EBENEZER SCROOGE

SCROOGE'S ROLE IN THE NOVELLA

One of Dickens's most famous characters, at the beginning of the **novella** Scrooge is presented to us as a mean and miserable man who cares only about making money. During the novella he:

- treats his office clerk, Bob Cratchit, badly, making him work in the cold and fear for his job.
- is antagonistic to his nephew who visits him at work to wish him a merry Christmas.
- tells charity collectors that poor people should die rather than be given charity.
- is visited by the ghost of his old partner, Jacob Marley, who tells him his focus on money is wrong.
- sees Christmas days from the past and begins to realise he has made bad choices.
- enjoys the present Christmas Day, especially the celebrations at the Cratchits' and Fred's houses.
- is horrified to find if he continues to behave badly no one will care about him, and Tiny Tim will die.
- changes his behaviour and supports the Cratchit family.

CHECKPOINT 31 AO1

Bob doesn't believe Scrooge at first when Scrooge says he will raise Bob's salary. Why is this?

SCROOGE'S IMPORTANCE TO THE NOVELLA AS A WHOLE

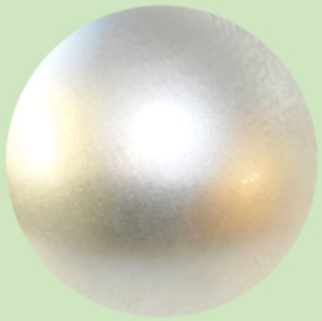
As the **central protagonist** of the novella all the action revolves around Scrooge. Even if he isn't in a scene he is watching it and we see how it affects him. Dickens shows how each scene that Scrooge is shown by the Ghosts changes him, until his final, joyful transformation.

EXAM FOCUS: WRITING ABOUT SCROOGE

AO1

Key point	Evidence/Further meaning
• Dickens makes it very clear that Scrooge is mean both with his money and in his dealings with others.	• Scrooge is 'Hard and sharp as flint' (p. 2). • This suggests his ability to hurt others.
• He used to know how to have fun.	• At Fezziwig's party (pp. 30–4) the young Scrooge is full of energy and enthusiasm. • The old Scrooge starts to learn from this scene, showing there is hope for him.
• By the arrival of the Ghost of Christmas Present the change is clear to see.	• 'Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been' (p. 42). • The **verb** 'timidly' contrasts with his confident rejection of the visitors at his office and the **narrator** clearly indicates that the change has started.
• If he continued his miserly ways he would have ended up alone.	• 'He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead!' (p. 73). • This horrifying potential future is what faces Scrooge if he doesn't change his ways. It is presented as inevitable and benefits only the thieves, something that adds to the shock.
• His transformation is complete at the end of the novella.	• It 'was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge' (p. 88). • He has changed his views and actions and this can be seen every Christmas.

AIMING HIGH: EXPLORE IMAGERY



It is interesting to consider how Dickens has used **imagery** to show Scrooge's transformation. Dickens's focus on Scrooge's total change of heart at the end of the novella is spelt out for us: 'His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him' (p. 87). This reminds us of one of the original **similes** used to describe him at the start of the novella: 'self contained, and solitary as an oyster' (p. 2). Dickens has carefully chosen his images to show that although Scrooge might be horrible at the beginning of the novella there is potential in him for change. The oyster is in a hard, sharp and dangerous shell but contains the potential of a pearl; an image we remember with the focus on Scrooge's heart at the end. The oyster that was Scrooge did contain a pearl and that is the transformed Scrooge.

TOP TIP AO1

Make sure you track Scrooge's change and know to what extent you believe in it. Each time he appears to respond with care or compassion make sure you ask yourself what Dickens is trying to show us.

RESPONDING TO WRITERS' EFFECTS

The two most important assessment objectives are **AO1** and **AO2**. They are about *what* writers do (the choices they make, and the effects these create), *what* your ideas are (your analysis and interpretation), and *how* you write about them (how well you explain your ideas).

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 1

What does it say?	What does it mean?	Dos and Don'ts
Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: • Maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response • Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations	You must: • Use some of the literary terms you have learned (correctly!) • Write in a professional way (not a sloppy, chatty way) • Show you have thought for yourself • Back up your ideas with examples, including quotations	**Don't write:** *Scrooge is a really horrible character. Dickens uses lots of horrible words to describe him. He's 'hard and sharp as flint' which makes him sound horrible.* **Do write:** *Dickens **firmly establishes** Scrooge as a miserly and harsh **character** at the start of the **novella**, encouraging us to reject him and his ways. The **simile** 'hard and sharp as flint' **suggests** his lack of human emotion and willingness to make life easier for others – something we see when he rejects the ideas presented by the charity collectors.*

IMPROVING YOUR CRITICAL STYLE

Use a variety of words and phrases to show effects. For example:

Dickens *suggests ..., conveys ..., implies ..., presents ..., demonstrates ..., signals ..., describes how ...*
I/we (as readers) *infer ..., recognise ..., understand ..., question ..., see ..., are given ...*

For example, look at these two alternative paragraphs by different students about Fred. Note the difference in the quality of expression:

Student A:

Dickens says that Fred is really positive when he talks about Christmas with Scrooge in Stave One. He says to Scrooge that Christmas is 'a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time'. This means that Christmas is a time to be nice to each other and give to charity. This means that Scrooge should be nice and give to charity.

This sounds as if Charles Dickens is speaking!

Very chatty and informal

It could 'mean' this, but there are other possibilities

Rephrases the quotation and doesn't add to our understanding

Better to use other words or phrases than 'This means'

Student B:

Dickens presents Fred in a very positive light when he speaks with Scrooge in Stave One. He demonstrates his understanding of the potential meaning of Christmas when he describes it as 'a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time'. The list of adjectives implies that the good aspects of Christmas are abundant and suggests Fred is more than a match for Scrooge as Dickens makes Fred mirror Scrooge's language patterns.

Fits with the idea of the overall way in which Fred is shown

Clear and precise language

Good vocabulary

Identification of technique and goes on to unpick what it does to create meaning

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 2

What does it say?	What does it mean?	Dos and don'ts
Analyse the language, form and structure used by the writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.	'Analyse' = comment **in detail** on **particular aspects** of the text or language 'Language' = vocabulary, **imagery**, variety of sentences, **dialogue**/speech, etc. 'Form' = how the story is told (e.g. first-person **narrative**, letters, diaries, chapter by chapter) 'Structure' = the order in which events are revealed, or in which characters appear, or descriptions are presented 'create meaning' = what can we, as readers, infer from what the writer tells us. What is implied by particular descriptions, or events? 'Subject terminology' = words you should use when writing about **novellas**, such as character, protagonist, imagery, setting, etc.	**Don't write:** *The writing is really descriptive in this bit so I get a good picture of London.* **Do write:** *Dickens **conveys** the sense that London is full of fun and laughter despite the severe weather. The use of the **verb** 'plumping' to describe the snow being shovelled from rooftops **creates a sense** of generosity and makes it seem soft, quite unlike the harshness of the ice that represents Scrooge.*

THE THREE 'I'S

- The best analysis focuses on specific ideas, events or uses of language and thinks about what is **implied.**
- This means looking beyond the obvious and beginning to draw **inferences.** On the surface, the lists of plenty used to describe the Ghost of Christmas Present create a sense of wealth and generosity – but what deeper ideas do they signify about the meaning of Christmas, or about the way Scrooge views the world?
- From the inferences you make across the text as a whole, you can arrive at your own **interpretation** – a sense of the bigger picture, a wider evaluation of a person, relationship or idea.