

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: 'A Christmas Carol'

'A Christmas Carol' is a C19 novella written by Charles Dickens

CONTEXT	CHARACTERS	
<p>Charles Dickens is one of the great writers of the 19th Century. He was a well-known social critic and much of his work examines life in the Victorian era.</p> <p>Dickens wrote the Novella in 1843, when Christmas in England was changing – traditions such as Christmas Trees were new at that time. Likewise, the ideas that Christmas is about family, fun and food is a very Victorian notion.</p> <p>Dickens wrote the story after visiting a school for poor children and was inspired by the idea of redemption and charity.</p> <p>The novella was published on December 19th, 1843 and sold out by Christmas Eve. Since that point, it has never been out of print in England.</p>	<p>Ebenezer Scrooge: Owner of London counting house. Miserable. Ghosts visit him to reverse his cold ways.</p> <p>Fan: Scrooge's sister, Fred's mother. Scrooge remembers her when with the ghost of Christmas past.</p>	<p>Ghost of Christmas Past. First to meet Scrooge. Shows Scrooge Christmases gone.</p> <p>Ghost of Christmas Present: Second to meet Scrooge. Shows Scrooge how others are spending their Christmas.</p> <p>Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come: Third to meet Scrooge. Shows Scrooge his lonely death.</p>
	<p>Bob Cratchit: Scrooge's clerk. A kind man with a big family. Remains a good employee despite Scrooge's treatment.</p> <p>Tiny Tim: Bob's crippled son. Represents England's poor.</p> <p>Peter Cratchit: Bob's eldest son, inherits father's collared shirt.</p> <p>Martha Cratchit: Bob's eldest daughter. Sells hats.</p>	<p>Fred: Scrooge's Christmas loving nephew. Invites him annually to his party, always rejected.</p> <p>Belle: A woman Scrooge loved. She broke their engagement because of Scrooge's greed.</p>
	<p>Jacob Marley: Scrooge's greedy partner, died seven years before start of the book. Appears as a ghost bound in chain and hopes to save Scrooge.</p>	<p>Portly Gentlemen: Two men who visit Scrooge at the start asking for donations. Scrooge declines but sees them after the ghosts. Promises large donations to the poor.</p>

Plot

<p>Stave 1 'Marley's Ghost': It is Christmas Eve. In Scrooge's counting house, it is cold but Scrooge refuses to use any coal. Fred, who loves Christmas, arrives and offers Scrooge to have Christmas dinner at his house but Scrooge declines. Two portly gentlemen ask Scrooge for charitable donations for the poor and Scrooge removes them from his office. Scrooge gives Bob Christmas day off but only because society suggests that's how it should be. Scrooge thinks of his dead business partner Marley when he thinks he sees him in a door knocker. Scrooge is tormented with visions of a hearse and bells ringing by themselves. That night Scrooge is visited by Marley's ghost. Marley tells him that he will be visited by three ghosts and must heed their warnings otherwise he will be forced to carry chains like Marley's after death.</p>	<p>The ghost takes Scrooge to other parties, including Fred's, where he enjoys the atmosphere. The Ghost shows Scrooge two hideous children called Ignorance and Want. Scrooge wants to help them and is taunted with his own earlier, cruel views on helping others.</p>
<p>Stave 2 'The First of the Three Spirits': At 1am, The Ghost of Christmas Past visits Scrooge. This reminds Scrooge of a time when he was kinder and more innocent and he cries. The ghost shows him his childhood and his sister Fan, who has died. The ghost shows his relationship with former mentor Mr. Fezziwig and his big Christmas parties. The ghost also shows Belle and Scrooge's breakup, in which Belle says Scrooge loves only money. The ghost shows Belle's current happy life and large family on Christmas Eve and her discussion with her husband about how Scrooge is lonely. Scrooge begs to go home.</p>	<p>Stave 4 'The Last of the Spirits': At midnight, the hooded ghost approaches Scrooge. The ghost shows Scrooge a series of places where all the people are discussing a man's death with relief and glee. Scrooge begs to know who they are discussing. They visit the Cratchits, who are trying to cope with the death of Tiny Tim. Finally, they visit a graveyard in which Scrooge sees his own neglected headstone. Scrooge is upset and begs with the ghost, saying that he will honour Christmas forever from now on. The ghost disappears and Scrooge is back in his bedroom.</p>
<p>Stave 3 'The Second of the Three Spirits': Scrooge wakes at 1am and finds The Ghost of Christmas Present in a different room. He is jolly and shows Scrooge how people are happily preparing for Christmas. The ghost shows the Cratchit's Christmas. The family are poor but happy. The ghost focuses on Tiny Tim and he tells Scrooge that Tim will die soon without help.</p>	<p>Stave 5 'The End of It': Scrooge wakes and realises it is Christmas morning. He is happy and yells 'Merry Christmas' at all that will listen. He goes out and offers a young boy money to deliver a large turkey to the Cratchits. He sees a portly gentleman he dismissed earlier, apologises and promises to donate to the poor. Scrooge goes to Fred's and is so happy, the other guests are shocked. The next day. Bob arrives at work late. Scrooge pretends to be mad but then tells Bob he is giving him a raise and will help his family from now on. Bob is shocked. As time passes, Scrooge stays a good man. He helps the Cratchits and Tiny Tim does not die. Scrooge brings the Christmas spirit into everyday life.</p>

Key Themes: greed, charity, selfishness, redemption, wealth, Christmas

Redemption Charity Ignorance Want Greed Selfishness Christmas Spirit Warning Visions Ghosts Disability Poor Law