

# A Christmas Carol

## Last Minute Revision

### Ticklist

- 10 key words (*DREAMM PADS*)
- 5 bits of context (*CRIPT*)
- 6 key themes (*SSSKRR*)
- 3 Dicken's intentions
- Key quote overview

### 10 key words:

Remember it as **DREAMM PADS**

- **D**ehumanisation
- **R**edemption
- **E**xploitation
- **A**variciousness
- **M**outhpiece
- **M**oral rebirth
- **P**arsimonious
- **A**llegorical novella
- **D**estitute
- **S**ocial equality/ inequality

### Context

Remember it as: **CRIPT**

**C**harles Dickens

**R**eligion

**I**ndustrial revolution

**P**oor law

**T**homas Malthus

## Charles Dickens:

Dickens grew up in poverty and worked in the workhouses. *Novella* was written in response to the **Report of Children's Employment Commission** which covered the **dehumanising and exploitative conditions** children were subject to in the Victorian era.

- The struggles of the Cratchits is presented in a compassionate way
- Tiny Tim's death links to the exploitation of children during the era

## Religion:

Religion was the foundation of morality in the Victorian era – **7 deadly sins** (greed, wrath and pride) to be avoided. Christians believed that God provides individuals with **redemption** (save from sin) when **sin has been confessed**.

- Scrooge embodies some of the 7 deadly sins: greed (want for money), wrath (angry at the world) and pride (ego)
- Scrooge granted redemption through the ghosts

## Industrial revolution:

Change from farming to factories, marked as the 'progressive era' due to advancements in technology

- Dickens **scathing** (critical) of Britain being the **pinnacle** (peak) of excellence and progression when it **neglects and exploits** the lower classes
- Uses character of Scrooge to critique how 'progressive' Victorian society is

## 1834 Poor Law:

Introduced the workhouses, poor sent there in exchange for food and shelter. They were hubs of **squalor** (filth) which exploited the poor. **10% people admitted to them would die.**

- Dickens shows ignorance of those who enforced laws like this one through Scrooge stave 1
- *Cratchits* and *children of ignorance* + *want* provide a small insight into how the poor were exploited + dehumanised by laws like this

## Thomas Malthus

British economist who believed poverty **was inevitable (always going to happen)** due to population increase.

- Dickens makes Scrooge embody Malthusian view and ridicules this
- Scrooge shows these views in stave 1 "prisons.. and the union workhouses?"
- He is ridiculed by ghost of Christmas present in stave 3 "decrease surplus population"

### All Key Themes:

Remember it as: **SSSKRR**

**S**elfishness/ materialism

**S**ocial injustice/ poverty

**S**upernatural

**K**indness/family

**R**eligion

**R**egret/redemption

## Dickens' Intentions:

- Dickens crafts an **allegorical** (story with moral message) novella with a **didactic** (to teach) purpose, aiming to convey a message about the **virulent** (harmful) consequences of **avariciousness (greed) and frugality (stinginess)** in society. He criticises the upper classes for their apathy (lack of concern) toward the poor and **their complicity in perpetuating dehumanising laws and social structures** through ignorance.
- Dickens crafts the ghosts as **vehicles for conveying his condemnation (criticism)** of the ignorance and **callousness (cruelty)** prevalent among the materialistic upper classes. Thus, the ghosts serve as **Dickens' mouthpiece** (can't be in the novel so they speak his beliefs), delivering a powerful message advocating for compassion and societal reform.
- Dickens communicates to his upper-class readers the important role of repentance (remorse) and compassion increasing both personal and societal **moral redemption**. **By holding up a mirror to his readership**, he prompts them to **introspect** (look in at themselves) and assess whether their attitudes **perpetuate social injustice or contribute to social reform**.

Character	Key Quotes	Key themes it links to
Scrooge	<p><u>“squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner”</u> (Stave 1)</p> <p><u>“he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head.”</u> (Stave 2)</p> <p><u>“Yellow” “wolish” “scowling”</u> (Stave 3 - ignorance and want shown by Ghost of Christmas Present)</p> <p><u>“I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me”</u> (stave 4)</p> <p><u>“Quite a baby” “merry as a schoolboy”</u> stave 5</p>	<p><b>Selfishness</b>, social injustice, religion</p> <p><b>Redemption</b>, supernatural, selfishness</p> <p><b>Social injustice</b>, selfishness, supernatural, religion, regret</p> <p><b>Redemption</b>, selfishness, social injustice, supernatural, religion</p> <p><b>Redemption</b>, kindness, selfishness, religion, social injustice, supernatural</p>

## “squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner” (Stave 1)

- **The asyndetic listing (a list that uses commas rather than the word ‘and’):** The asyndetic listing portrays Scrooge's immoral characteristics as ongoing, casting him as an **unrepentant** (no guilt) "sinner."
- **7 negative adjectives** mirrors how there are **7 deadly sins**. The parallels between Scrooge and the sins are used by Dickens to highlight how the rich, symbolised by Scrooge, are more inclined towards **moral transgression** (go against morals) than the poor.
- **‘squeezing’ and ‘wrenching’ connotes a struggle:** , shows Scrooge struggles to see the detrimental consequences of his **frugality** (stinginess) and thus, his role in **perpetuating social inequality**.

## To think about when remembering the analysis

- **Asyndetic listing:** ongoing immorality
- **7 negative adjectives:** mirrors 7 deadly sins
- **Connote a struggle:** struggle to see consequences of frugality (stingy)

## “Quite a baby” “merry as a schoolboy” stave 5

- **Infantile language:** This indicates his rebirth, as both a "baby" and "schoolboy" connote **innocence and youth**, Scrooge is showcasing how through him **repenting for his sins**, he has regained his youthful innocence and ability to see the world in an untainted light.
- As being a "baby" is the start of life, this signifies that Scrooge has been reborn as he has gone from a selfish "old sinner" back to the most innocent form of human life- he has had the ultimate rebirth.
- **Christian ideas of rebirth:** In Christianity, rebirth is a **spiritual renewal and connection with God**. This is deeply intertwined with the belief in **Jesus Christ's rebirth**, which offered **salvation to humanity** - Scrooge holds promise of salvation for the poor

## To think about when remembering the analysis

- **Infantile language:** rebirthed and regained his youthful innocence
- **Character comparison:** from "old sinner" to a "baby"
- **Christianity:** Jesus' rebirth was salvation for humanity - Scrooge's is for the poor

Character	Key Quotes	Key themes it links to
Marley	<p><i><u>“I wear the chain I forged in life...I made it link by link”</u></i> (stave 1)</p> <p><i><u>“Mankind was my business”</u></i> (stave 1)</p>	<p><b>Selfishness</b>, social injustice, supernatural, religion, regret</p> <p><b>Selfishness</b>, social injustice, supernatural, religion, regre</p>

## **"I wear the chain I forged in life...I made it link by link" (stave 1)**

- **Symbolism of chains:** as chains are made of links, which are all interconnecting, this is alike to how Marley is warning Scrooge that his **covetousness (desire for wealth)** is interconnected **to his anguish**.
- Chain symbolises **restriction and entrapment**. Through Marley "dragging" the chain, his chain is a **conceit** (extended metaphor) for the restricting and eternal consequences of being **parsimonious** (stingy) and perpetuating social injustice.
- **Personal pronoun:** The use of the personal pronoun "I" implies that Marley acknowledges with remorse the consequences of his own **personal and selfish pursuit of material wealth, leading to his eternal and spiritual poverty**

### **To think about when remembering the analysis**

- **Symbolism:** links interconnected, covetousness interconnected with suffering
- **Symbolism 2:** entrapment, Marley eternally entrapped because of his parsimoniousness
- **Personal pronoun:** personal and selfish pursuit lead to his spiritual poverty

## **"Mankind was my business" (stave 1)**

- **Economical language:** Marley serves as Dickens' **first mouthpiece** (can't be in the novel himself so speaks through the characters), using **economical language** as a **critique of society's obsession** with material wealth and the relentless pursuit of profit.
- It foreshadows the **grim fate** awaiting Scrooge if he fails to learn from the eternal punishment of Marley: being reduced to mere **economic terms upon his death** ("**cheap funereal**" "**marketing the corpse**").
- **Syntax:** In terms of syntax, "mankind" precedes "business," indicating the **hierarchical order of values** that Scrooge, and by extension society, should prioritise.

### **To think about when remembering the analysis**

- **Economical:** critique societies obsession with materialism
- **Foreshadow:** Scrooge reduced to economic terms in his death
- **Syntax:** hierarchical order of values – "mankind" come first in society



Character	Key Quotes	Key themes it links to
Ghost of Christmas Past	<p><i><u>“It was a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man”</u></i> (stave 2)</p> <p><i><u>“Bright clear jet of light”</u></i> <i>“purest white”</i> (stave 2)</p>	<p><b>Supernatural</b>, family, religion</p> <p><b>Redemption</b>, supernatural, family, religion</p>

### **“It was a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man” (stave 2)**

- **Juxtaposition between “child” and “old man”:** metaphorical for Scrooge. He appears physically alike to an *“old man”* as he is branded an *“old sinner”*, yet **is vulnerable and isolated** akin to how he was as a *“child”* – underpins the **interconnectedness** of time, emphasising that the past inevitably shapes the present and influences the future.
- By revisiting Scrooge's childhood, the ghost aims to catalyse a **regression** (go backwards) in him, prompting a return to his **former compassionate** self and setting him on the **path to redemption**.
- **Context about age and time:** the mixture of **both youth and age was a fascination within the Victorian era** – their emphasis on the youth of children caused a parallel interest to those in their older age. Dickens uses this to emphasise the **motif of time** (recurring symbol or theme).

### **To think about when remembering the analysis**

- **Juxtaposition:** metaphor for Scrooge, shows interconnectedness of time
- **Ghosts' purpose:** catalyse a regression to his former compassionate self
- **Context:** age fascination in the Victorian era – emphasises motif of time

### **“Bright clear jet of light” “purest white” (stave 2)**

- **Motif of light:** **permeates** (throughout) the novella. *“Light”* evokes images of hope and radiance, symbolising how the ghost is a beacon of enlightenment, tasked with illuminating Scrooge's path towards moral awakening and personal transformation.
- **“Purest” celestial image: of heaven and purity from sin.** As the ghost wears a *“tunic”* of this colour, it is suggestive that his aim is to **resurface Scrooge's repressed memories** and emotions in order to **purify him from his previous sins** so he is ready to access heaven.
- It foreshadows Scrooge's **spiritual journey** towards **moral transformation and redemption** while also emphasising the theme of forgiveness.

### **To think about when remembering the analysis**

- **Motif of light:** Ghost beacon of enlightenment for Scrooge's moral awakening
- **Celestial image:** purify Scrooge from sin
- **Foreshadows:** spiritual journey to moral redemption

Character	Key Quotes	Key themes it links to
Ghost of Christmas Present	<p><i><u>“glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty’s horn”</u></i> (stave 3)</p> <p><i><u>“If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.”</u></i> (stave 3)</p>	<p><b>Social injustice</b>, selfishness, supernatural, religion</p> <p><b>Social injustice</b>, selfishness, supernatural, religion</p>

### “glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty’s horn” (stave 3)

- **Symbolism of ‘Plenty’s horn’:** The Latin term for Plenty's horn, '*cornucopia*,' symbolises **nourishment and abundance** – emphasises there is an abundance of resources to be shared, and **societal neglect and malnourishment are unjustifiable in a world of plenty**.
- This critiques **Malthusian views (see context)**, which disregard the **plight (suffering) of the poor and destitute as inevitable**, yet the ghost shows that there is ample wealth to alleviate their suffering if shared equally.
- **Motif of light:** As the ghost holds the **emblem** (symbol) of the torch, intensifying the **recurring motif** (recurring symbol) of light, it signifies both the **physical and symbolic** illumination that Scrooge will undergo.

### To think about when remembering the analysis

- **Symbolism:** abundance symbolism – malnourishment unjustifiable
- **Malthusian views:** critiques these views through abundance
- **Motif of light:** symbolic and physical illumination Scrooge undergo

### “If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.” (stave 3)

- **Repetition:** The ghost repeats Scrooge's earlier quote from Stave 1, emphasising his callous (cruel) **neglect and ignorance** towards the **plight** of the lower classes. Through Scrooge's adoption of **Malthusian ideology** (check context), poverty and starvation are dismissed as inevitable outcomes of a "*surplus population*."
- The ghost, a symbol of **abundance and equality**, repeats it back to illustrate the inhumanity inherent in such **apathetic** (unemotional) and ignorant perspectives.
- **Plosives:** Plosives litter the speech, the harshness of the plosives accentuates the **harsh callousness** (cruelness) of upper class views towards the **destitute** (poor) – causes exploitation of children.

### To think about when remembering the analysis

- **Repetition:** emphasise callousness of these Malthusian views
- **Ghost symbolism:** abundance shows the inhumanity of these views
- **Plosives:** reflects harsh and callous views towards the destitute

Character	Key Quotes	Key themes it links to
Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come	<p><i><u>“shrouded in a deep black garment”</u></i></p> <p><i><u>“It was a worthy place...overrun by grass and weeds”.</u></i></p>	<p><b>Supernatural</b>, religion, regret, selfishness</p> <p><b>Selfishness</b>, supernatural, religion, regret</p>

### “shrouded in a deep black garment”

- **Symbol of death:** reminiscent of the **Grim Reaper**, a symbol of death – the Ghost creates an ambience (atmosphere) of **foreboding and finality**. A reminder of the consequences of Scrooge’s past immoralities and the urgency of his need for **repentance** (feeling remorse).
- **Image on ‘black’:** The dark ominous image created by black juxtaposes the motif of light seen with the ghost of Christmas past and present. Scrooge’s ironically “solitary” death is imminent – Scrooge longed for a “solitary” existence and now the ghost **is solemnly showing** him the consequences of his selfish and isolated existence.
- The **archetype (perfect example)** of the **menacing, faceless ghost** haunting Scrooge symbolises the **justly** forceful intervention needed to **catalyse his transformation**.

### To think about when remembering the analysis

- **Symbol of death:** alike to Grim Reaper, shows finality of Scrooge’s actions
- **Image on black:** contrasts motif of light from other ghosts – ironic “solitary” death
- **Archetype of a ghost:** justly force needed to catalyse transformation

### “It was a worthy place...overrun by grass and weeds”.

- **Decaying semantic field:** serving as a **mocking commentary** on Scrooge’s life. Ironically, the **vitality and life** of the surrounding plants highlight his own **insignificance**. This serves as a criticism of his materialistic existence, suggesting that he has become even more insignificant than the decaying plants surrounding his grave.
- Through the ghost's portrayal of Scrooge's **proleptic** (flash forward) **death**, Dickens emphasises the dire consequences of neglecting one's **moral and civic duties** – this neglect will inevitably lead to **eternal neglect and oblivion in death**.
- **Exclamative sentence:** The exclamatory sentence of “a worthy place!” serves as a form of **karmic retribution** (gets what he deserves), where Scrooge's **frugal (stingy) and miserly existence** is met with just punishment – evoking a sense of **divine justice**.

### To think about when remembering the analysis

- **Decaying semantic field:** mocking commentary on his materialistically driven life
- **Proleptic death:** consequences of neglecting moral and civic duties
- **Exclamative sentence:** karmic retribution and divine justice

Character	Key Quotes	Key themes it links to
Bob	<p><i><u>“clerk “ (stave 1)</u></i></p> <p><i><u>“I’ll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!”</u></i></p> <p><i><u>“My little, little child!”</u></i> cried Bob. <i><u>“My little child!”</u></i></p>	<p><b>Social injustice</b>, kindness/family</p> <p><b>Social injustice</b>, selfishness, religion</p> <p><b>Social injustice</b>, family, selfishness, religion</p>

### “clerk “ (stave 1)

- **Lack of an identity:** symbolic of the **dehumanisation and marginalisation** (treated as insignificant) experienced by the working class during the Victorian era.
- The **deliberate omission** (removal) of his name shows the **societal attitude that stripped the poor of their individuality**, reducing them to mere cogs in the machinery of an **industrialising society**.
- **Symbolism:** Bob's **anonymity** (being anonymous) highlights the motif (recurring symbol or theme) of social inequality and the **power dynamics between the upper and lower classes** – he is under the **oppressive** thumb of Scrooge, a ruthless embodiment of **capitalist greed**.

### To think about when remembering the analysis

- **Lack of an identity:** dehumanisation + marginalisation of working classes
- **No name:** poor stripped of their identity – cogs in a machine
- **Symbolism:** social inequality + oppressive power dynamics between rich and poor

### “I’ll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!”

- **Connotation of “Founder”:** **creatorship**, reflecting how Bob perceives Scrooge with a **quasi-divine reverence** (having features of being God-like). This reinforced through their gratitude towards a “goose”, using the **superlative** “*rarest*” despite the **irony** this was a cheap bird that replaced Turkey in the Victorian era.
- This quote from Bob explores the **disheartening reality** where the **destitute** (extremely poor), like Bob, feel **indebted (owing) and blindly grateful** to those who exploit them
- **Exclamative sentence:** Bob epitomises (perfect example) **the power of true wealth**. Despite their **meagre materialistic possessions**, their **gratitude** is emphasised by the exclamative sentence – challenging the idea that material wealth equates to **moral superiority**.

### To think about when remembering the analysis

- **Connotation of founder:** creatorship, views Scrooge with a quasi-divine reference
- **Disheartening:** destitute feel indebted + grateful to those who exploit them
- **Exclamative sentence:** power of true wealth – morally and spiritually wealthy



Character	Key Quotes	Key themes it links to
Fred	<p><i><u>“all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled” (stave 1)</u></i> compared to Scrooge <i><u>“frosty rime”</u></i> <i><u>“darkness is cheap” (stave 1)</u></i></p> <p><i><u>“his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.”</u></i> (stave 3)</p>	<p><b>Kindness</b>, selfishness, religion, redemption</p> <p><b>Religion</b>, kindness, redemption</p>

**“all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled” (stave 1)  
compared to Scrooge “frosty rime” “darkness is cheap” (stave 1)**

- **Motif of light:** Dickens employs a **motif** (recurring symbol or theme) of light. Light often signifies **hope and enlightenment** in the novella, thus he becomes a **beacon (guidance) of hope for Scrooge's redemption**.
- **Foil to Scrooge:** (character used to accentuate the traits of the main character) to Scrooge, highlighting his misanthropic (dislike others) and **miserly (stingy)** tendencies.
- This **juxtaposition** emphasise Scrooge's remarkable transformation by Stave 5. Fred's character serves as a **benchmark for Scrooge's moral rebirth, allowing the reader to measure the extent of his positive change**.

**To think about when remembering the analysis**

- **Motif of light:** he is a beacon of hope for Scrooge's redemption
- **Foil to Scrooge:** highlights his misanthropic and miserly traits
- **Juxtaposition:** Fred is a benchmark to measure Scrooge's moral rebirth