

EASIER CLASSICS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL



Teaching and Learning Resources

Context

Set in the 19th century, the story tells of Ebenezer Scrooge who transforms his life and changes his ways. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by three ghosts who show him how selfish and greedy he is. After the ghosts visit Scrooge, he changes his behavior and learns the true meaning of Christmas, kindness and family.

A Christmas Carol is a traditional Christmas ghost story that has been re-written many times. It has also been made into lots of films. Charles Dickens wrote the story to reflect his childhood during the Victorian era. At this time, the difference between the poor and the rich was much bigger than it is today and he wanted to highlight this.

Glossary

era	A time in history
century	A period of one hundred years
transforms	When something changes
highlight	To make everybody notice and think

1. Victorian Era

Activity 1: Pupils to create a mind map of any facts they already know, drawing on any prior knowledge they may have and linking to their history lessons.

Key question: Do you know any facts about the Victorian era?

Pupils to research Victorian era or discuss from the points below:

- During the Victorian period, poor people lived in dirty conditions and didn't have enough money to survive.
- There was no healthcare, so if you became unwell nobody could help you.
- Child deaths happened a lot due to illnesses and the lack of food.
- Poor people often worked and lived in the workhouses but conditions were still extremely poor.
- Rich people lived in huge houses and had servants working for them.
- Rich people didn't take any interest in the poor and would often ignore them.

Present the information you know about the Victorian era. This could be a presentation, leaflet, short non-fiction booklet, drawing or a verbal news report.

Glossary

era or period

A time in history

healthcare

Doctors, hospitals or dentists

lack

Not enough of something

workhouse

A factory where families worked and lived

servants

People who worked for the rich and did jobs such as cleaning and cooking

2. Questions based on the book

Activity 1: Front Cover Analysis

Label the book cover, looking for:

- its main features
- potential main themes
- genre clues
- inferences about the text

Discussion questions:

- What does the book cover tell us about the book?
- What is the title of the book and what does it tell us about the story?
- Who wrote the book?
- What do we already know about the author?
- What clues do the illustrations give us?

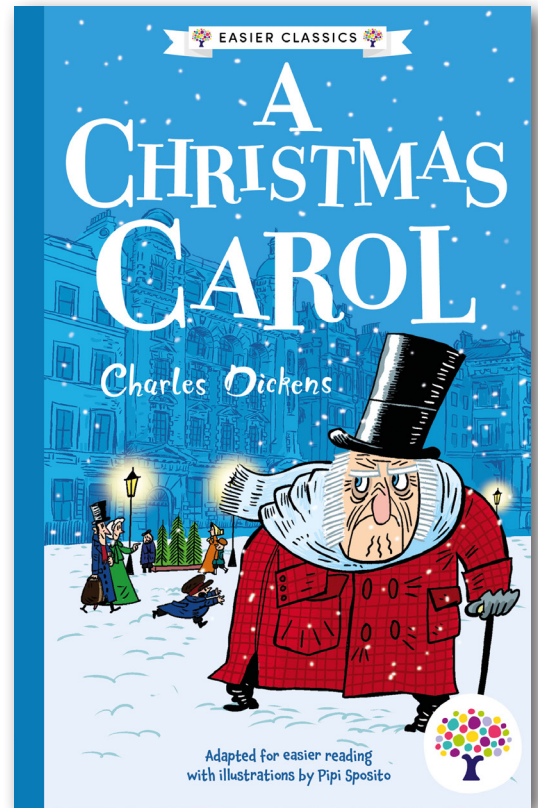
Activity 2: Back cover analysis

Read the blurb and label the back cover, looking for:

- Key words that give you clues about the story
- Character names that tell you who the story is about
- Images that give you clues about the story
- Potential main themes

Discussion Questions:

- What does it tell you about the story?
- What do you think could happen in the book?
- What genre do you think the book is? Use clues from the blurb to help you.
- Do you want to read this story?
- Why / why not?



Activity options:

- With the pupils, create a mind map for each theme. Look throughout the story for examples of each theme and add it to the mind map.
- Act out different scenes from the story that represent each theme, then create a freeze frame photo and write a sentence to explain the theme happening.

Challenge: Can you link one of the themes to an example in your own life? Have you ever experienced redemption?

Christmas

Christmas is a time to celebrate together as a family, think about others, share gifts and show love. The title 'A Christmas Carol' was chosen because it makes us think about the joy of people singing Christmas carols together. The original story was set out in the same structure as a Christmas carol.

Redemption

After the ghosts helped Scrooge see all the wrong choices he had made, he changed his behavior. He went from being miserable and greedy to good-natured and kind. Charles Dickens believed that anybody could change their behavior and be forgiven.

Social Injustice

In the Victorian era, poor people and rich people were treated very differently. Scrooge was rich and Bob Cratchit was poor. Rich people did not treat poor people kindly and this was shown through Scrooge being a nasty, inconsiderate person.

Glossary

Christmas carol	A song sang at Christmas. It is normally a church song.
redemption	When you change your behavior to be forgiven.
social Injustice	When something is not fair between groups of people.
inconsiderate	Somebody who does not think about how other people will feel.



Using the extracts from the text below, create a word bank followed by a character profile about Scrooge before he changed.

Scrooge was cruel and selfish. He grew more and more greedy as he got older.

'Fine,' snapped Scrooge. 'But you'll have to come into work earlier the next day!'

The family happily sat down to eat dinner. When Bob talked about Scrooge, the family were angry. Scrooge was always mean to Bob. Scrooge felt ashamed. He had so much money and never shared it.

Word bank

Draw a picture

Challenge 1: Discuss how and why Scrooge changed in the story

Challenge 2: Create a character spotlight for Bob Cratchit.



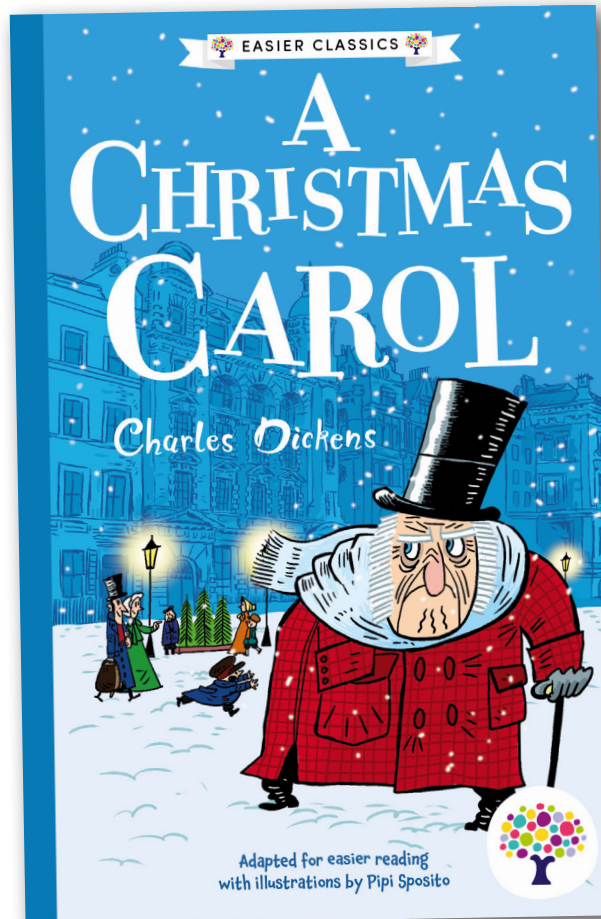
- What was Scrooge doing in his office on Christmas Eve? Why do you think he was doing this?
- Why does Scrooge not like Christmas?
- Can you link this story to any other Christmas story or film you might know?
- What is similar and what is different? (Teacher note: consider the Grinch as a comparison.)
- How do you think Bob felt when Scrooge asked if he wanted Christmas Day off?
- How does Scrooge feel when the door knocker changes into the face of his friend Marley?
- Why does Marley's ghost wear a chain? What does the chain symbolize?
- What does Marley mean when he says this to Scrooge?
'You are wearing a similar chain, Scrooge, though you cannot see it,' warned Marley.
- What do the three ghosts represent?
- How do you think Scrooge felt after the ghosts had visited? Use evidence from the text for your answer.
- Which word in the extract below tells you that Scrooge wanted another chance to change his behavior?
Scrooge stood in the spooky graveyard. The ghost pointed to the gravestone. Scrooge stepped closer. The words on the neglected gravestone were: Ebenezer Scrooge. Scrooge fell to his knees and begged, 'I'm not the man I was. Give me another chance. I will be a better man!'
- What did Scrooge send to Bob Cratchit and his family and why?

Additional Activities

1. Create story map or story mountain for the story.
2. Verbally re-tell the story to a friend.
3. Write a letter as Scrooge to his old friends to apologise for what he has done. This can be a written letter, verbal letter/ monologue or a comic strip.



Big stories, fewer barriers.



*This Teaching and Learning Resource has been written by
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