

AQA GCSE English Literature



How to Answer the 19th-century Novel Essay Question

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Structuring the Essay

Your notes

Structuring the Essay

Answering just one essay question can seem daunting. However, examiners just want to see your ideas and opinions on the 19th-century novel you have studied. The guide below will enable you to best express these ideas and opinions in a way that will gain the highest marks. It includes guides on:

- Answering the question
- Planning your essay
- Writing your essay

Answering the question

Regardless of which 19th-century novel you study, the type of question you'll need to write an essay for will be the same. You will be asked a question that asks you to analyse and write in detail about an aspect of the novel. Your answer will need to address both an extract from the novel that you will be given and the novel as a whole.

It is tempting to jump straight in and start analysing the extract immediately. However, completing the steps below first will ensure you answer the question in the way that examiners are looking for.

6 key steps to answer the 19th-century novel exam question effectively:

- 1. The very first thing you should do once you open your exam paper is to look at the question:
 - This sounds obvious, but it's really crucial to read through the question a few times
- Why is this important? Regardless of what subject you're being examined in, the single biggest mistake most students make in their exams is not reading the question through carefully enough that they answer the question they **think** they're being asked, rather than the question they've actually been asked
- It's especially important to get this right in your GCSE English Literature exams because you only have five essay questions to answer across two papers, so if you misread a question, you're potentially costing yourself a large number of marks
- 2. Identify the keywords of the question



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Starting with this extract, explore how Stevenson presents ideas about good and evil in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Your notes

Write about:

- how Stevenson presents ideas about good and evil in this extract
- how Stevenson presents ideas about good and evil in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

- The keywords are the focus of the question: the specific themes, ideas, or characters the examiners want you to focus on
- For the above question, the key words of question are "how Stevenson presents good and evil"
- This is the theme the examiners want you to explore in your essay
- Do not be tempted to write a question on a related theme, even if you have revised more for it: this will affect your overall mark badly, as you won't be directly answering the question!
- In the example above, the theme is about good and evil, so make sure you plan and write an essay about good and evil, rather than, for example, the role of religion in the novel
 - Although this could be viewed as a related theme, your answer won't be focused on the question and will lose you marks
- 3. Critically evaluate the idea or theme of the question in terms of the novel as a whole
 - Think: what is this question asking, and what is it not asking?
- It is asking you to explore ideas about good and evil a duality between what is considered morally right with what is considered wicked and wrong
- The question is not asking you to explore any other themes
- Again, writing about related ideas will actually lose you marks as you aren't answering the exact question you have been set. The examiner isn't going to reward you extra marks for information that is factually correct or demonstrates a great understanding of the novel if the information is not relevant to the question being asked
- 4. Now you have identified and evaluated the key idea or theme of the question, read the contextual information above the extract:

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Robert Louis Stevenson: The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Your notes

Read the following extract from Chapter 10 (Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case) of The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Jekyll describes his experience of taking the potion for the first time.

- This contextual information will help you understand where the extract comes in the novel (in this example, it is the final chapter of the novel), and will give you a headline about what is happening in the extract
 - o Jekyll describes his experience of taking the potion for the first time...
- This information, alongside your knowledge of what the theme the examiners are asking you to explore in the question, are vital clues that help you decode the extract
- 5. Contextualise the extract further yourself, before reading it
- Understanding where the extract comes from in the novel will also give you clues to understand the extract more completely
 - Think: what else happens before and after this point in the novel?
 - Which characters are involved?
 - How does it link to other parts of the text?
- Examiners repeatedly state that the very best answers are those that move beyond the extract and consider the question in the context of the novel as a whole:
 - Therefore, even at this stage, it is good to think about how the theme of the question develops before and after this point in the novel
- 6. Read the extract with all of the above information (the keywords from the question; the context) in mind
- This will enable you to pick out quotations and analyse only the most relevant parts of the extract in the context of the novel as a whole, and the question you have been set

Planning your essay

Planning your essay is absolutely vital to achieve the highest marks. Examiners always stress that the best responses are those that have a logical, well-structured argument that comes with spending time planning an answer. This, in turn, will enable you to achieve the highest marks for each assessment objective. The main assessment objectives are:



AO1	 Write a clear essay with a central argument based on your own opinions Select quotations and references from both the extract and the rest of the novel
AO2	 Use analysis of the author's methods to support your argument
AO3	 Use contextual ideas and perspectives to support your argument and to provide further insight of the author's choices



It is important to remember how marks are distributed for each assessment objective: there are 12 marks for AO1, 12 marks for AO2 and 6 marks for AO3. The mark scheme places assessment objectives AO1 and AO2 as the key skills, therefore while AO3 must be addressed in your response, your essay should focus predominantly on AO1 and AO2.

- Your plan should include all aspects of your response, covering all of the assessment objectives, but mainly focusing on AO1 and AO2:
 - Your overall argument, or **thesis** (AO1)
 - Your topic sentences for all your paragraphs (AO1)
 - The quotations you will be using and analysing from the extract (AO1 & AO2)
 - The quotations you will be using and analysing from elsewhere in the novel (AO1 & AO2)
 - A sense of why the author has made the choices they have (AO2)
 - A sense of what contextual factors give further insight to the ideas and theme presented in the question (AO3)
- Therefore, a plan may look like the following:

Thesis statement:

Stevenson presents good and evil as a constant duality throughout the novel and portrays it as a natural facet of the individual, which results in an ongoing battle between the two. Stevenson proposes that the inherent evil aspect of man is merely suppressed by society and he attempts to explore the consequences of attempting to separate one from the other.

Topic sentence	Evidence from extract	Evidence from elsewhere in the novel



Stevenson presents Jekyll as a man with a respectable reputation within society which is juxtaposed with the depiction of Hyde as a manifestation of evil	"in the course of my life, which had been, after all, nine-tenths a life of effort, virtue, and control"	Jekyll is first presented as a moral and "charitable man" who is suppressed and constrained by societal expectations in order to preserve his reputation
Stevenson presents the tensions which exist between good and evil and the base temptations and allurement of the latter	"And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome"	Jekyll delights that he is no longer restrained by his moral obligations and he indulges in depraved behaviour against innocent citizens
Stevenson challenges the reader to consider if good and evil can ever be separated or if they are inextricably linked	"all human beings are commingled out of good and evil"	The actions of Hyde are violent and grotesque and Stevenson's ideas concerning the duality of man only fully emerge in the last chapter of the novel and raise ideas about what constitutes human nature



Stevenson's methods: Imagery of pain and sickness associated with the transformation to Hyde; the vivid account of Jekyll's house; stylistic methods linked to the gothic genre

Contextual factors: society's views and attitudes concerning respectability, reputation and shame; religious views and attitudes; ideas about what constitutes human nature

Some other tips:

- You do not need to include a counter-argument (disagreeing with the question/including paragraphs which begin "On the other hand")
 - The questions have been designed to enable as many students as possible to write essays
 - Examiners say that the inclusion of a counter-argument is often unnecessary and unhelpful
 - It can affect your AO1 mark negatively
- Include evidence and analysis of the extract in the same paragraph as evidence and analysis of the rest
 of the novel
 - Think of the extract as a stepping stone to the whole text
 - Examiners prefer an "integrated approach": paragraphs that include related analysis of both the extract and the whole novel



- Examiners dislike essays which treat the extract and the rest of the novel as "separate entities":
 when students analyse the extract in the first half of their essays, and then the rest of the novel in the second half of their response
 - This would mean your answer doesn't cover the full scope of the question, and your AO1 mark would be affected

Your notes

Writing your essay

Once you have read and evaluated the question, read and analysed the extract, and created a clear plan, you are ready to begin writing. Below is a guide detailing what to include.

Your essay should include:

- An introduction with a thesis statement
- A number of paragraphs (three is ideal!), each covering a separate point. It's a great idea to start each paragraph with a **topic sentence**
- A conclusion

Introduction

- Your introduction should aim to clearly, and briefly, answer the question
- The best way to do this is to include a thesis statement
- A thesis statement is a short statement (one or two sentences) that summarises the main point or claim your argument is making
 - You should include the exact words from the question in your thesis statement
 - Examiners want to see your own opinion: your interpretation of what the author is trying to show
- Your thesis statement should also attempt to explain **why** you think the author has presented their characters in the way that they have: what are they trying to say overall? What is their message?
 - A good way to think about this is to ask: what is the author's one big idea in terms of the characters or themes addressed in the question?
 - Include contextual ideas and perspectives to help explain the author's intentions
 - Including the author's message or one big idea helps create a "conceptualised response", which examiners reward the highest marks
- An example of a thesis statement:

Question:



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Starting with this extract, explore how Stevenson presents ideas about good and evil in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.*

Your notes

Write about:

- how Stevenson presents ideas about good and evil in this extract
- how Stevenson presents ideas about good and evil in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Thesis statement:

"Stevenson presents good and evil as a constant duality throughout the novel and portrays it as a natural facet of the individual, which results in an ongoing battle between the two. Stevenson proposes that the inherent evil aspect of man is merely suppressed by society and he attempts to explore the consequences of attempting to separate one from the other."

Some other tips:

- Introductions should not be too long, or include all the details of what each paragraph will include
 - You will not be rewarded for including the same information twice, so don't waste time repeating yourself
- Write your thesis in the third person, not the first person (don't use "I")
 - "I believe that Stevenson presents ideas about good and evil \(\exists
 - "Stevenson presents good and evil as a constant duality through the character of Dr Jekyll / Mr Hyde ... in order to illustrate ..." ≡

Paragraphs

- Try to include three separate paragraphs that cover three separate points
 - This will ensure your response is to what examiners call the "full task"
- Start each paragraph with a topic sentence
 - A topic sentence is an opening sentence which details the focus of its paragraph
 - It should include the words of the question
 - All topic sentences must relate to your thesis
 - They should be seen as sub-points that provide a more specific and narrower focus than your thesis statement
 - Everything that follows a topic sentence in a paragraph must support the point it makes



Example of a topic sentence:

"Stevenson presents Jekyll as a man with a respectable reputation within society which is juxtaposed with the depiction of Hyde as a manifestation of evil."

- Paragraphs ideally include analysis of both the extract and the whole novel
 - This is what examiners call an "integrated approach"
 - Don't separate your analysis of the rest of the novel into different paragraphs
 - The examiners stated that the best students "dip in and out of both the extract and the whole text to select details which support their argument as appropriate"
- Beware of writing an overly structured paragraph which follows a set pattern
 - You may have learned PEE, PEAL, PEED, or other structures for your paragraphs
 - However, examiners often say that although these are excellent for learning what to include in essays, they can be limiting in an exam
 - Instead, be led by the ideas in the text, and prove your own argument (both the overall thesis and your topic sentences)

Conclusion

- It is always a good idea to include a conclusion to your essay so that your essay reads as coherent and focused on answering the question throughout
 - This can result in improved marks for AO1
- However, there is no need to spend a long time writing your conclusion
 - A conclusion for a 19th-century novel should only summarise the proof you have provided for your thesis
 - It only needs to be two or three sentences long
 - It should include the words of the question and your thesis
 - Remember, you do not get rewarded for including the same information twice

An example of a conclusion:

"To conclude, Stevenson presents good and evil as two powerful entities which coexist within the individual. Through his characterisation of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Stevenson indicates their separation as an impossibility and he uses them to present a very powerful exploration of the complexity of human nature."





Writer's Methods & Techniques

Your notes

Writer's Methods & Techniques

Examiners want students to analyse a wide range of the author's methods (AO2), not just the language. Remember, analysing methods means evaluating all of the author's choices, which includes a lot more than just the lines they wrote for each character. It includes characterisation, form and structure. In this guide you will find sections on:

- The Rise of the Novel
- Features of 19th-Century Novels
- How to Quote from a 19th-Century Novel in your Essay
- Analysing the Author's Methods

The Rise of the Novel

- 19th-century literature refers to written works published approximately between 1800 and 1899
- The word "novel" comes from the French word "nouvelle" which means "new" and was coined to introduce the birth of this new literature form in the 19th century:
 - Prior to the 1800s, poetry had been the dominant form of literature and it was only during the 19th century that the novel became the leading form of literature in English
 - The novel was defined as an extended form of fictional narrative written in a prose format
- The rise of the novel in the 19th century was due to a range of different factors:
 - Literacy rates increased dramatically during this period, in part due to the expansion of the school system and the growth of the middle classes
 - Improvements in printing technology meant that books, newspapers and periodicals were easier and cheaper to produce and therefore more accessible to a wider audience:
 - Many novels were first serialised in periodicals and journals before appearing in novel forms, such as Charles Dickens's Great Expectations

Features of 19th-Century Novels

There are many similar characteristics within 19th-century novels, and while not all of these can be found in every instance, some typical features are explored below.

Romanticism and Realism



- **Romanticism** and **Realism** pervaded much of the literature of the 19th century: the former dominated the first half of the 1800s, while the latter dominated the latter half of the century
- Your notes
- **Romanticism** was a literary movement which had dominated literature for centuries and was defined by a number of characteristics:
 - celebration of nature
 - the idealisation of the common man
 - focus on the individual experience and spirituality
 - idealisation of women
 - celebration of isolation and melancholy
- **Realism** was a literary movement which first began as a reaction to **Romanticism** as it was thought it had become too far removed from the real world
- **Realism** was defined by a number of characteristics:
 - familiar and realistic characters and settings
 - everyday life and occurrences
 - focus on social issues
 - depictions of the struggling working and middle classes
 - For example, in Great Expectations, Dickens depicts the harsh reality of life for the working class and impoverished

Gothic Genre

- The Gothic genre rose to prominence in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and was widespread in Victorian literature:
 - The gothic genre had become very influential and therefore many works of popular Victorian novels had elements of it
 - The majority of the 19th-century novels in this exam are classic gothic works or employ gothic elements within their writing
- The atmosphere of horror, the possibility of supernatural occurrences, and the present being haunted by the past are key characteristics of gothic fiction:
 - The atmosphere is typically claustrophobic and incarceration or persecution are common elements
 - It frequently uses the description of horrific occurrences to metaphorically express psychological or social tensions:



 For example, Frankenstein can be viewed as a classic gothic novel although Shelley also infuses the text with elements of romanticism

Your notes

Moral, Ethical and Social Considerations

- Many novels from the 19th century examined moral, ethical, and social themes
- It also reflected the Victorian era's interest in equality and the inner workings of the human psyche:
 - For example, in Pride and Prejudice, Austen explores the moral and ethical implications of pride, prejudice and vanity
 - For example, in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Stevenson portrays the moral and physical degeneration of his protagonist

Narrative style

- 19th-century novels generally used an omniscient third-person narrator, which enabled the narrator to be aware of all of the characters' thoughts and emotions
- The appeal for 19th-century writers of the third-person omniscient point-of-view is that it also gave the narrative a sense of objectivity or truthfulness:
 - This enabled the reader to form their own conclusions and evaluations about the characters and events in the novel
- Third-person narrative was also a useful device for novels which contained complex plots with multiple characters:
 - For example, the third-person narration in Great Expectations allows Dickens to present a wide range of characters who are all interwoven within a complex plot

How to quote the author in your essay

- The 19th-century novel exam is a closed-book exam, which means you don't get a copy of the novel to use in your exam
 - This means that examiners do not expect you to memorise dozens of direct quotations from the novel
 - The extract has been chosen for you to use to answer your essay, which means it will contain many lines that you can use as evidence in your essays
 - As much as you should take a "whole-text" approach to your essay, there will be plenty of excellent quotations that you can, and should, select from the extract first
 - If you are memorising quotations, focus on learning a few, short quotations that are relevant to the key themes in the novel you are studying
- The extract should serve as a springboard to the rest of the novel



- This means that when you are thinking about what other references to include you should be led
 by the themes and ideas in the extract, and not by the quotations you have memorised
- References don't need to be direct quotations
 - They can be things that characters say in different parts of the novel in your own words
 - They can be references to things that happen in the novel, or the way that different characters are presented elsewhere
- Examiners repeatedly stress that textual references are just as valuable as direct quotations, when referencing the rest of the novel
 - "You don't get extra marks for more quotations, but you do get more marks for making plenty of interesting comments about the references you have selected."
 - The most important thing is that these references are directly related to the ideas and themes you are exploring in your essay, and provide evidence to prove your thesis

Analysing the writer's methods

In order to achieve the highest AO2 marks, think about methods as the author's choices, not just the language they are using. One way to address this is to recognise that writer's methods embrace anything the writer has done to create and develop meaning, so while this obviously includes language, other aspects of the texts also should also be explored. The structure of the text, the juxtaposing of scenes and incidents, the use of characters as contrasts or foils all allow you to see the text in a larger sense, linking different parts of it together and exploring the choices the writer has made. Therefore, you should consider: What overall decisions has the author made in relation to characters, setting, form and structure? For what reasons have they made these choices? What overarching message do they help to convey?

What not to do when analysing the author's methods

- Don't "spot techniques"
 - Examiners dislike when students use overly sophisticated terminology unnecessarily ("polysyndeton"; "epanalepsis")
 - Knowing the names of sophisticated techniques will not gain you any more marks, especially if these techniques are only "spotted" and the author's intentions for this language are not explained
 - Instead of technique spotting, focus your analysis on the reasons why the author is presenting the character or theme the way they do
- Don't unnecessarily label word types
 - Similar to technique spotting, this is when students use "the noun X" or "the verb Y"
 - This doesn't add anything to your analysis
 - Instead, examiners suggest you focus on ideas, or images, instead of words, or word types





- Instead of "Stevenson uses the noun "deformity" to show..." use "Stevenson uses imagery of pain and sickness such as "deformity and decay" in connection with the transformation to Hyde which shows..."
- Your notes

- Don't limit your analysis to a close reading of the author's language
 - You gain marks for explaining all of the author's choices, not just their language
 - Only focusing on his language therefore limits the mark you will be given
 - Instead, take a whole-text approach and think about the author's decisions about:
 - Form
 - Structure
 - Characterisation
 - You do not need to include quotations to analyse the above, but you will still be rewarded well by the examiner
- Don't focus only on the extract
 - You will not be responding to the full task and text, and your mark will therefore suffer if you focus only on the extract, and not the wider novel overall
 - Use the extract as a springboard to ideas and themes in the rest of the novel
- Never retell the story
 - "Narrative" and "descriptive" answers get the lowest marks
- Move from what the author is presenting to how and why they have made the choices they have What to do when analysing the author's methods

Take a whole-text approach

- This could involve commenting on structure: "At the start / this changes when / in contrast..."
- Think about how characters develop: are they presented differently at different parts of the novel? Why has the author chosen to present this change?
- Are characters presented differently from each other? Why? What does each represent?
- Do characters' relationships with each other change? Why might the author have chosen to do this?
- Remember that characters are constructs, not real people
 - Think about what each character's function is in the novel
 - What does the author use each character to say about humanity, or about society?



- Always frame your essay with the author in mind
 - As the examiners say: "writers use methods, including language and structure, to form and express their ideas the choices the writer makes are conscious and deliberate"
 - Therefore, write that the author "highlights X", "suggests Y", "challenges Z"
 - Use the words "so" and "because" to push you to explain your own ideas further
 - Stevenson depicts Dr Jekyll as rapidly losing control over the malevolent force that is Hyde and so he is left alienated from his friends and position within society."
- Zoom out to big ideas in your analysis
 - Go from analysing language, or other writer's choices, to the author's overall intention, or message
 - This should also link to your thesis, and argument throughout
 - You can begin these "zoom-out" sentences with "Stevenson could be suggesting that because X, then Y" or "Stevenson could be using the character of X to challenge contemporary ideas about Y"
 - Use modal language to present sophisticated ideas
 - Using words like "could", "may" or "perhaps" shows that you are thinking conceptually





Context

Your notes

Context

There are only a maximum of six marks available in the 19th-century novel question for context. This may not seem like a lot, but six marks can be the difference between two entire grades at GCSE. Furthermore, if you understand how to effectively incorporate contextual understanding of your studied novel into your essay, it can even boost your mark in AO1 too, and help you create a more sophisticated and conceptualised response.

19th-century England

Below is some general context related to 19th-century England in which all of the authors wrote their novels. It should be stressed once again that it is not necessary, or even useful, to memorise all of this historical information, but that the notes below give a general sense of the behaviours and attitudes of the author's time. Remember, you should only revise those contextual factors that are relevant to the ideas and themes of the novel you are studying.

There were a number of transformations during this period, from scientific, economic, and technological advances to changes in class structures, gender roles and the role of religion in society. As a result, many 19th-century novels frequently functioned as a social critique, highlighting the problems of the day.

Industrial Revolution

- For many people, the 19th century was a time of profound and accelerated change and this is reflected
 in the literature of the time
- The effects of industrialisation and urbanisation are heavily portrayed in the 19th-century novel:
 - Between 1800 and 1900, the reality of daily life changed significantly due to industrialisation, urbanisation, the advent of new technologies and new scientific discoveries
- Education and literacy levels underwent major adjustments and advances in printing technology made it possible to produce books and newspapers quickly and inexpensively

Gender

- The social definitions of women's roles in the 19th century led to criticism towards marriage in the work of some female writers:
- For example, in Pride and Prejudice, Austen highlights the dependence of women on marriage to secure social standing and economic security
- This period was a time of expanding agency for women which also links to the context of empowerment of the disenfranchised:



- The civic and social roles of women were being challenged during this period and women were beginning to redefine their position in society:
 - For example, in Jane Eyre and Pride and Prejudice, both female protagonists provide new perspectives on the role of strong independent women and their changing attitudes toward marriage and family
- The role of men in many ways was also being redefined during this period and the definition of masculinity was being challenged:
 - For example, in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the protagonist's anxiety about women (who are largely absent from the novel) could be symbolic of the fear of women's liberation and its potential threat to masculinity

The Poor and Disenfranchised

- Much of the literature in the 19th century explored aspects of inequality in society and various societal reforms led to a greater concern for the poor and disenfranchised
- The class system in Victorian society deeply concerned many writers, who frequently used their literature to comment on the social and economic inequities of the time:
 - For example, in A Christmas Carol, Dickens uses the Ghost of Christmas Present to deliver scathing moral discourses about the condition of the poor and to encourage calls for social reform
- The development of prisons, workhouses and insane asylums (including new definitions of and treatments for madness) were a significant feature of 19th-century society:
 - References to these institutions within the 19th-century novel may have been used as a focus for other cultural anxieties at the time, such as class, masculinity and femininity or sexuality:
- For example, in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Hyde could be seen as a manifestation of Jekyll's madness
- For example, in Jane Eyre, Bronte could be considered to have presented a connection between Bertha's mental instability and her immorality as a character

Religion and Science

- The Victorian era was a very religious era and religion pervaded most aspects of everyday life:
 - The Christian Bible was viewed as an essential guide to leading a moral life
- The emergence of new scientific ideologies played a crucial role in challenging established religious beliefs:
 - A decline in religious belief was evident amongst the industrial working classes
- Victorians traditionally sought solace in the notion that religion was the only viable explanation for the natural world:





- Christian theology defined creation as an act of God, whereas Charles Darwin promoted the argument that man had evolved similarly to other species:
 - This led to traditional assumptions about religion being challenged and revised
- Religion and science are therefore central themes in many 19th-century novels and many explore the ideas of creation and moral responsibility:
 - For example, in Frankenstein, Victor's creation of a monster and his reckless pursuit of scientific discovery leads to chaos and tragedy

Supernatural

- The belief in the supernatural played a significant role in the 19th century:
 - It permeated all forms of art and was seen as a reaction to the "Victorian crisis of faith", which
 meant people began to question organised religion and its role in their lives
- As a result of the Victorian era's increasing secularisation an interest in spiritualism began to increase:
 - In literature, the interest in the supernatural and the unknown coincided with the rise in popularity of ghost stories and was linked Victorian gothic conventions and sensationalism
 - For example, in A Christmas Carol, the supernatural is a central theme of the novella and the ghosts are used as a catalyst for Scrooge's transformation

The 19th-century reader

- The audience for these novels would have comprised a wide range of social classes
- It is therefore useful to think of what their attitudes and behaviours would have been in general
 - What were the societal norms of the time?
 - How might these audiences have thought about topics like:
 - Social reform?
 - Religion?
 - Gender?
 - The class system?
 - The poor?
 - Science?
 - These topics should relate to the novel you have studied
 - Are the authors using the characters, or events in their novels, to reflect, or challenge these societal norms?





What not to do when exploring context

- Do not "bolt-on" irrelevant biographical or historical facts to your paragraphs
- Do not see context as history:
 - It is better understood as ideas and perspectives
- Do not explore contextual factors in your essay if they are not:
 - Relevant to the ideas and themes of the novel in general
 - Relevant to the question you have been set
 - Relevant to the central thesis of your own argument
- Do not only add context at the end of paragraphs, or in some set paragraph structure that includes context:
 - It is much better to incorporate contextual understanding into your argument, or into your analysis of the author's methods
- Do not include the formulation "A 19th-century audience would think... whereas a modern audience would think":
 - This takes you away from your own ideas, and from answering the question directly
- Do not include analysis of adaptations of the novel (for example a film version):
 - This will affect your focus on answering the question
- Do not include interpretations of the text based on literary theory (for example Marxist, feminist, Freudian and Nietzschean theories):
 - These do not contribute to your own interpretation of the text!

What to do when exploring context

- Ensure all your exploration of context is linked to:
 - The themes and ideas the author is exploring in the novel
 - The question you have been set
 - Your own argument
- Understanding that context is about understanding ideas and perspectives
 - Think: what were the particular attitudes and behaviours of the author's time that give a greater understanding of a theme or character?





- Do these societal norms help explain a character's actions, or development, over the course of the novel?
- Your notes
- Is there a reason why the author is exploring a theme? Do they want to reflect or challenge their society's attitudes on a particular issue?
- Some of these ideas are universal, which means that we don't just need to think from the perspective of 19th-century attitudes and behaviours
 - Your own understanding of the following ideas is valid and useful to explore:
 - Gender
 - Religion
 - Class
 - The supernatural
 - Science
 - Exploration of universal ideas and perspectives is equally valid, and awarded marks for context in the same way

Mark Scheme

Your notes

Mark Scheme

The mark scheme in English Literature can seem daunting, and difficult to understand. This is because there is no "correct answer" for any essay: the exam board does not provide points that need to be included in any essay, and instead, examiners have to use the mark scheme to place an answer into a level.

It is therefore essential to understand the mark scheme really well yourself: if you understand exactly what you are being assessed on, you understand how to improve. Below you will find sections on:

- Translating the mark scheme
- Understanding the different levels
- How to get a Level 6
- Student-friendly mark scheme
- Tick list for success

Translating the mark scheme

Here is a simple version of the AQA mark scheme for the 19th-century novel question, and below, a student-friendly translation of the mark scheme with expert advice and guidance, broken down into the different assessment objectives.

AO1	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. 					
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.					
AO3	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.					



AO1

What it says: "Maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response"

What it means: Write a clear essay with a central argument based on your own opinions. All parts of the essay must directly answer the question

Commentary:

- Examiners want to see what they call a "coherent" response: an answer that relates to a central
 argument in every part of the essay
 - This is why it is vital to **plan** your answer first
- This argument should always link directly to the question, so include the keywords of the question in your thesis and your topic sentences
- Examiners want to see your opinions, not the opinions of an imagined 19th-century reader

Tick list:

- Have I included a thesis statement in my introduction?
- Does my thesis statement include a central argument based on my own opinions?
- Does my thesis statement include keywords from the question?
- Have I included topic sentences for all of my paragraphs?
- Do all of my paragraphs directly answer the question?
- Have I included a conclusion that sums up my argument and links to my thesis?

What it says: "Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations"

What it means: Select quotations and references from both the extract and the rest of the novel. These must be accurate, and provide evidence for the points you make in your argument

- Examiners reward the highest marks to students who relate the ideas and themes of the extract to other parts of the novel
 - To link to elsewhere in the novel, use phrases like: "Earlier/later in the novel", "Similarly, in Chapter X", "the author also highlights this idea when"
- References do not need to be direct quotations
- You do not get more marks for more quotations
 - All references just need to be accurate and provide evidence for your points and overall argument





- All references must be relevant to the points of your essay
 - Examiners dislike when students include irrelevant quotations

Tick list:

- Have I chosen two or three quotations from the extract?
- Have I linked these quotations, and ideas presented in the extract, to other parts of the novel?
- Have I chosen at least three other quotations and references from elsewhere in the novel?
- Do all of my references directly support my argument?
 - Does each reference I have included support the points made in my topic sentences?

AO2

What it says: "Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects"

What it means: Use analysis of the author's choices to support your argument. This evidence can be the language used by the author, as well as the form of the novel chosen and the order of events in the novel

Commentary:

- Examiners want students to move away from word-level analysis to whole-text analysis
 - This means not just focusing your analysis on the language in the extract, or quotations you have memorised
 - Instead, think about choices the author has made in terms of form and structure, contrasts and character development
- This analysis should move from **how** the author uses language, structure and form, to **why** they do it
 - What is the author using their language/characters to say? What is the author's overall message?

Tick list:

- Does my analysis provide evidence for the points in my argument?
- Have I moved from close word-level analysis to whole-text analysis?
- Have I included an analysis of structure and/or form?
- Have I explained my analysis in terms of the author's overall message?

What it says: "[...] using relevant subject terminology where appropriate"

What it means: Include terminology on writers' techniques **only** when techniques are explained fully and relevant to your argument





- Examiners don't like what they call "technique-spotting"
 - This is where a student uses (sometimes very sophisticated) vocabulary to name the literary techniques the author uses without explaining them
- Equally, they don't reward analysis that just names a word class ("the noun X"; "the verb Y")
 - They think this is "unnecessary and unhelpful"
- The author's techniques should only be analysed if they provide further evidence to support your argument
- Examiners want students to move from what technique the author uses to how and why they are using them

Tick list:

- Have I removed any unnecessary technique spotting?
- Have I removed any unnecessary naming of word classes?
- Have I explained the author's use of techniques in terms of his overall message?

AO3

What it says: "Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written"

What it means: Use contextual ideas and perspectives to support your argument and to provide further insight into the author's choices

- Context is not historical or biographical information that has nothing to do with the ideas presented in the 19th-century novel
- Instead, context should be seen as the ideas and perspectives of the author's time
- These ideas and perspectives (19th-century views on religion, gender, the supernatural, etc.) help us understand why the authors present their novels and characters in the way they do
 - Why do characters behave the way they do?
 - Why is this scene set in this particular place?
 - Why is this theme significant in the text?
- Examiners want to see context linked to the themes and ideas of the novel
- All context should also be linked to your overall argument





What further insight does an understanding of the behaviours and beliefs of the novelist's era provide to my argument?

Your notes

Tick list:

- Have I removed any irrelevant contextual information?
- Is all my context linked to the ideas and perspectives of the author's time?
- Does all my context provide additional insight into my main argument?

Understanding the different levels

The mark scheme for English Literature has six levels, with Level 1 at the bottom, and Level 6 at the top. Examiners do not receive a list of points that need to be included for a student's essay to achieve Level 3, say, or Level 5. Instead, the mark scheme contains different "descriptors" for each level:

- "Descriptors" are the:
 - Features that a response is expected to have to achieve at each level
 - This means: How well a student has responded to the question (the overall quality of the answer)
 - Skills a student is expected to show to achieve each level
 - This means: The specific skills needed to explore and analyse a text
- For example, the "descriptors" for a Level 1 response are:
 - An attempt to answer the question (quality of answer)
 - A narrative or descriptive approach (quality of answer)
 - A simple analysis of the writer's methods and context (skills shown)
- In contrast, examiners expect a lot more for a Level 6 response. The "descriptors" for Level 6 include:
 - Responding to the full task with a well-structured argument (quality of answer)
 - A critical, exploratory and conceptualised approach (quality of answer)
 - Insightful analysis of the writer's methods (skills shown)
 - An integrated and exploratory approach to context (skills shown)

Essentially, when examiners are putting student essays into a particular level, they are just deciding **how** well the student has displayed the expected features and skills of each assessment objective. So if you understand each AO, and what is required for each AO, you will know how to improve.

What makes a Level 6 answer?



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If you want to achieve a Grade 9, you should be aiming for a Level 6 response. Below you will see a table that explains how to move from a Level 5 response to Level 6.

Your notes

Question:



Starting with this extract, explore how Dickens presents the suffering of the poor in A Christmas Carol.

Write about:

- how Dickens presents the suffering of the poor in this extract
- how Dickens presents the suffering of the poor in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Part of essay	Level 5	Level 6	Reason
Introduction	Dickens presents the suffering of the poor in numerous ways throughout the novella. Prevailing Victorian attitudes towards the poor meant they viewed their predicament as entirely of their own making and Dickens conveys their harsh attitudes in the extract.	The suffering of the poor is one of the most prevalent ideas within A Christmas Carol and Dickens presents the poor and destitute to the reader from the outset. Dickens depicts the exploitation and ignorance of the poor through various characters in the novella and he demonstrates how they are trapped in a system through no fault of their own which conveys his message for social change.	The Level 6 introduction is in the form of a thesis statement, which presents an overarching argument that includes Dickens as an author making deliberate choices and conveying a message.
Topic sentence	Dickens uses Ignorance and Want as an allegory in the extract and uses this device to convey his message.	In this extract, Dickens uses the two characters, Ignorance and Want, as an allegory, as they are symbolic of society's cruelty towards the suffering of the poor and underscore his moral message.	The Level 6 response develops the idea within the question much more thoroughly and links it directly to Dickens' message.



Analysis of writer's methods

Ignorance and Want convey Dickens's concerns about the suffering of the poor. They are first described through a range of adjectives: "wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable" which convey a horrifying image to the reader which would invoke sympathy. The repeated use of synonyms adds to the sense that their poverty is unending. Images of decay are also described such as "shrivelled hand" and "stale" which again create horror in the reader and demonstrate how wretched the poor are.

Dickens uses these two characters to highlight the effects of societal avarice and greed. The fact that the children are first shown emerging from the spirit's garment emphasises Dickens's point that poverty and its devastating effects are mostly concealed, unknown, and disregarded by society. Further, Dickens' imagery depicts the children as emaciated and wretched which induces both horror and pity from the reader. Further the religious undertones depicted in the phrase: "They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment" suggests how the poor are not provided with the resources to help themselves and instead must grovel and plead for assistance and are reliant on the charity of others.

The Level 5 response presents thoughtful and developed ideas and demonstrates a clear exploration of the writer's methods to create meanings and uses appropriate references to support their ideas.

The Level 6 response takes more of an analytical approach to the text by looking closely at elements of method and selecting precise references to illustrate their argument. It provides an argument which is much more convincing in its exploration than the Level 5 response.

Your notes

Context

The extract demonstrates how the Capitalist system and industrialisation had a detrimental impact on the lives of people during the Victoria era which meant that child labour and the exploitation of children became commonplace. Dickens could be using Ignorance and Want as symbols of the exploitation of poor children, which has therefore left them

In the rest of the novella, Dickens uses the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come to depict the devastating consequences of a Capitalist system in which Tiny Tim could potentially die. Similar to Ignorance and Want, Tiny Tim's potential death highlights the poor living conditions and malnourishment experienced by many poor children during this era. Dickens uses these characters to highlight the high levels of child mortality in

The Level 5 response is starting to demonstrate elements of exploratory thought concerning context

and begins to convey some tentative ideas as to Dickens's purpose which is one of the indicators of a Level 5 response.



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	emaciated and undernourished. Dickens's message here is one of social change.	Victorian England and indicates that many of them were poor through no fault of their own. Dickens uses these characters to highlight to the reader that such tragedies are avoidable if greater equality is achieved within society.	The Level 6 response demonstrates a more integrated engagement with the novel as a whole and its context, reflecting on the ideas in a more reflective and insightful way. Contextual information is also explicitly connected to Dickens's overall message.	
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Overall student-friendly mark scheme

The GCSE mark scheme can be confusing as it is written for examiners, not students. Below is a translated mark scheme that breaks the assessment objectives into concise, clear instructions.

Assessment Objective	Number of marks	Meaning
AO1	12	 Write a clear essay with a central argument based on your own opinions All parts of the essay must directly answer the question Select quotations and references from both the extract and the rest of the novel



		 Quotations must be accurate, and provide evidence for the points you make in your argument
AO2	12	 Use analysis of the author's choices to support your argument
		 Evidence can be analysis of the language used by the author, as well as the form and structure of the novel
		 Include terminology on writers' techniques only when techniques are explained fully and relevant to your argument
AO3	6	 Use contextual ideas and perspectives to support your argument and to provide further insight to the author's choices



Tick list for success

Marking your own essays can be difficult. However, if you use the tick list below, you can see which features and skills you have, and haven't, included in your answer. If you can say "yes" to all of the questions below, your essay should be heading toward the highest level.

AO1

- Have I included a thesis statement in my introduction?
- Does my thesis statement include a central argument based on my own opinions?
- Does my thesis statement include keywords from the guestion?
- Have I included topic sentences for all of my paragraphs?
- Do all of my paragraphs directly answer the question?
- Have I included a conclusion that sums up my argument and links to my thesis?
- Have I chosen two or three quotations from the extract?
- Have I linked these quotations, and ideas presented in the extract, to other parts of the novel?
- Have I chosen at least three other quotations and references from elsewhere in the novel?
- Do all of my references directly support my argument?
 - Does each reference I have included support the points made in my topic sentences?

AO2

- Does my analysis provide evidence for the points in my argument?
- Have I moved from close word-level analysis to whole-text analysis?



- Have I included analysis on structure and/or form?
- Have I explained my analysis in terms of the author's overall message?
- Have I removed any unnecessary technique spotting?
- Have I removed any unnecessary naming of word classes?
- Have I explained the author's use of techniques in terms of their overall message?

AO3

- Have I removed any irrelevant contextual information?
- Is all my context linked to the ideas and perspectives of the author's time?
- Does all my context provide additional insight into my main argument?



Model Answers



Model Answers

Below you will find a full-mark, Level 6 model answer for a 19th-century novel essay. Commentary below each section of the essay illustrates how and why it would be awarded Level 6. Despite the fact it is an answer to A Christmas Carol question, the commentary below is relevant to any 19th-century novel question.

A student-friendly mark scheme has been included here:

Assessment Objective	Number of marks	Meaning
AO1	12	 Write a clear essay with a central argument based on your own opinions All parts of the essay must directly answer the question Select quotations and references from both the extract and the rest of the novel Quotations must be accurate, and provide evidence for the points you make in your argument
AO2	12	 Use analysis of the author's choices to support your argument Evidence can be analysis of the language used by the author, as well as the form and structure of the novel Include terminology on writers' techniques only when techniques are explained fully and relevant to your argument
AO3	6	 Use contextual ideas and perspectives to support your argument and to provide further insight into the author's choices

Model Answer Breakdown

The commentary for the below model answer as arranged by assessment objective: each paragraph has commentary for a different assessment objective, as follows:

• Introduction includes commentary on all the AOs



- Section 1 includes commentary on AO1 (answering the question and selecting references)
- Section 2 includes commentary on AO2 (analysing a writer's methods)
- Section 3 includes commentary on AO3 (exploring context)
- Conclusion includes commentary on all the AOs

The model answer answers the following question:

0 8

Charles Dickens: A Christmas Carol

Read the following extract from Chapter 3 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, the Ghost of Christmas Present is about to leave Scrooge.

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?"

- 5 "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 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
- 20 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
- 25 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 bide 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
- 30 own words. "Are there no workhouses?"
 - The bell struck twelve.





0 8

Starting with this extract, explore how Dickens presents the suffering of the poor in A Christmas Carol.

Your notes

Write about:

- · how Dickens presents the suffering of the poor in this extract
- how Dickens presents the suffering of the poor in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Level 6, full-mark answer:

The suffering of the poor is one of the most prevalent ideas within A Christmas Carol and Dickens presents the poor and destitute to the reader from the outset. Dickens depicts the exploitation and ignorance of the poor through various characters in the novella and he demonstrates how they are trapped in a system through no fault of their own, which conveys his message for social change.

Commentary:

- The introduction is in the form of a thesis statement.
- It includes a central argument based on my own opinions
- It includes keywords from the question:
 - "The suffering of the poor is one of the most prevalent ideas within A Christmas Carol and Dickens presents the poor and destitute to the reader from the outset."
- It takes a whole-text approach, referencing characters across the whole novel:
 - "Dickens depicts the exploitation and ignorance of the poor through various characters in the novella: Dickens demonstrates how they are trapped in a system through no fault of their own..."
- It acknowledges Dickens as an author making deliberate choices and conveys a message
 - "Dickens demonstrates how they are trapped in a system through no fault of their own which conveys his message for social change."
- It includes modal language to show a conceptualised approach

In this extract, Dickens uses the two characters, Ignorance and Want, as an allegory, as they are symbolic of society's cruelty towards the suffering of the poor. Dickens uses these two characters to expose the consequences of society's greed and avarice. The children are first depicted as emerging from the spirit's robe which underscores Dickens's message of how poverty, and its devastating consequences, remain largely shrouded, unseen and ignored by society. Further, Dickens's imagery depicts the children as emaciated and wretched which induces both horror and pity in the reader. Further, the religious undertones depicted in the phrase: "They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment" suggests



how the poor are not provided with the resources to help themselves and instead must grovel and plead for assistance as they are reliant on the charity of others. At other points in the novella, Dickens continues to make the suffering of the poor a serious concern and he demonstrates how poverty can destroy lives. For example, through The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, Dickens depicts the devastating consequences of a Capitalist system in which Tiny Tim could potentially die. Similar to Ignorance and Want, Tiny Tim's potential death highlights the poor living conditions and malnourishment experienced by many poor children and Dickens uses these characters to highlight the high levels of child mortality in Victorian England, especially for those who were poor through no fault of their own. Dickens uses these characters to highlight to the reader that such tragedies are avoidable if greater equality is achieved within society.



Commentary:

- Paragraph begins with a topic sentence
- Topic sentence directly addresses the question ("the suffering of the poor")
- Topic sentence has a narrower focus than the thesis statement
- The whole paragraph is related to the topic sentence
- Paragraph includes at least one reference to the extract
- Paragraph includes multiple references to the rest of the novel
- All references are linked to the question, and support the argument of my topic sentence

Structurally, this extract is significant as the spirit references Scrooge's exact comments at the beginning of the novella: "Are there no prisons?" ... "Are there no workhouses?" By repeating Scrooge's words verbatim, Dickens reveals Scrooge's former ignorance of the poor when he associated workhouses with prisons. Although workhouses were very similar to prisons during the Victorian period (both in terms of their harshness and confinement) the poor and destitute who inhabited the workhouses were generally there through no fault of their own. Although Scrooge's original comments are in response to the charity collectors in Stave I and while they could be viewed as representing goodness at Christmas time, it could be seen that Dickens is suggesting that the poor should be helped at all times of the year. Further, this extract is also deliberately structured after the spirit has depicted multiple scenes of abundance, which further serves to highlight the suffering of the poor as they are forced to do without. Dickens deliberately structures the chapter in this way to illustrate the idea that there is enough for everyone if it is shared equally. Indeed, Dickens uses the Ghost of Christmas Present throughout this Stave to deliver scathing moral discourses about the condition of the poor and to encourage calls for social reform. Dickens presents the spirit as authoritative and commanding (evident through its repeated use of imperative and exclamatory statements) which demonstrates that his views on the suffering of the poor must be heeded. Furthermore, in Stave III, the spirit does not refer to Scrooge by his name, but instead by the word "man" which suggests that the spirit's message is not just directed toward Scrooge but to all of mankind. The spirit could be seen as a mouthpiece for Dickens's views on poverty and social injustice and through the spirit, Dickens highlights the selfishness of the rich and their heartlessness towards the plight of the poor.



- Analysis provides evidence for the points in the topic sentence (all evidence relates to depictions of the suffering of the poor)
- Whole-text analysis of the author's methods, not just focused on the extract
- Analysis includes other wider choices made by the author:
 - Characterisation
 - Structure
- All analysis is explained fully in terms of the question and my own argument
- Analysis explained in terms of the author's overall message

Dickens uses Scrooge as symbolic of the Capitalist system which Dickens believed denied others access to wealth and opportunity and he represents the self-centred businessman as unconcerned about the conditions in which his employees were forced to work. In the rest of the novella, the suffering of the poor is highlighted through Bob's character and he is used to demonstrate Scrooge's cruel and exploitative behaviour. For example, Bob is made to endure difficult work conditions, though they are less harsh than what many other poor people would have endured, especially those who would have been less skilled than him. In Stave I, Bob is too fearful to ask Scrooge for more coal to replenish his fire and instead tries "to warm himself at the candle", which highlights the dreadful conditions that employers could make employees accept. Indeed, Bob works in a "dismal little cell" which Dickens uses to convey the gloomy confinement from which he cannot escape and which could be viewed as a wider symbol of his poverty. Similarly, Bob is also symbolic of the lower classes and their dependence on their employer as his situation, and thus the fate of his family depends on businessmen like Scrooge. While Bob Cratchit is first introduced in Stave I, his character remains unnamed and silent in this chapter and he is simply referred to as "the clerk": By omitting Bob's name and referring to him by his occupation, Dickens conveys Scrooge's myopic perception of Bob in terms of labour, rather than as a human being. Bob's silence also signifies his irrelevance and insignificance as a poor person in the views of the wealthier classes such as Scrooge. Further, by titling the character "Bob" (a Victorian colloquial term for a shilling) Dickens may be suggesting the poor are viewed merely in terms of capital and thus their suffering is inconsequential to them.

- Does not include any irrelevant historical or biographical facts
- All context is linked to the topic sentence ("symbolic of the Capitalist system which Dickens believed denied others access to wealth and opportunity") and argument as a whole
- All context is integrated into analysis of the author's methods
- Understanding contextual ideas and perspectives provides additional insight into my main argument
- Context is sometimes implied, rather than explicit. This still shows sophisticated awareness of ideas ("Bob is made to endure difficult work conditions, though they are less harsh than what many other poor people would have endured, especially those who would have been less skilled than him")





To conclude, Dickens presents the suffering of the poor throughout the novella and highlights the selfishness of the rich and their heartlessness towards the plight of the poor. While Dickens is keen to highlight the importance of charity and benevolence, he also illustrates how the poor are not provided with the resources to help themselves and instead is reliant on the charity of others. Dickens's depictions of the cycle of poverty urge the reader to confront the issues of poverty within their own societies.

Your notes

- Conclusion uses keywords from the question
- Conclusion links to thesis
- Conclusion sums up more detailed arguments outlined in topic sentences of all paragraphs
- It also gives a fuller understanding of the author's intentions, based on ideas explored in the essay