fears and desires
- Consider the overall impact of a live or recorded performance, identifying dramatic ways of conveying characters' ideas and building tension

7 Understanding and interpreting texts

Y5

- Make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas
- Infer writers' perspectives from what is written and from what is implied
- Explore how writers use language for comic and dramatic effects

Y6

- Understand underlying themes, causes and points of view
- Understand how writers use different structures to create coherence and impact
- Recognise rhetorical devices used to argue, persuade, mislead and sway the reader

8 Engaging and responding to texts

Y5

- Compare the usefulness of techniques such as visualisation, prediction and empathy in exploring the meaning of texts
- Compare how a common theme is presented in poetry, prose and other media

Y6

- Sustain engagement with longer texts, using different techniques to make the text come alive
- Compare how writers from different times and places present experiences and use language



Dramatic techniques to support activities for *A Christmas Carol*:

Freeze-frame

Working in small groups or a whole class, the children create a moment that shows the action in a narrative frozen in time, as if the pause button has been pressed. This allows them to think about what is going on for each of the characters in the frame, or to consider what is happening from different points of view. The moment itself may be the interesting thing, or they may be asked to think about what has just happened or is about to happen.

Make sure children have sufficient background knowledge of the context for the freeze-frame to understand their own role in the action or to discuss it.

Role on the wall

A character is depicted and developed in a visual way using a large format note-making strategy. The teacher can use a flipchart, whiteboard, large screen or a big piece of paper displayed 'on the wall'. A simple character shape such as a stick person is drawn.

The character may already be partly developed, for example through reading the first chapter of a class novel (*What do we already know about this person?*), or the children may be creating the character from scratch (*What do we want this character to be like?*). As children contribute their own ideas, the teacher adds brief notes to the visual in an appropriate position.

Encourage children to talk and think about different dimensions of the character. For example, if they focus on physical description ask them what kind of person this might be.

Hot seating

A character is questioned by the group about his or her background, behaviour and motivation. Even done without preparation, it is an excellent way of fleshing out a character.

Characters may be hot-seated individually, in pairs or small groups.

The technique is additionally useful for developing questioning skills with the rest of the group. The traditional approach is for the pupil playing the character to sit on a chair in front of the group (arranged in a semi-circle), although characters may be hot-seated in pairs or groups.

It is helpful if the teacher takes on the role of facilitator to guide the questioning in constructive directions however the teacher could take on the role of the character themselves.



Episode 1: Marley's Ghost

Synopsis:

It is Christmas Eve and seven years since Ebenezer Scrooge's business partner, Jacob Marley, died. It is cold, biting weather and Scrooge is in his 'counting-house' with his eye on his clerk, Bob Cratchit.

Scrooge's nephew, Fred, enters and invites his uncle to Christmas dinner the following day, as he does each year. Scrooge declines the invitation and, in doing so, attacks the whole festivity of the time of year. Fred leaves, determined to keep his 'Christmas humour'.

Two gentlemen enter raising money for homeless people at Christmas time and enquire what they can put Scrooge 'down for'. He rebuffs them with the suggestion that those unable to provide for themselves should be housed in prisons or workhouses - both of which he has already contributed to through payment of taxes.

The bell strikes and it is time to 'shut up shop'. Scrooge reluctantly agrees that Cratchit may have Christmas Day as holiday then makes his way home to his dark and dingy home.

When he arrives at his door he is shocked to see in his door knocker the face of Jacob Marley. He then passes hesitantly through his chambers searching for any other ghostly signs.

Scrooge assures himself that all is well but just as he turns in for the night he hears a clanking sound down in the basement and then coming up the stairs. Scrooge tries to persuade himself it is all 'humbug' - until an apparition walks through the door. It is the ghost of Jacob Marley.

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Y5

- Analyse the use of persuasive language

Y6

- Make notes when listening for a sustained period and discuss how note-taking varies depending on context and purpose

3 Group discussion and interaction

Y5

- Understand different ways to take the lead and support others in groups

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- Consider examples of conflict and resolution, exploring the language used
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- Reflect on how working in role helps to explore complex issues
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- Compare the usefulness of techniques such as visualisation, prediction and empathy in exploring the meaning of texts
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Ideas for Teaching and Learning:

Listen to the episode and identify key moments where characters are introduced.

Map a timeline of how they appear and discuss how important they are to understanding the character of Scrooge.

Ask pupils why Dickens starts with the introduction of a character who is dead. Discuss how this sets the tone for the story and how it makes the reader/listener feel about what is in store.

Explore how Dickens describes the character of Scrooge throughout Episode 1. He makes comparisons to the seasons and weather 'frost on his head' and paints a picture of a lonely bitter character. Collect the vocabulary and check understanding of new words such as 'sole friend' and 'morose'.

Character comparisons can be made using the word choices of Dickens. Pupils can listen to the descriptions of Fred and Scrooge identifying the vocabulary used exploring how Dickens creates a warm character and contrasting cold character. Consider how the two charitable visitors help to underline Scrooge's mean-ness and lack of compassion for those less fortunate. Make comparisons to charities today and explore opinion. Do the pupils agree with Scrooge's argument for not helping those less fortunate at Christmas time? How are Fred and the clerk, Bob Cratchit used to illustrate how wrong he is?

Create a debate around the importance of Christmas using Fred to represent for and Scrooge to represent against. Using the characters arguments set pupils with the task of presenting this argument and then planning questions to challenge. Pupils can compare with Christmas of today and consider if the arguments remain as relevant today.

Ask the children to decide how they think Dickens felt about Christmas and helping the poor. Can they identify his viewpoint as a writer at this time in 1843?

Explore how Dickens builds up the story to the moment Marley's Ghost appears. Map a timeline of incidents that increase Scrooge's fear to the point of Marley arriving. Ask pupils to consider what Scrooge sees, hears and feels as the ghost approaches through the building and explore using drama techniques such as freeze-framing.

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/achristmascarol1_transcript.pdf



Episode 2: Meeting with Marley

Synopsis:

The ghost who has entered Scrooge's bed chamber is undoubtedly Jacob Marley. Scrooge asks what the spirit wants with him; 'a lot' is the reply.

Scrooge tries to maintain that Marley is just a figment of his imagination – perhaps caused by a piece of cheese or an underdone potato. But Marley scares him into submission and now the business of his visit may begin...

Marley explains that it is the duty of every person that their spirit should 'walk among their fellow-men'...and that 'if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death'. Marley is one such unfortunate: he spent his life amassing his fortune when care for others should have been his business. The dreadful chain he wears he forged, link by link, throughout his life. He can see another chain weighing Scrooge down now.

But Marley has come on a mission of mercy, with an explanation that Scrooge may yet escape a similar fate to Marley if only he will mend his ways. Scrooge is to be haunted by three spirits. The first will come this evening when the clock strikes one.

Marley ends by telling Scrooge to mark what has passed between them. Then he floats out through the open window to join countless other spirits in the sky while Scrooge falls exhausted on his bed and is asleep within an instant.

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Ideas for Teaching and Learning:

Marley's ghost is introduced. Ask pupils to draw him by listening to the description in small sections and at the same time tackling any new or difficult vocabulary. Pupils can annotate their drawing with phrases from the story.

Explore the different words 'ghost', 'spectre', 'spirit', 'phantom'. Choose other new words and see how many more can be found which have similar meaning. Discuss why Dickens likes to choose many words which have the same meaning and how they help the telling of the story.

Ask the children in pairs to listen again to Marley's arrival. How much information about him can they gather and how does this help us to understand why he is there? Can they link Marley's character to Scrooge's character?

This part of the story is particularly scary. Pupils can look for the moments Dickens creates fear in Scrooge. Does he do this well and is it still scary to us in 2010?

Pose to pupils, if this were a scary movie, which moments would they emphasise and how would they direct it to make these moments as effective as they can on the viewer? Use story boxes to retell the key moments with stage directions added. (Sequenced boxes linked together.)

Marley's Ghost explains the rules of being a spirit forced to roam the world. Ask pupils to make a set of rules for bad spirits based on those in the story. Can they add some rules of their own that are in keeping with Dickens' style?

Use the image of a chain to record the failures of Marley and Scrooge. Pupils can record each failure on a link to display on the class book board or in the class book area.

Compare how Scrooge feels now compared to how he was feeling at the end of Episode 1. Revisit their descriptions of his attitude. How has he changed?

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/achristmascarol2_transcript.pdf



Episode 3: The First of the Three Spirits

Synopsis:

When Scrooge awakes he is feeling confused. The clock has struck 12, but it was past two when he went to bed. Perhaps he has slept right through the following day..?

Then the clock strikes one and the curtains of Scrooge's four-poster bed are drawn back. Scrooge is confronted by a strange figure – putting him in mind of a child and an old man in equal measure.

The ghost explains it is the Spirit of Christmas Past and that its purpose is Scrooge's reclamation. The Spirit whisks Scrooge from his surroundings and when he becomes sensible once more he is greeted by a Christmas scene from his childhood. The effect is immediate as Scrooge watches a group of boys known to him from many years past and his 'cold eye glistens'.

The next scene which Scrooge witnesses is his former school where Scrooge finds himself alone, the other pupils having gone home for the holidays. Scrooge feels sad for this solitary figure and shows the first instance of remorse, remembering the child who sang at his door in Episode 1.

His sister, Fan, bursts in upon this scene, announcing to the young Scrooge that she has come to take him home for the Christmas holiday. Scrooge, watching this scene, reflects upon the big-heartedness of his now deceased sister...and how her only child is his nephew, Fred.

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8 Engaging and responding to texts

Y5

- Compare how a common theme is presented in poetry, prose and other media

Y6

- Compare how writers from different times and places present experiences and use language

Ideas for Teaching and Learning:

Discuss how time appears to have stood still or maybe even reversed. How does Dickens use this to keep the story moving?

Revisit the Ghost of Christmas Past. How does he look and behave and what does this tell us about the character? Use drawings to illustrate the character and add words and phrases from the story as well as adding their own ideas. Hot seat the Ghost of Christmas Past devising and asking questions to find out more about all he knows.



Explore the three Christmas scenes Scrooge sees. Pupils can record the similarities and differences between each Christmas. Decide together what is revealed about Scrooge's childhood. Have they changed their opinions of Scrooge in any way? Explore how Dickens does this to help his readers understand why Scrooge is the way he is.

Return to the moment when Scrooge says quietly, 'I wish...I wish...'. Pupils can record wishes for Scrooge at this moment in time - e.g. 'I wish I had spoken to the boy at my door'; 'I wish I could see Alibaba, my old friend, again'; 'I wish I could see my beautiful sister again'. What would he wish for and why?

Explore the idea of regret in the pupils' own lives. What might we regret in the choices we have made such as unkind words to a friend, ignoring a brother or sister, being rude to someone being helpful. Compare to Scrooge's regret about the sister he missed. Remind them about Fred. Can Scrooge do something about his regrets? Link back to his relationship with Fred in Episode 1.

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/achristmascarol3_transcript.pdf

Episode 4: Master Fezziwig

Synopsis:

The Spirit ushers Scrooge away to another winter scene.

It is Christmas once more and Scrooge is standing outside the warehouse where once he was an apprentice.

They go inside and Scrooge is delighted to find his former boss – Fezziwig – instructing a young Scrooge and his fellow apprentice, Dick, to ready the premises for their annual Christmas party.

The scene fills as in come a fiddler, Mrs Fezziwig, all the other Fezziwigs and the employees.

They enjoy music and dancing and when finally the joyous evening comes to a close Scrooge is forced to reflect on his own treatment as an employer regarding his staff.

The scene shifts again and this time Scrooge finds himself witness to a scene between himself as a young man and a young woman who is clearly his fiancée. However, through the course of the conversation it becomes clear that the young lady has detected that young Scrooge's heart has become concerned with little else than gain. Full of regret, she releases Scrooge from their bond, sensing that this is what he wishes.

Scrooge watching fills with pain at the memory. But the Spirit has one final Christmas scene to show: Scrooge's former fiancée now older and happily settled with a loving family.

The pain is so great for Scrooge that he demands to be taken away; he struggles with the ghost, finally snuffing out its light, whereupon Scrooge falls into bed and sinks into a deep sleep once again.



Framework for Literacy Learning objectives:

2 Listening and responding

Y5

- Analyse the use of persuasive language

3 Group discussion and interaction

Y6

- Consider examples of conflict and resolution, exploring the language used

7 Understanding and interpreting texts

Y5

- Make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas
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Y6

- Sustain engagement with longer texts, using different techniques to make the text come alive
- Compare how writers from different times and places present experiences and use language

Ideas for Teaching and Learning:

Revisit the description Dickens gives of the Fezziwig premises for the fourth Christmas. Find the descriptive language used and imagine the picture it paints. Discuss why Dickens wanted to create such a vivid picture for us and for Scrooge.

Talk about the character of Mr Fezziwig. Use role on the wall to list facts and feelings about Mr Fezziwig. Pupils can list his qualities and the effect these qualities have on others.

Compare him to the kind of employer that Scrooge has become. Pupils can again explore how Scrooge's style of managing affects those around him contrasting with Mr Fezziwig.

Scrooge reflects for a moment on Bob Cratchit, his clerk. Remind the pupils about his relationship with Cratchit in episode 1. If Scrooge could speak to him now, what would he say? Pupils could complete speech bubbles in the role of Scrooge. Encourage them to think of how Scrooge might express his feelings. Would he apologise? Would he offer him a better quality of working life? In response, how would Cratchit react to Scrooge being different? Would he believe him?

Explore the theme of greed through the fifth Christmas and the character of Scrooge's fiancé. Discuss the big decision she has had to make and why. A drama technique such as conscience alley could be used to help Scrooge or his fiancé with their decision making e.g. should Scrooge allow her to leave or decide to convince her to stay?

Ask pupils to think back to both descriptions and how vivid they are. Was it really like that in Victorian times? Discuss how authors use exaggeration to emphasise something to their reader. Explore the vocabulary he chose which exaggerates the images he wants readers to envisage. Pupils could draw or paint the scenes to show the detail using his words and phrases as prompts on the wall.

Ask pupils to reflect on how Scrooge has become the way he has. What events have happened to him and what has been of his own making? Encourage the pupils to compare this to their own choices such as who are our friends, how we treat others, what job we might do and so on.

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/achristmascarol4_transcript.pdf



Episode 5: The Second of the Three Spirits

Synopsis:

Scrooge wakes again on the strike of 1, but no ghost appears.

When he gets out of bed he notices a light coming under the door from the next room. He opens the door to find the room draped with holly, ivy and mistletoe; a heap of festive food including turkeys, hams, geese; and sitting on top of it all a jolly, green giant of a ghost.

It is the Spirit of Christmas Present.

First the Ghost takes Scrooge through the streets of London, until they stand outside the window of a modest house in a poor area of the city. It is the home of the Cratchit family. There is hustle and bustle as the Cratchits prepare for Christmas dinner. Bob enters with Tiny Tim upon his shoulders and the Cratchits sit down to a scanty meal which is nevertheless a kind of feast to them.

The mood darkens though when Cratchit suggests they toast Mr Scrooge as the 'founder of the feast' and Mrs Cratchit replies that only on Christmas Day should such an 'odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man' as Scrooge be toasted. Scrooge asks the Ghost if Tiny Tim will recover and the Ghost replies '...if these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die.'

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Ideas for Teaching and Learning

Explore the themes Dickens writes about through Christmas Present. Listen to or reread the description of the ghost and in pairs encourage the pupils to talk about how he looks and behaves. Does he remind us of Father Christmas and why? Link to what was happening around the idea of Christmas at that time in Victorian households. How did they celebrate Christmas and had it always been celebrated in this way.

Compare this spirit to the last. How are they different and how does this affect Scrooge? In this part of the story he becomes happy at the thought of seeing a jolly scene. Consider if Scrooge is beginning to change in anyway and what the signs might be in this part of the story.

Reflect again on how Dickens likes to describe scenes with lots of detail and fuss. He paints the picture of the Cratchit family's celebrations vividly. Encourage the pupils to identify what is good about their Christmas and what is poor about their Christmas. Ask the pupils to talk or write their own Christmas description using Dickens technique of adding as much detail as possible. Their aim is to help the reader gain a very clear picture of what Christmas is like in that household.



Tiny Tim remains a famous character from the book. Explore how Tiny Tim makes us, the reader/listener feel. How does Dickens help us to understand how Scrooge might feel by doing this? He doesn't tell us clearly what Scrooge is feeling but infers it. Ask the pupils to identify in this part of the story the clues that tell us he is feeling regret and sadness over the Cratchit family and then discuss Mrs Cratchit's response to the toast to him.

At this point in the story the reader/listener has a clear picture of the kind of person Scrooge has been. Revisit some of their thoughts and ideas from the first episode and ask the pupils to decide how they feel towards him now. Encourage them to explain their opinion using evidence from the story.

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/achristmascarol5_transcript.pdf

Episode 6: Scrooge's Nephew

Synopsis:

The Ghost of Christmas Present takes Scrooge away from the Cratchit's home and presents him with a series of Christmas scenes: a mining family on a bleak moor; the keepers of a solitary lighthouse out at sea; the crew of a ship.

In each case the circumstances of the individuals concerned are difficult; yet each hums 'a Christmas tune'. Then the scene changes again. Now Scrooge sees his nephew – Fred – at his Christmas party. Fred is in the process of relating to his guests his encounter with Scrooge that very morning, during which Scrooge described Christmas as 'humbug'. The essence of the scene is generosity and a refusal to censure Scrooge for his behaviour.

They journey on and 'in misery's every refuge, where vain man had not made fast the door and barred the Spirit out, he left his blessing.'

Finally Scrooge asks the Ghost about two children he has noticed sheltering in the folds of his robe. The Spirit says they are the children of mankind: '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!'

The bell strikes twelve and the Ghost disappears, to be replaced by the ghoulish sight of the last of the three spirits 'coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.'

Framework for Literacy Learning objectives:

1 Speaking

Y5

- Present a spoken argument, sequencing points logically, defending views with evidence and making use of persuasive language

Y6

- Use a range of oral techniques to present persuasive arguments and engaging narratives



- Participate in whole-class debate using the conventions and language of debate, including standard English
- Use the techniques of dialogic talk to explore ideas, topics or issues

3 Group discussion and interaction

Y5

- Understand different ways to take the lead and support others in groups

Y6

- Consider examples of conflict and resolution, exploring the language used
- Understand and use a variety of ways to criticise constructively and respond to criticism

4 Drama

Y5

- Reflect on how working in role helps to explore complex issues

Y6

- Improvise using a range of drama strategies and conventions to explore themes such as hopes, fears and desires

7 Understanding and interpreting texts

Y5

- Make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas
- Infer writers' perspectives from what is written and from what is implied
- Explore how writers use language for comic and dramatic effects

Y6

- Understand underlying themes, causes and points of view
- Understand how writers use different structures to create coherence and impact
- Recognise rhetorical devices used to argue, persuade, mislead and sway the reader

8 Engaging and responding to texts

Y5

- Compare how a common theme is presented in poetry, prose and other media

Y6

- Compare how writers from different times and places present experiences and use language

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/achristmascarol6_transcript.pdf

Ideas for Teaching and Learning:

Discuss the three settings of the miner, the lighthouse keeper and the ship's crew. Ask pupils to find the common themes of them all. Consider why the Ghost of Christmas Present wants Scrooge to see the happy scenes within hardship. Look for links in song and singing and discuss why Dickens might have thought this a symbol of happiness.

Review the scene of Fred's home. Ask the pupils to think about how Scrooge felt listening and watching everyone laughing and teasing about him. Do they agree with Fred's forgiveness of Scrooge and his reasons. Do they think Scrooge should be forgiven or does he deserve his loneliness?

Pose the question- Why is the Ghost of Christmas Present dying? Encourage pupils to think beyond what is obvious and consider why his spirit life ends at midnight.

The boy and girl images are disturbing and make us feel uncomfortable as they do Scrooge. The symbols here of Ignorance and Want need some clarifying for pupils. These could be labelled, displayed and definitions agreed by using various sources, dictionaries, thesaurus, on line search engine. At this point the ghost uses Scrooge's words to suggest the children should go to prison or a work house. Discuss with pupils whether Ignorance or Want should be punished or is there some other way to help them. Use a debate to decide.

Pay close attention to the arrival of the final ghost. Who does he remind us of? What feelings do we have at his description? Collect any vocabulary and record around the image of a hooded figure (role on the wall could be used here). Ask the pupils to think as Scrooge and decide some questions to ask the spirit as it approaches.



Episode 7: The Last of the Spirits

Synopsis:

The last of the three spirits causes Scrooge the most fear of all, but he is now resolved to learn all that he can from what he will be shown.

The scenes that the ghost subsequently reveals Scrooge are elusive, with Scrooge struggling to comprehend their meaning.

First the spirit takes Scrooge into the heart of the financial institution of the city, where Scrooge once worked.

Four businessmen are mocking someone of their acquaintance who has just died. Immediately after two others refer to the death of 'Old Scratch', but it is clearly a matter of little interest to them, barely more significant than the weather.

Scrooge assumes that he will be shown himself in the future at some point and that this will solve the riddle of whom is being referred to. But the next scene is a dark and ominous episode in which the stolen possessions of a man who has died in solitude are brought to a pawnbroker. It becomes clear that these possessions include the bed curtains, linen and even the very shirt in which the man was dressed shortly after his death.

Scrooge mistakes the purpose of the ghost: 'I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own.' So the spirit takes Scrooge to another place – the very bedroom of the man who has died, where he lies, still uncared for...

- Use the techniques of dialogic talk to explore ideas, topics or issues

3 Group discussion and interaction

Y5

- Understand different ways to take the lead and support others in groups

Y6

- Consider examples of conflict and resolution, exploring the language used
- Understand and use a variety of ways to criticise constructively and respond to criticism

7 Understanding and interpreting texts

Y5

- Make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas
- Infer writers' perspectives from what is written and from what is implied
- Explore how writers use language for comic and dramatic effects

Y6

- Understand underlying themes, causes and points of view
- Understand how writers use different structures to create coherence and impact
- Recognise rhetorical devices used to argue, persuade, mislead and sway the reader

8 Engaging and responding to texts

Y5

- Compare the usefulness of techniques such as visualisation, prediction and empathy in exploring the meaning of texts
- Compare how a common theme is presented in poetry, prose and other media

Y6

- Compare how writers from different times and places present experiences and use language

Framework for Literacy Learning objectives:

1 Speaking

Y5

- Present a spoken argument, sequencing points logically, defending views with evidence and making use of persuasive language

Y6

- Use a range of oral techniques to present persuasive arguments and engaging narratives
- Participate in whole-class debate using the conventions and language of debate, including standard English



Ideas for Teaching and Learning:

Suggest to the pupils that in this episode they are detectives. They must gather the clues and understand them so they can present them clearly to Scrooge. Ask them to listen to each of the three scenes where groups of people discuss a man who has died.

Explore each of the conversations using the transcripts of the episode and identify how the characters felt about the man in what they said and what they did not say.

Financiers' conversation - going to a funeral and take pleasure in a free meal

Wealthy men - the death of the man is as interesting as the weather

Pawnbrokers - to prophet from the death of someone unloved and ignored

When they have collated their clues and agreed their findings they must present them to Scrooge.

Encourage prediction at the end of the episode as to who the death is and what the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come will show Scrooge next. Pupils should explain why.

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/achristmascarol7_transcript.pdf

Episode 8: An End to the Haunting

Synopsis:

The episode begins in the bedroom of the man who has died. The spirit wishes Scrooge to draw back the bedclothes and see who it is; but Scrooge refuses saying he cannot do it.

Instead, Scrooge implores the spirit to show him a scene in which some emotion will be expressed for the man's death. Accordingly the spirit shows Scrooge a scene in which a young woman awaits the return of her husband. She is very agitated and when he returns it becomes clear that they are in the debt of the man who has died. The debt has been called in, but in the nick of time the couple have been spared by the man's death. Even here the 'only emotion that the Ghost could show Scrooge, caused by the event, was one of pleasure.'

As the story approaches its climax the spirit takes Scrooge to the Cratchits once again. The household is extremely quiet, in contrast to Scrooge's previous visit. It emerges that Mrs Cratchit is making items for a funeral and when Bob returns it is from the church where he has just made arrangements. Bob relates how he bumped into Fred who offered kind words and an assurance that he would help the Cratchits in any way possible. Cratchit breaks down at the talk of his deceased child and he goes upstairs, where Tiny Tim's body is laid out in bed.

Scrooge senses that the time of parting is drawing near. He asks to know what man it was who lay dead in bed. The spirit ushers him away and on their journey Scrooge passes his old office...but still doesn't work out why he cannot see an image of himself within...

Finally the spirit takes Scrooge to a graveyard. Reading the inscription on a gravestone Scrooge at last realises the identity of the man who has died: it is himself.



He implores the spirit 'Are these the shadows of the things that will be, or are they shadows of things that may be, only?' Scrooge promises that the change in him is complete and as he snatches at the spirit it dwindles down and disappears, becoming his own bedpost.

Framework for Literacy Learning objectives:

4 Drama

Y5

- Reflect on how working in role helps to explore complex issues
- Perform a scripted scene making use of dramatic conventions
- Use and recognise the impact of theatrical effects in drama

Y6

- Improvise using a range of drama strategies and conventions to explore themes such as hopes, fears and desires
- Consider the overall impact of a live or recorded performance, identifying dramatic ways of conveying characters' ideas and building tension

7 Understanding and interpreting texts

Y5

- Make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas
- Infer writers' perspectives from what is written and from what is implied
- Explore how writers use language for comic and dramatic effects

Y6

- Understand underlying themes, causes and points of view
- Understand how writers use different structures to create coherence and impact
- Recognise rhetorical devices used to argue, persuade, mislead and sway the reader

8 Engaging and responding to texts

Y5

- Compare the usefulness of techniques such as visualisation, prediction and empathy in exploring the meaning of texts
- Compare how a common theme is presented in poetry, prose and other media

Y6

- Compare how writers from different times and places present experiences and use language

Ideas for Teaching and Learning:

In this episode the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come does not speak to Scrooge. Discuss with pupils why this might be. What kind of spirit is it compared to the others? What feelings does it bring about in the reader/listener? Scrooge does not guess that the dead body is his own. Pupils can discuss why he might not make this connection even though we as the reader have.

Recreate the scene where the family are relieved at the death of Scrooge so that they are released from their debt to him. The family freeze frame and in turn each pupil in character can add a thought 'I am so thankful he is dead' or speech 'We can now be happy together free from the debt to that man' or feelings 'I am not afraid now'.

Investigate the scene of Bob Cratchit's family. Compare this to the Christmas day scene of celebration. Ask pupils to find all the differences and then think about how this changes the mood towards the end of the story. How does this make the reader/listener feel as the story nears its end.

Explore how Dickens wants us to share the feelings of Scrooge such as regret and a desire for the matters not to end with the death of Tiny Tim.

Ensure pupils understand Scrooge's request to the spirit to be able to make changes. Do the pupils feel Scrooge has changed through his experiences? Pupils could pose questions to Scrooge about his change of heart about his attitude. At the end of the episode the spirit begins to subside and disappear. Pupils can discuss why they think this happens at this point. How might Scrooge's attitude bring about the end of the spirit?

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/achristmascarol8_transcript.pdf



Episode 9: The End of It

Scrooge is ecstatic as he realises that his bed curtains are not torn down and that the things he has been shown can be altered by his own actions.

When the church bells ring Scrooge runs to the window to ask a young boy what day it is.

The bemused youngster answers that it's Christmas Day – and Scrooge celebrates again as he realises he has not missed the day after all.

He tells the boy to buy the prize turkey from the local butcher – it will be an anonymous gift to the Cratchits.

Then Scrooge sets forth, walking the city streets, enjoying the contact of all those he meets. Finally he arrives at Fred's house, where Scrooge enjoys a party of the sort he had been shown by the Ghost of Christmas Present.

The following morning Cratchit is late into the office. Scrooge briefly feigns outrage, before telling Bob they'll discuss a raise in his salary and other matters over a bowl of Christmas punch.

Scrooge enjoys life to the full thereafter, and it is said of him by everyone that he 'knew how to keep Christmas well'...

'And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God Bless Us, Every One!'

Framework for Literacy Learning objectives:

2 Listening and responding

Y5

- Analyse the use of persuasive language

Y6

- Make notes when listening for a sustained period and discuss how note-taking varies depending on context and purpose
- Identify the ways spoken language varies according to differences in the context and purpose of its use

7 Understanding and interpreting texts

Y5

- Make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas

- Infer writers' perspectives from what is written and from what is implied
- Explore how writers use language for comic and dramatic effects

Y6

- Understand underlying themes, causes and points of view
- Understand how writers use different structures to create coherence and impact
- Recognise rhetorical devices used to argue, persuade, mislead and sway the reader

8 Engaging and responding to texts

Y5

- Compare the usefulness of techniques such as visualisation, prediction and empathy in exploring the meaning of texts
- Compare how a common theme is presented in poetry, prose and other media

Y6

- Compare how writers from different times and places present experiences and use language

Ideas for Teaching and Learning

In Episode 9 Dickens closes the story by Scrooge renouncing his past bad behaviour towards those he has wronged.

Ask the pupils to list each of the situations he must resolve from episode 1. Recall each and how he treated each person badly. Then revisit them in turn with a recount of how he fixes each problem.

Ask the pupils to find in the evidence in the ending to support how Scrooge has changed. Looking for key phrases pupils can gather the evidence and explain why this shows he has changed for the better.

Reflect on his dramatic change and how it is received. How would the characters be feeling about him? What might be their reservations and suspicions?



The end of the story contrasts in mood with the beginning. Collect the vocabulary that sets the mood and tackle any new or difficult words. Identify the words linked to humour which threads through the ending such as the joke Scrooge plays on Bob Cratchit.

Focus how Scrooge ends with the words of Tiny Tim and our relief he is alive. How satisfied are the pupils with the ending? Would they have ended the tale differently or does it work well?

Finally reflect on the story. Review their likes and dislikes, would they recommend the story to others and is it still as enjoyable to children and adults today as it was back in 1843?

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/achristmascarol9_transcript.pdf

A Christmas Carol - Cross curricular links

A Christmas Carol is ideal for linking in to a history topic of The Victorians tackling the following KS2 attainment targets. Suggestions of ways to explore history via the text are included in italics.

Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past

2. Pupils should be taught:

- about characteristic features of the periods and societies studied, including the ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children in the past

Identify the features of the period described by Dickens e.g. living conditions, poor education, health

- about the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studied, in Britain and the wider world

Compare the different classes characterised in the book. Discuss how confident we can be in Dickens portrayal. What other sources of evidence can support his descriptions?

- to identify and describe reasons for, and results of, historical events, situations, and changes in the periods studied

Explore Ragged Schools and how they came about. Why was Dickens concerned about children's welfare. Link to his own unhappy childhood.

-to describe and make links between the main events, situations and changes within and across the different periods and societies studied.

Link in to education or health care of the time.

Historical interpretation

3. Pupils should be taught to recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways, and to give reasons for this.

Explore how Dickens has represented a particular time in history. Consider the reliability of the story as historical fact.

Historical enquiry

4. Pupils should be taught:

- how to find out about the events, people and changes studied from an appropriate range of sources of information, including ICT-based sources [for example, documents, printed sources, CD-ROMS, databases, pictures and photographs, music, artefacts, historic buildings and visits to museums, galleries and sites]

Using the text as a starting point, identify events, people and changes and explore them further through other sources to gain a more detailed understanding. Gather facts, create a mind map, add to a topic journey on a display.