A Christmas Carol - Aim Higher Instructions

The aim of this booklet is to support and extend your learning and understanding of A Christmas Carol whilst studying it in class. Each week, you will be set a task to complete. It will be in relation to an event, character and/or theme you have recently covered in class. It is your responsibility to use your notes in your exercise books and your copies of the novella to complete each task in as much detail as possible and to the best of your ability. There will also be an AIM HIGHER task that will allow you to explore literary criticism and psychological theories surrounding the text in order to extend and develop your responses.

After completing each task, you must ensure that a parent or carer signs their name in the table below. This must be completed before the due date.

Once you have completed this booklet, you will have an invaluable revision source that you can use to prepare for your English Literature Paper 1 exam in May.

Week / Task:	Date Due:	AIM HIGHER completed? Y/N	Parent/Carer Signature:	Teacher Signature:
Week 1: Scrooge as an outsider				
Week 2: The theme of the Christmas spirit				
Week 3: Attitudes towards social responsibility				
Week 4: The theme of religion				
Week 5: The significance and impact of the past.				
Week 6: Wealth and greed				
Week 7: Generosity				
Week 8: The importance of family				
Week 9: Effects of poverty				



GCSE English Literature CHECKPOINT Home Learning Booklet

NAME:

ENGLISH CLASS/SET:

TEACHER:

Week 10: Supernatural as a predominant		
theme		
Week 11: Reality of living in destitution		
Week 12: Feelings of sympathy		
Week 13: Regret and Remorse		
Week 14: The theme of redemption		

Week 1

Starting with the extract below from Stave 1, explore how Dickens presents Scrooge as an outsider in society.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind- stone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dogdays; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

You should consider:

- How Scrooge is presented as an outsider
- Dickens' use of the cold and the weather
- How his physical description reflects his personality

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Scrooge is presented as an outsider in society. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of Scrooge may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in Stave 1 that also present Scrooge as an outsider in society.

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- o 3)

Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to introduce Scrooge this way? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the task: Starting with the extract, explore how Dickens presents Scrooge as an outsider in society.

Week 1 – AIM HIGHER

The Science of Generosity by Summer Allen, PHD, Greater Good Science Centre, UC Berkley (May 2018)

Read through the extracts below taken from GSC centre's study of generosity and highlight anything that could relates to generosity and Scrooge.

Generosity comes in many forms, from charitable donations to formal volunteering to helping a stranger to caring for a spouse or a child. What these and other examples have in common is that they involve "giving good things to others freely and abundantly"—the definition of generosity according to the University of Notre Dame's **Science of Generosity Project**. When they are generous, people (and sometimes animals) prioritize the needs of others, or even above their own.

Roots Of Generosity

Humans are a generous species. That statement seems to fly in the face of decades of research—and centuries of conventional wisdom—equating "human nature" with selfishness and aggression. Yet in recent years, a more complex and nuanced understanding of human nature has emerged. While studies no doubt suggest that humans have a propensity for self-interest—and these studies have drawn understandable attention—research has revealed that currents of generosity also run deep through us. Indeed, generosity has its roots not just in our individual development but also in our very biology and evolutionary history. Species as diverse as bees, birds, vampire bats, rats, and chimpanzees all exhibit forms of generosity, or what can be broadly described as "prosocial behavior"—acts that benefit others. The broad occurrence of generosity across species suggests that generosity may be an evolutionary adaptation that has helped promote the survival of these species—and our own. And sure enough, a host of studies have uncovered evidence that humans are biologically wired for generosity. Acting generously activates the same reward pathway that is activated by sex and food, a correlation that may help to explain why giving and helping feel good, as well as provide further evidence for the idea that prosocial activity has been an important

evolutionary adaptation. Further evidence of the deep roots of human generosity comes from studies finding consistent displays of generosity among young children— even young toddlers. Multiple studies have shown that children appear to have an innate drive to cooperate and to help others, but that this drive is tempered as children grow older and their giving behavior becomes more selective and nuanced.

Social and Cultural Drivers

A host of social and cultural factors also in influence generosity. Many studies suggest that people o en act generously out of an expectation that their generosity will be reciprocated or because they feel it will help their reputation. A person's generosity is also influenced by cultural norms, such as standards of fairness. Strong social networks may also in influence generosity. For example, people with more friends engage in more volunteering, charitable giving, and blood donations. What's more, generosity is contagious; it can propagate within social networks and workplaces.

Week 1 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Allen, to what extent is generosity part of human nature?

2. Which external influences also encourage generosity?

3. To what extent does Scrooge's lack of innate generosity contribute to his position as an outsider in society?

<u>Week 2</u>

Starting with the extract below from Stave 1, explore how Dickens presents the theme of the Christmas spirit.

"There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew. "Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round -- apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that -- as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

You should consider:

- Fred's attitude towards Christmas
- How Dickens creates a juxtaposition between characters
- How the power of the Christmas spirit is emphasised

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how the theme of the Christmas spirit is presented. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of the theme of the Christmas spirit may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in Stave 1 that convey ideas surrounding the theme of the Christmas spirit.

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Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to introduce Fred this way? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 1, explore how Dickens presents the theme of the Christmas spirit.

<u>Week 2 – AIM HIGHER</u> The True Essence of Christmas by Gabriel Osu (2012)

Read through the extracts below taken from Osu's article carefully and highlight anything that could relate to the significance and power of the Christmas spirit.

WE are in that special season once again, a season of joy, of peace, of great tidings. A season when we celebrate the birth of Christ the King, the redeemer of mankind! Jesus is the reason for the season.

What does Christmas mean to you and me? I will like to draw reference from the views of two writers. The first is J. C Penney who wrote, 'Christmas is not just a time for festivity and merry making. It is more than that. It is a time for the contemplation of eternal things. The Christmas spirit is a spirit of giving and forgiving.' Next is the thought provoking words of George F. McDougall 'Christmas means a spirit of love, a time when the love of God and the love of our fellow men should prevail over all hatred and bitterness, a time when our thoughts and deeds and the spirit of our lives manifest the presence of God.

The above comments say it all. Christmas is not all about merry making. We must also spare time to reflect on the essence of the period which is the love of God for humanity. This unquantifiable love is summed up in the popular bible verse John 3: 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave us his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him will not perish but have eternal life. "When we ponder on God's love for us, we too are encouraged to share love with others, to embrace peace and be our brother's keeper. When we are imbued with this love of God, we will be always willing to give a helping hand to those in need, to give succour and comfort to the vulnerable ones amongst others.

At Christmas, we are expected to spare time to contemplate on things eternal. That is, we must remind ourselves that we are strangers her on earth; that our real home is in heaven. And that no matter how long we live, we shall sure die one day. So many people who started the year 2012 with us are not around to finish it. Like us, they commenced the New Year with high hopes and aspirations. Some may have planned to marry this year, to buy a new car or to move into their new apartment. But alas, all those are now but a pipe dream. Thus, we should count ourselves lucky to be alive to see this Christmas. This should therefore be a period of gratitude to God for sparing our lives and counting us among the living. It should equally be an opportunity for us to mend our ways with God so that we will not be found wanting.

The spirit behind Christmas is that of giving and sharing.

Week 2 - AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Osu, what is the true meaning behind the Christmas season and spirit?

2. How do Osu's ideas relate to those expressed by Fred in Stave 1?

3. Though Dickens never explicitly references religion at this point, to what extent is Fred a symbol of Christianity?

Week 3

Starting with the extract below from Stave 1, explore how Dickens presents attitudes surrounding social responsibility.

"Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude," returned the gentleman, "a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?" "Nothing!" Scrooge replied. "You wish to be anonymous?" "I wish to be left alone," said Scrooge. "Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned -- they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there." "Many can't go there; and many would rather die." "If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. "But you might know it," observed the gentleman. "It's not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"

You should consider:

- Scrooge's attitude towards social responsibility
- The charity gentleman's attitude towards social responsibility
- How and why Dickens creates a juxtaposition

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how attitudes surrounding social responsibility are presented. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of attitudes surrounding responsibility may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in Stave 1 that also present attitudes surrounding social responsibility.

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- o 2)
- o **3**)

Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to introduce the theme of social responsibility at this point in the novella and through these characters? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 1, explore how Dickens presents attitudes surrounding social responsibility.

Week 3 – AIM HIGHER

Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" Told Uncomfortable Truths About Victorian Society, But Does it Have Anything to Teach Us Today? By Stephanie Allen (December, 2013)

Read through the extracts below taken from Allen's article carefully and highlight anything that could relate to attitudes towards social responsibility.

The Ebeneezer Scrooge we meet at the beginning of the story is isolated, set apart from his fellow humans by cynicism, misanthropy and an avarice that beggars belief. To the embarrassed astonishment of the host of characters he meets in the book's first chapter, he resolves to spend Christmas alone, counting his money. All this isn't to say he's not amusing - one of the many paradoxes of the novella is Dickens's obvious pleasure in thinking up sarcastic, callous soundbites for his main character, like "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart". But when two portly gentlemen appear in his office, asking or a donation for the poor, Scrooge's reply is entirely more sinister. He asks, 'Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?', a phrase that will return to haunt him throughout the book, at once emphasising the coldness of a rational, capitalist outlook on life, and echoing the writings of a famous near-contemporary economist, Thomas Robert Malthus (on whom, more later). Because the dangerous thing about Ebeneezer Scrooge is that his loneliness, and the generally scandalised reactions of all those he encounters to his behaviour, do not mean he is unique or even uncommon. Rather, when we meet the ghost of Jacob Marley, Scrooge's old business partner who is doomed for eternity to drag the chain of his sins, and begs that Scrooge 'shun the path I tread', we realise that the old miser is symptomatic of a particular generation and class of men.

Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol at what is now considered the end of the Industrial Revolution, a period when Britain's change to new manufacturing processes — to machines that required fewer workers, to steam trains, to water power — resulted in intense economic output, and the country rising to a position as

one of the world's economic superpowers. And Dickens was fascinated by the technological change...But he was less enchanted by a darker, crueller potential of this social and economic transformation — the inequality it entrenched in society. Britain, a nation whose wealth was growing exponentially, had the power to (and later would) put measures in place to redistribute money fairly, ensuring that the poorest members of society were looked after, and had better chances of making a living, even flourishing. But instead, draconian laws about debt repayment and penury (the very state of being poor) forced many into workhouses and debtors' prisons. After death, criminals' bodies were treated as fair game for_anatomists to dissect in the name of medical science — the misfortune of dying in debtors' prison could result in this final, horrid indignity.

Though it might at first seem anachronistic to assign egalitarian views to a Victorian writer, social justice was, increasingly, becoming a theme in the period. Thomas Malthus, the economist Scrooge so irresistibly evokes in his enquiry 'Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?' authored a series of now-notorious works, including an *Essay on the Principle of Population* in 1798, that argued that catastrophic poverty and starvation were a necessary, irrefutable result of the fact that population grown would always outpace food supply. Population would always expand to the limit of subsistence, and be held there by famine, war and disease. In another, unpublished pamphlet, 'The Crisis', of 1796, Malthus, among other things, supported newly proposed 'poor laws' to install workhouses, arguing that men who were unable to sustain themselves did not have the right to live.

Week 3 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. What parallels does Allen draw between Scrooge's introduction in the novella and his attitudes towards social responsibility?

2. According to Allen, what concerned Dickens about Victorian society?

3. To what extent is Scrooge a symbol of Capitalism and Malthusianism?

Week 4

Starting with the extract below from Stave 1, explore how Dickens presents the theme of religion throughout the novella.

"It is required of every man," the Ghost returned, "that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world -- oh, woe is me! -- and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!" Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands. "You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why?" "I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?" Scrooge trembled more and more. "Or would you know," pursued the Ghost, "the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!" Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

You should consider:

- How Jacob Marley is presented
- The religious ideas conveyed in his dialogue
- His significance at this point and throughout the novella

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how the theme of religion is presented. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of the theme of religion may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in Stave 1 that present ideas surrounding religion.

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Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to introduce Jacob Marley at this point in the novella? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 1, explore how Dickens presents the theme of religion throughout the novella.

<u>Week 4 – AIM HIGHER</u> The Significance of Ghosts: Science, Religion and Social Criticism by Niki Brodin Larsson (Lund University, 2013)

Read through the extracts below taken from Larsson's study and carefully and highlight anything that could relate to the significance of Jacob Marley and the theme of religion.

In *A Christmas Carol*, the natural explanation for Ebenezer Scrooge's first encounter with his deceased partner, Jacob Marley, is that he is having a hallucination. The first time Scrooge sees Marley is when he is about to enter his house. It is dark and late at night, and Dickens writes of the fog and frost around the doorway that "it seemed as if the Genius of Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold" (41). When Scrooge is about to unlock the door, the face of Marley suddenly appears in the knocker (41-2). The hallucination soon dissolves but the horrific image stays with him and sets his nerves on edge (42). The vision of Jacob Marley could very well be seen as a hallucination caused by Scrooge's memory of his deceased colleague and the darkness and the heavy fog around the doorway.

In relation to *A Christmas Carol,* Henson explains how "[s]ensations from the present are interwoven with ideas from a remembered past which temporarily become dominant, and are closely related to apprehensions about the future" (47). It could easily be argued that Scrooge falls asleep when he sits down by the fire with his gruel to ponder over the events of the day, and subsequently starts dreaming (43). In this altered state of mind, the memory of Marley and the spirit of Christmas, combined with Scrooge's concerns about the future, become the substance of his dream (Henson 47-8). In his dream, Scrooge is unable to control what he sees, but tells Marley that he does not rely on his own senses (45). He tries to be rational, but in the dream his rational thoughts do not have any power over the unconscious part of his mind, and it is only in this state that Scrooge is able to communicate with the ghosts or spirits that come to visit him in his sleep (Briggs 147; Henson 48). The natural explanation of the apparitions in this story is that Jacob Marley is a product of Scrooge's psychological tensions, his memories and concerns, which are manifested in a dream.

The Christian explanation for ghosts clashes with the scientific one; the ghosts cannot possibly be the soul of a deceased person as well as the manifestation of the protagonist's psychological tension at the same time. These contradicting ideas were what people had to deal with in the nineteenth century and what Dickens appears to carefully balance in these ghost stories.

By reinforcing certain Christian beliefs Dickens was able to give the Victorian readers the spiritual reassurance they needed (Gavin 20). Concerning Dickens' Christmas books, Briggs writes that they are "inspired by their authors sense of Christianity as ideally an active and integrative force in society, the profound link between man and his fellowmen" (210). According to Oulton "[Dickens'] aim was always not to revamp Christ's message, but to present it as clearly as possible to a modern reader in a way that would be universally accessible" (197-8). A *Christmas Carol* and *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain* confirm the Christian convictions that there is an afterlife, that the soul is immortal, and that people, after death, will be judged for the way they have lived their life. These stories further reassure Christian readers that Christmas is sacred and that to condemn Christmas is blasphemous. There is also a prominent theme of repentance in both of these books.

In *A Christmas Carol* the Christian explanation for the ghosts' appearances would be that the soul is immortal and that there is an afterlife. The question whether there is a life that awaits us after our death is a precondition for the whole story. Already on the first page Dickens assures the reader that Jacob Marley is dead, but that he will appear just like Hamlet's father (33). Therefore, with his emergence Jacob Marley proves that there is an afterlife, even if he himself is condemned to walk the earth among other sinners to repent (44, 47-49). In this story, there is clear evidence for the Christian faith regarding the immortality of the soul.

The Christian notion that people who have lived a wrongful life will be punished after their death is most evident in *A Christmas Carol*, but it is also an important theme in *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain*. According to Oulton, Dickens believed in the Judgement and she writes that "*A Christmas Carol* works towards a comic resolution, but significantly the spirits who visit Scrooge are sent to save him from damnation; if he fails to repent he will suffer the consequences after death, as Marley does" (129). When Jacob Marley first appears before Scrooge, Scrooge observes that he is wearing a heavy chain around his waist made of "cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel" (44). When Scrooge asks Marley about the chain he answers that he forged the chain when he was alive and that Scrooge's own chain is even longer and heavier (47). Marley confirms the Christian belief that the way you live your life has an impact on your life after death. He explains to Scrooge that "[i]t is required of every man ... that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world ... and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!" (47). Marley speaks here of the punishment [purgatory] of those who have lived a wrongful life and of how the soul is condemned to wander earth to witness all the troubles and sorrows of mankind.

Week 4 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. What scientific explanation does Larsson offer for Marley's appearance in the novella?

2. What Christian explanation does Larsson offer for Marley's appearance and how does this relate to Dickens' purpose and intentions when writing the novella?

3. To what extent is Jacob Marley a symbol of Christianity?

Week 5

Starting with the extract below from Stave 2, explore how Dickens emphasises the significance and impact of the past throughout the novella.

"The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were over-run with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat. They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be. Not a latent echo in the house, not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the panelling, not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind, not a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty store-house door, no, not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with a softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

You should consider:

- How Scrooge's childhood is presented
- How the description of the setting reinforces ideas from Stave 1
- The impact Scrooge's childhood may have had on his present self

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how the significance and impact of the past is presented. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of the theme of religion may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella that emphasise the significance and impact of the past.

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Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to return to Scrooge's childhood at this point in the novella? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 2, explore how Dickens emphasises the significance and impact of the past throughout the novella.

Week 5 – AIM HIGHER

"Your Reclamation": The Gothic Child and Moral Restoration in Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol by Ashten Roberts (University of Southern Mississippi, 2016)

Read through the extracts below taken from Roberts' study of the Ghost of Christmas Past carefully and highlight anything that could relate to the significance and impact of the past.

While the spirit holds a key to Scrooge's repressed past, its role as a gothic child also assists Scrooge in his transformation through its embodiment of the uncanny. In fact, the gothic "provides the best-known examples of those strange and ghostly figures that Freud saw as examples of 'the Uncanny'" (Hogle 6). Sigmund Freud defines the uncanny as "that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar" and "frightening precisely because it is unknown and unfamiliar" (Freud 124, 124-125). The narrator's description of the spirit creates a sense of the uncanny for the narrator. The spirit becomes familiar through its connection to Scrooge's repressed past. Scrooge attempts to understand its appearance and first notices its familiar aspects. For example, he comprehends the spirit's physical attributes such as its arms, legs, feet, and hair but is de-familiarized as the spirit changes or does not meet expectations: "the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness" and "in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct" (Dickens 62). Its uncannily familiar and unfamiliar body in flux also relates to the frightening aspect of the uncanny because this fluctuation was "its strangest quality," thus suggesting a sense of fear or, at least, apprehension (62).

Through its metamorphic body, the Ghost of Christmas Past again becomes related to memory. Jen Cadwallader argues that the spirits within Dickens's work often represent the troubled psyche of his characters (57). In other words, Cadwallader finds that the ghosts represent reflections of Scrooge's "fractured self" (57). Literal images of the "fractured self" call attention to the Ghost of Christmas Past and his physical fluctuation of fractured and dissolving parts of the body. By reading the spirit's image in relation to memory, the ghost becomes the fractured image of Scrooge's past memory. Like other ghosts in Victorian works, the spirit constitutes some part of the seer's past or inner psyche. The spirit's link with the past and "monstrous" body, though, becomes less threatening as the spirit manifests the role of the gothic child. While Cadwallader is more interested in the spirits' relations to time and how time affects Scrooge's transformation, the discussion of at least one spirit as a gothic child helps readers to better understand Scrooge's ability to comprehend and assimilate the effect seeing his past has on his moral reawakening. The spirit's undeniable childlikeness tames the terror usually so apparent in other elements of the gothic. In order to incite a change in Scrooge and help him towards reclamation through a regression to the past, the novella's gothic child character accomplishes another turn of a gothic component. The spirit maintains transformative powers over the main character without terrifying him through a representation of the abhuman body.

The Ghost of Christmas Past embodies the gothic child by deliberately using gothic elements to assist Scrooge's transformation. For example, when Scrooge asks the Ghost of Christmas Past why it has come to him, the spirit answers, "[y]our welfare" and "[y]our reclamation" (Dickens 63). The character again represents a gothic child as it knowingly guides Scrooge to change through a regression to his past self—a reclamation of his better state. Cadwallader also argues that Scrooge's traversal through space and time help him to grow morally and spiritually (57-58). The spirit's own goals are to reclaim Scrooge's past self by traversing time, which will then morally reform him. The spirit, however, must employ elements of the gothic and a childlike appearance in order to reach the goal within this text—the moral reawakening of Scrooge. Its uncanny familiarity and abhuman body allow it to embody Scrooge's repressed childhood and traverse the time and space necessary to reveal to Scrooge the parts of himself he must reclaim.

Week 5 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Roberts, how is the Ghost of Christmas Past related to Freud's 'the Uncanny'?

2. In relation to Cadwallader, how is the spirits 'physical' appearance reflective of Scrooge and his past?

Week 6

Starting with the extract below from Stave 2, consider how far you think Dickens presents money and wealth as a corruptive force.

"It matters little," she said, softly. "To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve." "What Idol has displaced you?" he rejoined. "A golden one." "This is the even-handed dealing of the world!" he said. "There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!" "You fear the world too much," she answered, gently. "All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?" "What then?" he retorted. "Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you." She shook her head. "Am I?" "Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man."

You should consider:

- How money and wealth are presented as a corruptive force.
- The impact they have had on Scrooge's character (bot past and present).
- The juxtaposition created between wealth and love.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how money and wealth are presented as a corruptive force. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how money and wealth isn't presented as a corruptive force. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them <u>or</u> juxtapose them with a quote from elsewhere in the novella where money and wealth are presented more positively?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella where money and wealth is presented as a corruptive force.

o **1**)

- o 2)
- o **3**)

Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to include this vision of Scrooge's past at this point in the novella? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 2, consider how far you Dickens presents money and wealth as a corruptive force.

<u>Week 6 – AIM HIGHER</u> A Christmas Carol: A Capitalist Story by Jacqueline Isaacs

Read through the extracts below taken from Isaac's article carefully and highlight anything that could relate wealth and greed.

Charles Dickens is well known as one of the most prolific and influential authors of the Victorian period. His works often communicated the deep sense of *justice* that burdened Dickens. He spent his life bringing attention to the social stratification of Victorian English society and the poverty and destitution that plagued those at the bottom.

Many communist and socialist leaders have looked to Dickens as a champion for their cause. Even Karl Marx was a self-professed fan. And for these reasons, many have labeled Dickens a socialist and have used his ever-popular seasonal classic *A Christmas Carol*, as a condemnation of capitalism and consumerism.

While it is too late to speak for Dickens's political views, I would challenge anyone who might be watching one of the many cinematic renditions of *A Christmas Carol* or even reading the book, to notice the decidedly non-socialist themes Dickens presents. In fact, I would go so far as to say that *A Christmas Carol* is a story about capitalism.

First, Dickens never condemns capitalism, decries the success of business owners, nor denounces the trading by which they amassed their wealth. The only criticism Dickens makes, in a move of astounding literary focus, is that Ebenezer Scrooge and Jacob Marley were not generous in their earned success.

There would not have been a story if Scrooge and Marley were not successful businessmen. If they had been unhappy poor folk, instead of unhappy rich folk, the beginning would not have been possible.

More importantly, the conclusion would not have been possible if Ebenezer Scrooge had not been a successful businessman. When the character has gone through his revelatory experience and come out a *better* man, he does not then become poor. Instead the new Scrooge uses his wealth to help those around him. He pays for Tiny Tim's medical treatments which save his life. He buys food for local families. He raises the salaries of his employees. And he donates a large amount to charity.

None of this generosity would have been possible had not Scrooge been a successful business man and had not there have been a system of wealth creation such as capitalism.

This is, in a sense, an autobiographical element of the story. Dickens himself was very successful through his writings and journalism, and he used this success to sponsor many philanthropic causes throughout his life including founding a women's home.

Secondly, Dickens seems to go out of his way to point out the inadequacies of government anti-poverty programs.

When Ebenezer Scrooge is approached by two gentlemen and asked to make a donation to the "poor and destitute," his response was that the poor and destitute should go to the prisons and workhouses because his tax dollars already support those.

This demonstrates the fallacy of taxations superseding generosity. In his book, <u>Who Really Cares</u>, AEI president Arthur Brooks shows quantitatively that liberals who support large government anti-poverty programs are in their own lives the least generous. To them, their taxation has taken the place of personal generosity.

David Henderson, a research fellow at the Hoover Institute, <u>wrote</u> in *The Freeman* magazine a few Christmases ago: *The modern Scrooge, instead of asking, "Are there no prisons?" would ask, "Is there no Medicaid? Are there no food stamps?" The modern Scrooges, in short, are those who advocate government programs for the poor rather than charity for the poor.*

The lesson of Brooks, Henderson and Dickens is that the government cannot be generous. **If the** government takes over the responsibility of caring for the poor, then we will all be Scrooges.

What benefits our soul, and what led to the redemption of Ebenezer Scrooge, is the personal responsibility to take care of the poor. The New Scrooge took responsibility for caring for the poor in his community. He identified the needs and made the decisions and sacrifices necessary to fill those needs.

Furthermore, Dickens backhandedly makes the point that the government programs are insufficient. People in need were falling through the cracks, or else the gentlemen would not have been fundraising on their behalf in the first place.

Lastly, Dickens takes a relatively narrow view of community. The New Ebenezer did not set forth to save all of England, but he took care of those needy people whom he encountered everyday. Biblically speaking, he loved his neighbor.

Socialism and communism take very large views of community. They require large numbers of people to participate in the system so that the more productive members of society can fully support the less productive.

Capitalism is the only system that takes a small view of community. Due to principles such as Adam Smith's "<u>invisible hand</u>" and F. A. Hayek's "<u>knowledge problem</u>," capitalism accepts that it cannot foresee nor understand all of the demands of a large community. Capitalism asks only that people take care of their own needs and allows for them to take care of the needs in their immediate community.

In conclusion, A Christmas Carol cannot be a story that promotes socialism because it is a story that depends upon capitalism.

The warnings we should head from Charles Dickens and the reclaimed Ebenezer Scrooge, are not that we need more government, but that we ought to strive to be successful and use our success to care for our families and contribute to our community.

Week 6 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. What 3 main reasons does Isaac's offer as justification of her view that the novella is a story about Capitalism?

2. How does Isaac's create positive links between Capitalism and wealth in the article?

4. 'Dickens doesn't criticise the wealth of his characters, nor the Capitalism that enabled them to achieve such affluence; but the greed that prevents munificence.' To what extent do you agree?

Week 7

Starting with the extract below from Stave 3, explore how Dickens presents ideas surrounding generosity.

In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see:, who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door. "Come in!" exclaimed the Ghost. "Come in, and know me better, man."
Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them. "I am the Ghost of Christmas Present," said the Spirit. "Look upon me."
Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.

You should consider:

- How the Ghost of Christmas Present is physically described and what this reveals about his character.
- Dickens' deliberate use of symbolism.
- How the spirit is juxtaposed with Scrooge.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Dickens presents ideas surrounding generosity. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of the theme of generosity may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella where ideas surrounding generosity are presented.

- o **1)**
- o 2)
- o 3)

Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to use this spirit to explore the theme of generosity in the present? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 3, explore how Dickens presents ideas surrounding generosity.

<u>Week 7 – AIM HIGHER</u>

Malthus and Scrooge: How Charles Dickens Put Holly Branch Through The Heart Of The Worst Economics Ever by Jerry Bowyer

Read through the extracts below taken from Bowyer's article carefully and highlight anything that could relate to abundance and generosity.

What was Dickens really doing when he wrote *A Christmas Carol*? Answer: He was weighing in on one of the central economic debates of his time, the one that raged between Thomas Malthus and one of the disciples of Adam Smith.

Malthus famously argued that in a world in which economies grew arithmetically and population grew geometrically, mass want would be inevitable. His *Essay on Population* created a school of thought which continues to this day under the banners of Zero Population Growth and Sustainability. The threat of a "population bomb" under which my generation lived was Paul Ehrlich's modern rehashing of the Malthusian argument about the inability of productivity to keep pace with, let alone exceed, population growth.

Jean Baptiste Say, Smith's most influential disciple, argued on the other hand, as had his mentor, that the gains from global population growth, spread over vast expanses of trading, trigger gains from a division of labor which exceed those ever thought possible before the rise of the market order.

The Ghost of Christmas Present is the key to understanding Dickens' political and economic philosophy. He is the symbol of abundance. He literally and figuratively holds a cornucopia, a horn of plenty. While he wears a scabbard at his side, it is bereft of sword and neglected in care. Peace and plenty.

When Scrooge asks him how many brothers he has, the ghost replies "More than 1,800." When Scrooge declares that this is a 'tremendous family to provide for," the ghost rises in anger. And then he takes Scrooge where? To the university economics department? To the socialist meeting house? No, he takes Scrooge to the market, and shows him the abundance there, especially the fruits (sometimes literal) of foreign trade.

Malthus taught the world to fear new people. An amateur economist, he created a theoretical model which allegedly proved that mass starvation was an inevitable result of population growth. Populations grow, he said, geometrically, but wealth only grows arithmetically. In other words, new people create more new people, but new food doesn't create new food.

Ebenezer Scrooge was clearly a Malthusian. When he turns away an opportunity for alms giving, he uses the zero growth rationale. When he meets the Ghost of Christmas Present, he reiterates it:

"You have never seen the like of me before!" exclaimed the Spirit.

"Never," Scrooge made answer to it.

"Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years?" pursued the Phantom.

"I don't think I have," said Scrooge. "I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?"

"More than eighteen hundred," said the Ghost.

"A tremendous family to provide for!" muttered Scrooge.

At this, the Ghost rose in indignation. Scrooge cowers and submits. Then the ghost raises his torch (in the shape of a cornucopia) and leads Scrooge to the public market, brimming with food from all around the world. Dickens especially emphasizes the fruits of trade: almonds, Spanish onions and oranges (in winter, no less). The message is clear: Use your eyes, man, just look around and see that the dirge-ists of the day are wrong. England, even with its poor classes, is a prosperous society. The world is abundant. Rest is possible. So is generosity.

Week 7 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Bowyer, how is Scrooge presented as Malthusian in Stave 3?

2. In what way does Bowyer suggest the Ghost of Christmas Present is a representative of Smith and Say?

3. Bowyer seems to suggest that Dickens uses the Ghost of Christmas Present to promote free trade that would benefit the many as opposed to the few as abundance leads to generosity. To what extent do you agree?

Week 8

Starting with the extract below from Stave 3, explore how Dickens presents the importance of family throughout the novella.

Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a milliner's, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch, and how she meant to lie abed to-morrow morning for a good long rest; to-morrow being a holiday she passed at home. Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord was much about as tall as Peter; at which Peter pulled up his collars so high that you couldn't have seen his head if you had been there. All this time the chestnuts and the jug went round and round; and by-and-bye they had a song, about a lost child travelling in the snow, from Tiny Tim, who had a plaintive little voice, and sang it very well indeed. There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

You should consider:

- How the Cratchit family are presented.
- Why Dickens emphasises their poverty.
- How this presentation of them would dispel middle/upper class misconceptions of typical working class families.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Dickens presents the importance of family. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of the importance of family may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella that emphasise the importance of family.

- o 1)
- o 2)
- o 3)

Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to focus on the Cratchits when exploring the importance of family? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 3, explore how Dickens presents the importance of family throughout the novella.

<u>Week 8 – AIM HIGHER</u> From Why Spending Time With Family is More Important Than Ever by Tim Cumming

Read through the extracts below taken from Cumming's article carefully and highlight anything that relates to the importance of family time in the 21st century.

Whatever your definition of life is, <u>play and make-believe are precious and irreplaceable commodities</u> – but under the digital cosh of 21st century life, they are at risk of extinction. While my daughter's childhood was free of tablets and mobiles, today's infants paw at them even in their prams. From phone to tablet to laptop and smart TV, our lives are lived through multiple screens, each demanding our time and attention, even as we complain that we don't have enough to give.

As a result, whether we're posting on social sites, scrolling through emails, playing games or watching ondemand entertainment, we seem to be glued to our digital devices more than ever, ending up in a kind of voluntary solitary confinement. This means we risk becoming ever-more remote from real-life experiences as families, whether that be playing games, sharing outdoors adventures, <u>reading together</u>, or simply sitting down to eat at the same time.

So when it comes to family time, what is it really all about? "It's about sharing things together and creating bonds and attachments so that children feel they belong in the family and have routines and traditions," says Dr Gummer, who is also founder of Fundamentally Children, which promotes the value of play in healthy childhoods. For Dr Gummer, quality family time – sharing experiences and creating memories – gives children that sense of belonging they crave. "You get to pass on shared values and opinions, and you

get to have discussions about what's going on in life, and children feel more valued, more heard, and they understand their parents more as well."

"Repeated daily good connections between parent and child foster what is known as secure attachment, or resilience," says Dr Sunderland. "Research shows that it leads to better functioning, a stronger immune system, better physiology, higher academic marks, a sense of wellbeing and contentment – and it prevents mental and physical ill-health in later life." That's quite a legacy you're making there for your children, simply by exchanging passive pursuits for active play, with or without a digital signal.

"It's all about moderation," adds Dr Sunderland. "A good guide is to ensure that you have at least one hour a day built up of real moments of connection between you and your child." Like Dr Gummer, she doesn't believe in digital bans. "It's not so much the impact of the device," she says, "more the issue is what are you not doing because of the device – playing together, running in the woods together, laughing together, talking together."

Week 8 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Cummings, a barrier to quality family time in the 21st century is digital devices and media. However, with regards to the Cratchits, what prevents them from regular family time in 19th century Britain?

2. Dr Gummer states that family time is 'about sharing things together and creating bonds and attachments so that children feel they belong in the family and have routines and traditions.' How does Dickens reinforce this belief through his representation of the Cratchits in Stave 3?
3. 'The Cratchits highlight the importance of family when they defy the restrictions of poverty and the pressures of living in the Victorian working class and unite on Christmas Day.' To what extent do you agree?

<u>Week 9</u>

Starting with the extract below from Stave 3, consider how Dickens explores the effects of poverty.

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 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 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 abide 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 own words. "Are there no workhouses?"
The bell struck twelve.

You should consider:

- The personification of Ignorance and Want.
- What they each represent and suggest about society.
- Scrooge's changing attitudes towards poverty and those who suffer because of it.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Dickens explores the effects of poverty. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' exploration of the effects of poverty may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella that convey the effects of poverty.

- o 1)
- o 2)
- o 3)

Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to personify Ignorance and Want as children? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 3, consider how Dickens explores the effects of poverty.

Week 9 – AIM HIGHER

"Your Reclamation": The Gothic Child and Moral Restoration in Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol by Ashten Roberts (University of Southern Mississippi, 2016)

Read through the extracts below from Roberts' study carefully and highlight anything that relates to the significance of Ignorance and Want and the effects of poverty.

Want and Ignorance are the only characters in Dickens's novella described as monsters—a gothic trope. Georgieva argues that the gothic child can often take on typical gothic elements through villainy, monstrosity, or mystery, which appears to be the case here. On the other hand, the children are also victimized: where "graceful youth should have filled their features out," instead, "a stale and shriveled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds" (Dickens 99, 101). Like the aged but childlike Ghost of Christmas Past, Want and Ignorance represent another binary of youth and old age, though their childish features do not come and go but have been worn away by an aged hand. These children seem forsaken by their elders: "hand, like that of age." Interestingly, Scrooge is also described as old, though not childlike. In the first pages of the novella, the narrator dubs him "old Scrooge," and in Leech's illustration of him in the presence of Want and Ignorance, Scrooge's posture seems bent with old age (41). Considering that the novella uses Scrooge to represent the blindness of society towards the plight of the poor, the description of him as old and the children's ruined features suggests that Scrooge, as well as society, figuratively had a hand in their ruin.

While the children are described as victims of society, their dreadful state also appears vicious as they encourage Scrooge to remain at a distance from them. The state of the characters suggests that the children are not just victims, but could also easily become aggressors. Through this possibility of attack, the novella suggests that society has created monsters and now must deal with possibly monstrous attacks. The children, though, while terrifying, mask their possible violent aggression by being children—seemingly innocent beings. The gothic child characters appear menacing and monstrous but also evoke sympathy through their appearance of childlike helplessness.

The Ghost of Christmas Present, also a spirit but not a child character, actually reveals the children from beneath his robe and describes them as possessions of humankind: "This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased" (Dickens 101). Society has refused to acknowledge that it has effectively created ignorance and want. The children illustrate a hidden truth within society: the upper classes are ignorant of the poor who want for more. In fact, society must recognize their repression of this truth and "erase" impending "Doom" by assisting the poor in their needs. Again, the gothic often reveals repressed truths depicted in terrifying or grotesque forms. The

Ghost of Christmas Present literally hides the children beneath his robes as issues of Scrooge's present society are hidden in his subconscious.

The children become a metaphor within the novella of society's inability, or lack of desire, to care for the helpless. Representing the downtrodden as impoverished and emaciated children serves to encourage in the reader a sense of duty towards the less fortunate. The element of the gothic child becomes important because its manifestation as a helpless child seems to evoke more sympathy from both Scrooge and the reader, thereby creating a more resounding impact.

Through the viewing of the children, Scrooge wants for them "refuge or resource," but the spirit quickly reminds Scrooge of his own previously expressed disdain for those in need (101). Like Langbauer, Saltmarsh understands Want and Ignorance as the "articulation between childhood and society" because they are susceptible to societal issues but also exhibit "powerlessness to intervene in . . . political and economic circumstances" (9). In short, the children represent a repressed knowledge of the inability of the poor to care for their own wants without aid from the richer members of society. The pair's existence in the novella, even as a metaphor, supports Scrooge's transformation by revealing these repressed societal understandings and by making him feel guilt for his previous attitude towards the less fortunate. Again, repression represented through often metaphorical forms constitutes an element of the gothic. Unlike typical gothic tropes, though, Want and Ignorance do not necessarily cause Scrooge to be entirely afraid or even attempt to threaten him. However, the narrator does inform the reader that, upon witnessing the children, Scrooge himself "started back, appalled," but his shock soon subsides into a morbid curiosity and even guilty understanding (Dickens 101).

Week 9 - AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. How does Roberts create parallels between Ignorance and Want, the gothic and Scrooge?

2. According to Roberts, how and why does Dickens create juxtaposition between their appearance and position in society?

3. 'The element of the gothic child becomes important because its manifestation as a helpless child seems to evoke more sympathy from both Scrooge and the reader, thereby creating a more resounding impact.' To what extent do you agree?

<u>Week 10</u>

Starting with the extract below from Stave 4, explore how Dickens presents the supernatural as a predominant theme throughout the novella.

The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached. When it came, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery. It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded. He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved. "I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?" said Scrooge. The Spirit answered not, but pointed downward with its hand.

You should consider:

- How the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is described and what it represents.
- How Dickens' use of language creates a sense of foreboding.
- How and why this spirit differs from the previous ghosts.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Dickens presents the supernatural as a predominant theme. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of the supernatural may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella where Dickens presents the supernatural as a predominant theme.

- o **1)**
- o 2)
- o 3)

Task 4: Why does Dickens choose to create such juxtaposition between the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come and the other spirits? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 4, explore how Dickens presents the supernatural as a predominant theme throughout the novella.

<u>Week 10 – AIM HIGHER</u> The Haunted Universe of Dickens in A Christmas Carol by Mukesh Williams

Read through the extracts below taken from Mukresh's study carefully and highlight anything that relates to the importance and significance of the supernatural.

Dickens uses the spectral presence both as a narrative device and moral consciousness to haunt the text thereby lifting it out of reality and returning it back to reality in altered forms. Reality always comes to us as Jacques Derrida points out in a fictionalized form (Derrida, 2002 3). Unlike the Gothic text in Dickens there is no shift from a "narrative device" to "literary trope" (Berthin, 2010 1). Dickens presents one apparition and three ghosts each with a specific purpose. The "dreadful apparition" of Jacob Marley appears dragging chains he "forged in life" (ACC, p. 22) to prepare Scrooge for the impending visit of the three ghosts. And before Marley leaves he has already preached the central message of the novel.

Marley preaches compassion, fellow feeling and sharing as necessary conditions for a happy life both present life and after life, failing which a man's life will be eternal suffering. Scrooge is jolted out of his smug complacency just as the rich class English reader would. Until we realize social responsibility there is "no rest, no peace" but "incessant torture of remorse" (ACC, p. 23). Marley brings with him a warning and a hope to Scrooge and help him escape a terrible fate of damnation. But this is not possible without the visitations of the three spirits.

Marley enters the "double locked door" of Scrooge's heart and offers a window of hope by exiting through it. Scrooge looks out of the window and sees "phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went." The incident bothers him and exhausts him and he goes to sleep without "undressing" (ACC, 26-27; 30). Marley's ghost expands the Victorian meaning of reason for Scrooge and he begins to believe that dreams are also deeper part of reason as Freud was trying to explain. Scrooge is perplexed as his "mature inquiry" dismisses the ghost as a "dream" but his consciousness is "bothered" by it (p. 30). Marley embodies the "paradoxical state of the spectre, which is neither being nor non-being" (Derrida, 1994). Scrooge's heart too has become palsied, paralyzed and frozen. The visitations of the phantoms are a necessary condition for Scrooge to change as he has become so hard of heart that he "cannot hope to shun the path" he is following (Dickens 1843 25). So both the spectre and the spirits are needed for Scrooge to change.

Scrooge needs to be shaken, to be frightened into a new awareness which both the spectre and the spirits do for him. As Scrooge looks out of the window of his "dusty chambers" he sees "phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste and moaning" (Dickens, 1843 72, 26-27). The phantoms generate regret, surprise and fear at what he has missed, is missing and will miss after his death. The phantoms Scrooge sees outside his window are powerless creatures wanting to do good, "in human matters" but have "lost the power for ever" (Dickens 1843 27).

Visiting the past is undoubtedly a strange experience and the Ghost of Christmas Past is indeed a "strange figure." Its hair is white but its skin is wrinkle free. It is no general ghost of mankind's amorphous past but a specific ghost of Scrooge's past. It is on a special mission to remind Scrooge of the sights and the sounds and the smells of his long-forgotten past when he was happy and concerned about others. He remembers himself as poor lonely boy, his generous sister Fan with a "large heart," the happy employer Mr. Fezziwig and the indictment of Belle— "You fear the world too much" (ACC "strangest agitation" (ACC, p. 45). These sights leave him in a state of , p. 43). Even though Scrooge realizes that these are but "shadows of things that have been" and people in it "have no consciousness of us" he is so moved by the haunting that he begs the Ghost to remove him from the past—"Haunt me no longer!" (ACC, p. 49).

The second Ghost is a "jolly Giant" with "a glowing torch" wearing a green robe lined with fur with a holly wreath on his head. Scrooge has "never seen the like of [him] before" but is willing to learn a lesson— "teach me, let me profit by it" (ACC, p. 53-55). The prose that follows is at times evocative and poetic and at times dull and boring. But nevertheless Dickens has made a point—the genial Ghost has "sympathy with all poor men" (ACC, p. 59). Scrooge heart warms up to the Cratchits and his concern about Tiny Tim's well being grows (ACC, pp. 55-64).

The third Ghost is totally concealed in black garment with one "out-stretched hand" (ACC, p. 79). Scrooge is terribly frightened of the "spectral hand" and symbolically of his hidden but dark future. The Ghost of Christmas Future takes him to the underbelly of the town. Here Scrooge recoils but continues to watch with dawning comprehension that they are exchanging stolen goods of "a wretched old screw" who has recently died is no other than him (ACC, pp. 86-96). Scrooge is now ready to change and he inquires eagerly from the third Ghost: "Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?" (ACC, p. 96). And once he gets the assurance from the spirit that these events are forebodings of "May be" he decides to change. As soon he transforms the Ghost of the Future collapses into a bedpost. He then he gets into the act of dispelling the "shadows of the things that would have been" with renewed gusto (ACC, p. 100). And he looks at the knocker that starts his journey of spiritual awakening and exclaims: "I shall love it, as long as I live!"

The supernatural exerted a powerful influence on the Victorian mind. It shaped their world view and became a subject of literary inquiry. Though Freud's work on psychoanalysis, paranormal and the uncanny created a "whole climate of opinion" to use W. H. Auden's phrase, the world continued to be a mysterious place. Zizek believes that the "traumatic fantasies" of history are transmitted though a vibrant "symbolic tradition to "haunt the living" (Zizek, 2003 128). All major religious traditions have their ghosts and our self-discovery is always haunted by these ghosts whether they are suppressed or released. Luke Thurston suggests that the literary ghost carries with him "a spark of life" and attempts to find ways to write "life itself" (Thurston, 2012 6). However that may be too ambitious a task for the literary ghost to accomplish. In Dickens the ghosts jolt the protagonist and the reader into a new awareness of themselves. It is they who write on the tabula rasa, not the ghosts.

Week 10 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Mukresh, how does Dickens use the 'spectral presence' for effect?

2. How does Mukresh define the significance and purpose of each spirit?

3. 'In Dickens the ghosts jolt the protagonist and the reader into a new awareness of themselves. It is they who write on the tabula rasa, not the ghosts.' To what extent do you agree?

<u>Week 11</u>

Starting with the extract below from Stave 4, explore how Dickens presents the reality of living in destitution.

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offenses of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery. Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a greyhaired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frowsy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement.

You should consider:

- Dickens' description of the living conditions
- The atmosphere this creates
- How the destitute are presented

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Dickens presents the reality of living in destitution. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of the reality of living in destitution may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella where Dickens conveys the reality of living in destitution.

- o 1)
- o 2)
- o 3)

Task 4: Why does Dickens ensure that Scrooge (and the reader) see this part of London at this point? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 4, explore how Dickens presents the reality of living in destitution.



<u>Week 11 – AIM HIGHER</u> The Blackest Streets by Sara Wise (2008)

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to the reality of living in destitution.

Charles Mowbray, former soldier, master tailor and one of the greatest working-class orators in late Victorian England, had only to look out of his cracked window in London's East End to know this was the place to start the revolution. As his pay had been slashed to subsistence levels, so Mowbray had been driven to take refuge at the bottom of the heap, in the worst, most soul-destroying slum in the greatest city on Earth. Its name was the Old Nichol, possibly derived from the name of the devil himself, Old Nick.

Situated in Bethnal Green and part of Shoreditch, it was only 25 minutes' walk from the Bank of England. But the Old Nichol, a maze of rotting streets hemmed in by bleak tenement buildings, might as well have been on a different planet. Most Londoners preferred to forget that it even existed.

When Mowbray put on his boots and walked through the Old Nichol, he passed down narrow, muddy streets, skirting pools of filthy liquid and the carcasses of dogs and cats. Eyes watched him greedily through broken window panes. Mowbray would go on to decry the injustices of the age and was an impassioned socialist. No grass grew in this dark and putrid labyrinth. The narrow canyons of blackened brick tenements blocked out the sun and all colour was leached away except for the dull greys of smoke and soot. In a two-room tenement in Anne Court, just around the corner from where Mowbray lived, the meagre fire burning in the grate drew moisture out of the saturated plaster, creating wisps of fog inside the house.

In the Old Nichol, there was no escape from the gloom. Its two tiny rooms were home to a married couple and six children, but there were no beds. When Montagu Williams, a magistrate and writer, asked how they slept, the mother replied: 'Oh, we sleep how we can.'

But not everyone hated the slum or railed against it like Mowbray. Arthur Harding was born in the Nichol in 1886 and lived there most of his life. Known as Prince Arthur, being the family favourite, he was brought up in a family of six in a single room in Keeve's Buildings, Boundary Street.

To the young Arthur, this humble home was comfortable compared to many in the area. Renting at three shillings a week, it measured 12ft by 10ft and accommodated a table, two armchairs, a chest of drawers, straw mattress and small stove. Over the mantelpiece was a portrait of Queen Victoria, looking down on Arthur's cot which was made out of an old orange box.

Arthur's maternal grandparents were agricultural labourers who had come to London thinking they could better themselves. They were mistaken: both died in the Shoreditch workhouse. Arthur's mother, Mary Ann, found work in a factory, sorting old rags for pulping into paper, one of the most hazardous of East End jobs as employees risked infection from lice and fleas. Thankfully, she was rescued by Arthur's father, 'Flash' Harry, who met her one night at a Bishopsgate pub. But about the time Arthur was born in Keeve's Buildings, his parents fell on hard times.

Mary Ann had a crippled hip, which confined her to making matchboxes, while Flash Harry was reduced to casual pub shifts and cadging food from restaurants. What kept them going, however, was Aunt Liza's generosity. An unmarried woman (rare in those days), she owned her own grocery store and sold stolen goods from it - she even kept the back door open so visiting thieves could escape if the police called. She also ran the Jack Simmons pub where, on Sunday mornings, the East End elite - prize-fighters, racetrack celebrities and music hall artists - would mingle with the Swell Mob, prosperous villains who dressed flamboyantly in brown, double-breasted overcoats and wide, black satin ties.

Prince Arthur swore that he would never become like his father, who eventually abandoned Mary Ann and died in the Mile End Workhouse aged 85. Instead, he would follow his mother's example. She was crippled by her hip and deserted by a feckless husband, but was a loving mother nevertheless and kept her humble home spotless. She was also a favourite among local philanthropists. Showered with charity clothing, she would take it straight round to a dealer who paid as much as five shillings for a good pair of trousers. But she wasn't an ideal role model. She graduated to stealing from church jumble sales, with the help of Arthur who, from an early age, decided self-employment was for him.

The Old Nichol was made for the light-fingered and if you knew your way through the labyrinth, you could easily evade the police. Before long, Arthur resembled Oliver Twist's Artful Dodger. After all, the smaller you were, the more nimbly you could dodge between the stalls which lined one side of Shoreditch High Street, which he dubbed the area's Champs Elysees.

In winter, a free breakfast of bread and milk was supplied at the Ragged School Mission Hall. But after that, residents were on their own. Arthur would hang around a corner shop which sold bags of broken biscuits for a halfpenny and, along with his friends, most of whom would die at the Somme, he became a proficient pickpocket.

When he was nine, Arthur and his mother were evicted from their home and spent a freezing night under a railway arch. And after they were rehoused, Arthur's criminal career began in earnest. He joined a local gang, stealing and menacing shopkeepers and spent much of his time in prison, which, ironically, saved him from a worse fate in the trenches.

He was not alone. Mugging was commonplace in the Old Nichol - although perhaps no more so than in London today. The magistrate Montagu Williams, for example, warned a victim: 'It is as certain as the day is long that if you go out to get drunk, and have money in your pocket, you will, in this neighbourhood, get robbed.'

More violent crimes, however, were rare. According to the Old Bailey archives, between 1885 and 1895 only one murder occurred within the Old Nichol, when a middle-aged shoemaker stabbed his wife to death.

Week 11 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. How does Wise emphasise the bleak reality of living in the slums in the Victorian era?

2. What parallels can be drawn between Wise's depiction of living in destitution and Dickens' description?

3. To what extent does Dickens offer the reader a realistic insight into living in destitution and what are his reasons for doing so?

<u>Week 12</u>

Starting with the extract below from Stave 4, explore how Dickens evokes feelings of sympathy throughout the novella.

She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter -- he had need of it, poor fellow -- came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid, each child a little cheek, against his face, as if they said, "Don't mind it, father. Don't be grieved." Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday, he said. "Sunday. You went to-day, then, Robert?" said his wife. "Yes, my dear," returned Bob. "I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child!" cried Bob. "My little child!" He broke down all at once. He couldn't help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were. He left the room, and went up-stairs into the room above, which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas. There was a chair set close beside the child, and there were signs of some one having been there, lately. Poor Bob sat down in it, and when he had thought a little and composed himself, he kissed the little face.

You should consider:

- How Bob Cratchit is presented.
- How his speech, actions and behaviour evoke sympathy.
- How the death of Tiny Tim is conveyed.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Dickens evokes feelings of sympathy. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' evocation of sympathy may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella where Dickens evokes feelings of sympathy.

- o **1)**
- o 2)
- o 3)

Task 4: Why does Dickens return Scrooge to the Cratchits after Tiny Tim's death? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 4, explore how Dickens evokes feelings of sympathy throughout the novella.

Week 12 – AIM HIGHER

"Your Reclamation": The Gothic Child and Moral Restoration in Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol by Ashten Roberts (University of Southern Mississippi, 2016)

Read through the extracts below taken from Roberts' study carefully and highlight anything that relates to feelings of sympathy and their purpose within the novella.

Scrooge actually witnesses Tim's dead body, though we do not get his reaction, when the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come takes him to the future. Tim's disabled body seems to have a stronger effect on Scrooge than the viewing of Tim's corpse.

Like the other gothic children in the novella, Tiny Tim pushes Scrooge to a moral transformation. Tim's body actually becomes the tool that encourages Scrooge towards transformation. Scrooge's childhood self lacks familial attachment and suffers from neglect. Similarly, Tim's body suffers from a disability. Both of these characters suffer from some issue within their childhoods. Tiny Tim as a character does not excite terror, but his body draws attention to the often unhappy and certainly repressed memories of Scrooge's childhood. This connection pushes Scrooge towards reclamation through his desire to aid Tiny Tim—an act he can no longer perform for his own childhood self. In fact, at the work's conclusion, Scrooge becomes "a second father" to Tim Cratchit (Dickens 123). In her brief nod to *Carol*, Craton argues that Scrooge is in part reformed through his newfound relationship with Tiny Tim, and these cultivating "relationships demand engagement with the world, so child rearing served as an antidote to miserliness" (102). Scrooge needs this developing relationship with and connection to Tim in order to transform himself...

Interestingly, *Carol* directly links Tiny Tim and little Fan, and this connection is one reason why seeing Tiny Tim pushes Scrooge towards reclamation. For example, their very names mark their smallness. Fan is designated as "little Fan," and Tim's nickname, Tiny Tim, similarly emphasizes his diminutiveness (Dickens 67, emphasis added). Other characters often describe aspects of Tim such as his crutch, his body, and his voice as "little" (86, 87, 91). Both characters are also sickly and fated to early deaths. Also, Tiny Tim affects Scrooge's transformation through his own connection to Scrooge's past child self and the delicate, childish nature of little Fan. While the text does not link Tim to Scrooge's past directly, Scrooge automatically feels kinship or, at least, concern for the child. Like child Scrooge, Tim also spends time alone despite his large and loving family. His father admits "he gets thoughtful sitting by himself so much" (87). His time alone, though, culminates into his goodness in that he thinks of ways he might encourage others through his disability.

After Scrooge witnesses Tim with his family during his time with the Ghost of Christmas Present, he asks the spirit, "with an interest he had never felt before," if Tiny Tim will live, and the spirit responds that if the future remains unaltered "the child will die" (89). At this point in the novella, the Ghost of Christmas Past has already revealed to Scrooge his own past self as a child: a "solitary child, neglected by his friends," as well as the delicate, now deceased Fan (64). Scrooge displays this newfound "interest" in Tim because of his connection to the disabled child, as well as his memory of Fan—also a delicate child. For example, upon witnessing himself as a child "Scrooge sat down . . . and wept to see his poor forgotten self" who, despite his loneliness, found happiness through imagination and a love for literature (65). Both the young Scrooge and Tim express childhood resilience to make the best of unfortunate situations. Thus, Scrooge seems to harbor a connection between himself and Tim brought about by a nostalgia for his former childhood. Also, as mentioned above, Scrooge's loss of little Fan was a probable pivotal moment in his loss of childlike innocence and happiness. The possible loss of Tim draws attention to Scrooge's loss of little Fan, who seems to have much in common with the disabled child still alive and in need of help if he hopes to survive. Like Fan and child Scrooge, Tim rallies through his hardships with childhood innocence and goodness. Not only does Tim connect Scrooge to his own childhood, but he also represents a missing component in his life—familial attachment with an innocent, happy child.

Week 12 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Roberts, how is Scrooge's connection to Tiny Tim derived from sympathy?

2. How does Roberts create links between Tiny Tim and Little Fan?

3. 'Sympathetic feelings propel Scrooge towards moral restoration.' To what extent do you agree?

Week 13

Starting with the extract below from Stave 4, consider how far you think Dickens conveys attitudes of regret and remorse.

"No, Spirit! Oh no, no!" The finger still was there. "Spirit!" he cried, tight clutching at its robe, "hear me. I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?" For the first time the hand appeared to shake. "Good Spirit," he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it: "Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have
shown me, by an altered life." The kind hand trembled.
"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!"
In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him.
Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate aye reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress.

You should consider:

- Scrooge's behaviour and feelings.
- His attitude towards his past and his future.
- How these convey his regret and remorse.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Dickens conveys attitudes of regret and remorse. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you 'how far you think' which means that you can also consider how Scrooge (and other characters) are presented as unrepentant. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative interpretation for any of them <u>or</u> juxtapose them with a quote from elsewhere in the novella?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella where Dickens conveys attitudes of regret or remorse.

- o **1)**
- o 2)
- o 3)

Task 4: How does Dickens' description of Scrooge pleading with the spirit emphasise the change in his character? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 4, consider how far you think Dickens conveys attitudes of regret and remorse.

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<u>Week 13 – AIM HIGHER</u> Capitalism, Christian Compassion and Redemption in A Christmas Carol by Radek Kučera (2015)

Read through the extracts below carefully and highlight anything that relates to attitudes of regret and remorse.

Jacob Marley, an old business partner of Scrooge, who died exactly seven years before the events of the main story took place, plays a vital role in Scrooge's reformation. In a spirit of true friendship, he visits Scrooge with an important message of warning and tries to help him escape his fate. Considered from a theological standpoint, he acts as an emissary of redemption, revealing a course of action by which Scrooge can atone and be delivered from his past sins of greed and ignorance.

The hebrew name Jacob would no doubt evoke the possibility of the character being connected to the Old Testament in minds of Victorian readers. Marley, similarly to Jacob from the bible who in Genesis 32:28 struggles with God for which he is dubbed Israel, stands in direct opposition to God by refusing to "intercede for good in human affairs" during his life. In his death he is forced to wander the Earth, helpless most of the time, and laments his sins. It is clear that he endeavours to persuade Scrooge to learn from his mistake of not abiding by Christian charitable ways and further emphasizes the importance of doing so at the time of Christ's birth by the following disclosure,' "At this time of the rolling year," the spectre said, "I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me!"' Interestingly enough it is this piece of revelation that leads Scrooge, who until than was only slightly dismayed by the apparition and kept jesting about the situation, began to "quake exceedingly." This show of fear reveals the first sign of Scrooge's newly-found understanding of the importance to repent and redeem his past actions if he wants to escape Marley's terrible fate.

As regards the emotional impact on Scrooge, which would likely push him to reconsider the chance of redemption Marley bestowed upon him, perhaps the most important part of Marley's message comes last. When Marley decides that it is time to leave, he chooses the window as an exit, presumably so that he can draw Scrooge's attention to what is happening outside. In the street, "the air was filled with phantoms,

wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went." Scrooge recognizes a great deal many of them as his acquaintances. He sees the misery and desperation of one old ghost in a white waistcoat who tries to help a destitute women holding an infant. Returning to the theme of personal responsibility, Scrooge managed to shirk by appealing to governmental solutions of The Poor Law, Workhouses and The Treadmill, Dickens mentions the several ghosts as being linked together, and insinuates that they might be a government. Scrooge, being one of most prosperous and prominent businessmen with influential connections in all likelihood recognized at least some of the ghosts of politicians he knew during their lifetime.

As Fairhurst points out, the whole episode bears striking resemblance to the description of hell from Dante's Inferno, and the similarity is bigger yet if we consider that Scrooge subsequently obtains guidance from supernatural entities, similarly to Virgil guiding Dante through the circles of hell (8). The character of Scrooge, raised in a private school, would no doubt be acquainted and recognize the resemblance, similarly to many Victorian times readers. It could be therefore argued that the purpose of the scene is not by any means to show how kindness and charity are important, but rather to simply highlight the importance of the decision Scrooge has ahead of him and to scare him into acceptance of what the Ghost are about to reveal to him. In short, after the revelation of afterlife, highly akin to hell, Scrooge cannot longer hide behind his own ignorance. In Marley, and the other ghosts, he is shown that ignorance won't protect him from his doom. The revelation that turning a blind eye to government's failed solutions and being indifference to well-known fact that "the poor who were deemed deserving of government care were placed in conditions which were, remarkably, lower than the typically attainable standard of living for the lower class," won't save him causes him to heed Marley's advice. Thus Marley effectively destroys any hope of retaining his current lifestyle while not being punished in the life that follows Scrooge once held, forcing him to re-evaluate his priorities not for the sake of others but for his own. At the beginning of A Christmas Carol we are introduced to heartless, cruel and selfish Ebenezer Scrooge, who speaks ill of the poor, rejects any form of personal responsibility or care, and claims that society would be better off if they were dead. As the story progresses, and he is reminded of his humanity and childhood innocence, he begins to see the faults of his behaviour and feel regret, remorse and need to atone for

Following the visit of his childhood school and his regrets about telling off the caroller, who sang at his office door in Stave I, Scrooge is conducted to an old warehouse where he had been formerly apprenticed. He observes a merry ball with everyone laughing and dancing, and is so touched by generosity of his old employer that he stands up to the Ghost, who belittles Fezziwig's importance and responds that "The happiness he[Fezziwig] gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune." Shortly after the statement which is reflective of Scrooge's sudden realization that certain things can be more of more importance than money, Scrooge regrets his behaviour towards Bob Cratchit and desires to have a word with him.

them. There are several such instances, which can be used to track Scrooge's progression towards a more

empathetic, charitable and selfless individual worthy of redemption.

A second profound show of empathy and shame comes at the beginning of the III Stave when Scrooge accompanied by the Ghost of Christmas Present visit Bob Cratchit and his family at their home. After a rich Christmas dinner, Cratchit's family sits round the hearth and Scrooge notices Bob's troubled expression as he looks at Tiny Tim and holds his hand. Worried about the ill child, Scrooge pleads with the Ghost and begs him to say that Tim will be spared. The Ghost retorts that if the Future remains unaltered Tim will die and echoes a comment Scrooge made in the first Stave "If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population." This time Scrooge's response to being faced with the plight of poverty is diametrically different from the one he gave at the very beginning of the story. He hangs his head down in shame, and is "overcome with penitence and grief", revealing a distinct change in his attitude and progress on his way towards being corrected and redeemed.

Week 13 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)

1. According to Kučera, what is the significance of Jacob Marley with regards to Scrooge's redemption?

2. What links does Kučera make between Marley and religion and how does this prompt Scrooge to open himself up to change?

3. With reference to Kučera's ideas, to what extent is Scrooge compelled to repent due to feelings of regret and remorse?

<u>Week 14</u>

Starting with the extract below from Stave 5, explore how Dickens presents ideas surrounding the theme of redemption throughout the novella.

"I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"
He had frisked into the sitting-room, and was now standing there: perfectly winded.
"There's the saucepan that the gruel was in!" cried Scrooge, starting off again, and frisking round the fireplace. "There's the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered. There's the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present, sat. There's the window where I saw the wandering Spirits. It's all right, it's all true, it all happened. Ha ha ha!" Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long,
long line of brilliant laughs. "I don't know what day of the month it is," said Scrooge. "I don't know how long I've been among the Spirits. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby. Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!"

You should consider:

- Scrooge's speech and behaviour.
- How the way he is presented here is juxtaposed with his introduction in Stave 1.
- How Dickens uses a semantic field of innocence and purity for effect.

Task 1: Annotate the above extract by highlighting key words/phrases and noting down how Dickens presents ideas surrounding the theme of redemption. Don't forget to identify language and structural features.

Task 2: The question asks you to 'explore' which means that you can (and should) consider how Dickens' presentation of ideas surrounding redemption may have more than one purpose or effect. Go back to the quotes you've already annotated. Can you offer an alternative or additional interpretation for any of them?

Task 3: Identify 3 quotations from elsewhere in the novella where ideas surrounding redemption are presented.

- o **1)**
- o 2)
- o 3)

Task 4: Why does Dickens create such a stark juxtaposition between Scrooge's character and how he is presented in Stave 1 and Stave 5? Consider your understanding of the entire plot.

Now write **two** PEAE or **one** PEALE paragraph in response to the question: Starting with the extract below from Stave 5, explore how Dickens presents ideas surrounding the theme of redemption throughout the novella.

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<u>Week 14 – AIM HIGHER</u> Life, Death and Christmas in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol by Karen Oshima

Read through the extracts below taken from Oshima's study carefully and highlight anything that relates to the theme of redemption.

Scrooge fears the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come in Stave 4 and understandably so — the spirit in black robes is like Death incarnate. This silent spirit simply shows Scrooge an unidentified dead man whose death inspires no natural feelings of grief from anyone — instead people profit from it or feel relief from it. Death indeed seems like a fearful, vengeful God in relation to the dead man. The dead man is, of course, Scrooge, who realizes that if he continues his misanthropic ways, he will suffer the same hell as Marley— an eternity of remorse. Death, however, cannot harm those who have been kind and good for they will achieve a kind of immortality.

This immortality is that of being remembered by others. Scrooge sees that his corpse lay "with not a man, woman, or a child, to say that he was kind of me in this or that, and for the memory of one kind word I will be kind to him" (118). He realizes that having shunned humanity and considered it "not his business," he will be forgotten and his grave neglected. Thus, Dickens shows that another definition of "death" is to be forgotten. When he asks the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come to show him some tenderness concerning a death, he finds a very different kind of scene. Scrooge hears Bob Cratchit remind his children about their deceased brother, Tiny Tim... Cratchit's children cry out that they will never forget their poor brother. Christmas is a time of recollection and Tiny Tim, in being remembered by his family, will live on in spirit.⁷ Scrooge sees the contrast between his fate and that of Tiny Tim's.

With the combined insight he has gained from the spirits and an understanding of his failure to nurture his own spirit through relations with others, Scrooge can be reborn. The old Scrooge dies

on Christmas Eve, the anniversary of Marley's death, and the new one is born on Christmas Day. In becoming a kinder, gentler person, Scrooge himself almost becomes a Christ figure, capering about jubilantly as a child as he resolves to help those he can. He can become both a "joyous child and a benevolent adult" (Andrews 111). He contributes to charities, raises Bob's salary, and helps the Cratchit family financially so that Tiny Tim can recover. Through such good deeds, he is able to rejoin society and finds happiness in sharing his life with others. His good deeds will insure that he will not face the eternity of remorse that Marley suffers and that he will be remembered and, in this way, "live on" even after death. In A Christmas Carol, Dickens tells a story where life, death, and Christmas are inextricably linked. He shows two planes of existence, the human world and the spiritual world where "life" and "death" are defined in different ways. In the human world, there is a natural order from the beginning of life, birth, to the end of life, death. This order, however, does not necessarily apply to the spiritual world. The old Scrooge must "die," experience a kind of conversion, before the new one can be born and truly live. Through his time travel with the spirits, he can widen his view of life to include the spiritual world and recover his own forgotten humanity. Death may always be looming but it challenges people to make something of their lives. Dickens's A Christmas Carol suggests that it is never too late for reform — both personal and social — and that if each individual makes a similar kind of leap of faith as Scrooge, there is hope in life and hope of a better world.

<u>Week 14 – AIM HIGHER (In your own words)</u>

1. According to Oshima, how can Scrooge achieve immortality through redemption?

2. With reference to Oshima's final paragraph, what expedites Scrooge's spiritual re-birth?

3. 'Dickens's A Christmas Carol suggests that it is never too late for reform — both personal and social — and that if each individual makes a similar kind of leap of faith as Scrooge, there is hope in life and hope of a better world.' To what extent do you agree?

For each quotation:

- 1. Identify the speaker
- 2. Highlight and annotate any AO2 techniques
- 3. Prepare your analysis. Analysing language could be:
 - Choosing verbs, adverbs or adjectives to 'explore.' How does the word create a particular image that could link to the character or setting?
 - Considering the language that the character uses in their speech is it timid, authoritative, aggressive, something else. What does the language suggest about their character?
 - Identifying particular techniques that have been used within the text. How do they create a specific effect?
 - Looking out for words that have more than one meaning what further ideas or images could they have?
 - Identifying specific emotions that you feel as a result of the writer's word choice.

Never just repeat the quotation in your own words or explain what it means. 4. Memorise the quotations

- 5. Test yourself/get friends and family to test you too
- 6. Produce mind maps for each character and theme using the quotations

Prose/narrativeTechniques:

A Christmas Carol

adjectives, alliteration, atmosphere, biblical connotations, characterisation, charactertonym, contrast, empathy, imagery, intrusive narrator, juxtaposition, light and dark imagery, listing, novella, onomatopoeia, pathetic fallacy, personification repetition, resolution, simile, staves, symbolism, verbs

AO2 Techniques:

adjective, adverb, alliteration, atmosphere, character, characterisation, chronological order, context, dialogue, dramatic irony, exclamation, first person, image, narrator, onomatopoeia, past tense, pause, present tense, pronouns, punctuation, repetition, rhetorical questions, rhyme, simile, simple sentence, setting, stanza, speaker, sonnet, stage directions, theme, third person, verb

antagonist, aside, assonance, contrast, collective pronoun, colloquial, direct address, emotive, empathy enjambment, ellipsis, figurative language, free verse foreshadowing, hyperbole, humour, iambic pentameter, imagery, imperative, inclusive pronoun, listing, metaphor, modal verb, monologue, parenthesis, pathetic fallacy, persona, personification, present participle, protagonist, resolution, rhyme pattern, sibilance, soliloquy, symbol, symbolism, tone

abstract noun, alliteration- plosive and fricative, ambiguity, anaphora, antithesis, collective noun, definite article, dichotomy, duality, embedded clause, fronted conjunction, hypophora, indefinite article, intensifier, intrusive narrative, inverted syntax, irony, juxtaposition, litotes, motif, omniscient narrator, oxymoron, pathos, pivot, pun, register, semantic field, syntax, triad, triadic structure, unreliable narrator

"But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind-stone"

"clutching, covetous, old sinner!"

"Hard and sharp as flint"

"solitary as an oyster"

"No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him."

"I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry."

"If they would rather die,' said Scrooge, 'they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."

"I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future."

"I will not shut out the lessons that they teach."

"I wear the chain I forged in life,"

"Mankind was my business."

"I see a vacant seat"

"If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die."

"A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."

"Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be."

"He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man"

"Then up rose Mrs Cratchit"

"brave in ribbons"

"I'll give you Mr Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!"

"Are there no prisons?"

"Scrooge had a very small fire"

"darkness is cheap, and Scrooge like it"

"a lonely boy was reading by a feeble fire"

"Why, it's old Fezziwig!"

"He has the power to render us happy or unhappy"

"Another idol has displace me"

"Why do you delight to torture me?"

"Quite alone in the world"

"Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes"

"This boy is Ignorance. This girl is want. Beware the both"

"I am not the man I was"

"I will honour Christmas in my heart"

"I'm quite a baby."

"No fog, no mist"

"I have come to bring you home, dear brother!"

"Lead on, Spirit!"

"I am as light as a feather"

"The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!"

"Make up the fires"

Practice Questions

Use these questions to help you with your revision. You can either answer the questions as they are or find an appropriate extract to use with them.

- 1. Write about Scrooge and the way he changes throughout the novel
- 2. How does Dickens present the redeemed character of Scrooge?
- 3. How does Dickens present Scrooge as an outsider to society?
- 4. How does Dickens present Scrooge's attitude to money?
- 5. How does Dickens present the Cratchit family in the novella?
- 6. How does Dickens present society's attitude to poverty?
- 7. How is the character of Bob Cratchit important to the novel as a whole?
- 8. How does Dicken present Scrooge's growing self-awareness?
- 9. How does Dickens present reactions to Scrooge in A Christmas Carol?
- 10. How does Dickens present attitudes to Christmas in A Christmas Carol?
- 11. How does Dickens present the importance of family in A Christmas Carol.
- 12. How are children important to the novel as a whole?
- 13. Write about the character of Fred, Scrooge's nephew, and his importance in A Christmas Carol.
- 14. Which of the three spirits has the most powerful impact on Scrooge?
- 15. Which character or characters have the greatest impact on Scrooge?
- 16. "A Christmas Carol shows goodness and love defeating self-interest." How does Charles Dickens present this in his novel?
- 17. How does Charles Dickens create sympathy for the character of Ebenezer Scrooge in A Christmas Carol?

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