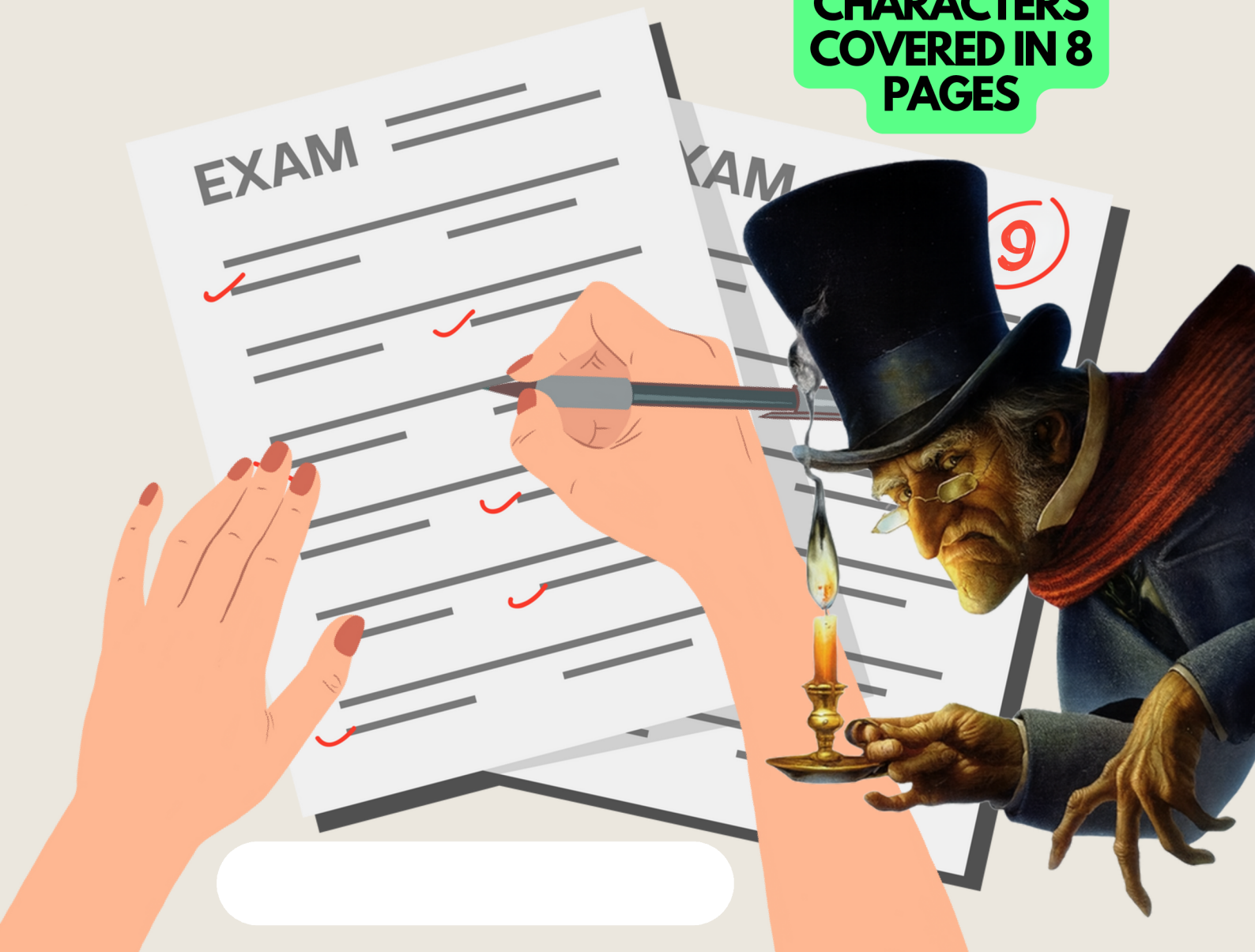


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AQA GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

A CHRISTMAS CAROL NOTEBOOK

THEMES +
CHARACTERS
COVERED IN 8
PAGES



CONTENTS

HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTION	1
OVERVIEW & PLOT SUMMARY	2
THEMES	3
CHARACTERS	5
CONTEXT & WRITER'S METHODS	7
POWER QUOTES BY THEME	8

POVERTY

- Poverty is a central theme → Dickens exposes social injustice + responsibility of the wealthy.
- Scrooge = symbol of selfish, rich elite.
- Cratchits/Tiny Tim = symbol of the working poor + vulnerable.
- Ignorance & Want (allegorical children) = symbol of neglected social problems.
- Old Joe + thieves = seedy underbelly of poverty → crime + moral decay.

HOW POVERTY IS PRESENTED

- Stave 1 – Scrooge dismisses charity collectors: "Are there no prisons?" → shows ignorance + cruelty.
- Stave 2 – Ghost of Past shows Scrooge when not obsessed with money → highlights lost values.
- Stave 3 – Cratchits' simple but loving Christmas → poverty with dignity. Tiny Tim's illness = poverty's deadly effects. Ghost reveals Ignorance + Want.
- Stave 4 – Joe + thieves steal from corpse → poverty driving crime; Scrooge sees consequences of neglect.
- Stave 5 – Scrooge redeems himself → raises Bob's salary, supports the poor, becomes generous.

KEY CHARACTERS & POVERTY

- Scrooge → Initially apathetic: poor should go to "workhouses/prisons". Transformed to socially responsible benefactor.
- Bob Cratchit → Hardworking but exploited; fears Scrooge; symbolises working-class suffering.
- Mrs Cratchit → Frugal + resourceful ("apple-sauce and mashed potato"). Represents dignity in hardship.
- Tiny Tim → Innocent, disabled. Fate shows deadly cost of poverty. Symbol of Christian charity.
- Old Joe & thieves → Driven to crime; Dickens shows how poverty corrupts + dehumanises.

WHY DICKENS USES POVERTY

- Expose social injustice + inequality + neglect (of 1834 Poor Law).
- Encourage social responsibility. Wealthy have duty to help poor (Marley: "Mankind was my friend").
- Symbolism → Christmas = generosity + hope. Tiny Tim = cost of neglect. Ignorance + Want = society's doom.
- Contrast Scrooge's wealth vs Cratchits' poverty highlights inequality.

CONTEXT (1834)

- Victorian family ideal → Large, close families (e.g., Queen Victoria & Prince Albert's 9 children).
- Revolutions → poverty, poor housing.
- 1834 Poor Law – introduced workhouses.
- Dickens' own experience – childhood poverty, father in debtors' prison shaped his views.

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

TIMELINE ACROSS THE STAVES

- Stave 1 → Scrooge rejects Fred Christmas invite → shows isolation + dismissal of family warmth.
- Stave 2 → Ghost of Past shows Scrooge's lost chances for love (Fanny (sister) + Belle (fiancée)).
- Stave 3 → Cratchit family happy/united → contrasts Scrooge's loneliness.
- Stave 4 → Bob mourns Tiny Tim → family grief highlights love & loss.
- Stave 5 → Scrooge joins Fred + becomes "second father" to Tiny Tim → embraces family.

KEY CHARACTERS

- Fred → Foil to Scrooge. Warm, generous, laughter, forgiveness. His Christmas dinner contrasts Scrooge's isolation.
- The Cratchits → Represent a perfect, loving family. Their joy + grief highlights Tiny Tim's death.
- Bob Cratchit → Represents sibling love + emotional support. Highlights Scrooge's isolation.
- Belle (fiancée) → Represents love + engagement. Her rejection with money contrasts Scrooge's obsession with wealth over relationships.
- Old Joe + thieves → Represent the underbelly of society. Contrast Scrooge's value on Christmas.

PRESENTATION OF THE FAMILY IN THE

- Contrast between Scrooge's isolation, joy, unity, warmth (Cratchits, wider families).
- Scrooge's negative effects of absence → regret, coldness (Scrooge, Belle, Fanny's death).
- Contrast between Cratchits' warmth & love vs Scrooge's loneliness & obsession.

ISOLATION VS FAMILY

- Scrooge = "solitary as an oyster" → closed-off but potential for change.
- Self-inflicted: "Nobody ever stopped him..." → he excludes himself.
- Childhood neglect: "A solitary child, neglected by his friends" → roots of loneliness.
- Belle: money becomes his "idol" → greed isolates him, rejecting love.

CONTEXT

- Victorian family ideal → Large, close families (e.g., Queen Victoria & Prince Albert's 9 children).
- Christian values → Family = forgiveness, kindness, charity (Tiny Tim symbol of hope, echoing Jesus).

THEMES

TRANSFORMATION & REDEMPTION

- Scrooge's journey from a "solitary as an oyster" → "as good a man as the good old city knew."
- Message: Even the worst can change → hope for all.

TRANSFORMATION TIMELINE

- Stave 1: Bitter, selfish, "hard as flint", rejects family.
- Stave 2: Regret (Fanny, Belle) → hints Scrooge can love.
- Stave 3: Ashamed of his words, empathises with Cratchits + Tiny Tim.
- Stave 4: Terrified by lonely death, vows to change ("I am not the man I was").
- Stave 5: Redeemed — generous, joyful, "as good a man as the good old city knew."

STRUCTURE & SYMBOLISM

- 5 Staves = carol form → builds tension + suspense around Scrooge's redemption.
- Contrast between cold/gloomy weather (Stave 1) vs "clear, bright, jovial" weather (Stave 5) reflects Scrooge's transformation.
- Foreshadowing: "solitary as an oyster" → closed, but potential for goodness (a pearl).

Tension & Suspense: Readers unsure if Scrooge can change → creates dramatic drive.

SCROOGE'S CHANGED INTERACTIONS

- Charity collectors: Stave 1 → dismissive, Stave 5 → runs to donate, pays "many back-payments."
- Christmas: Stave 1 → wants Christmas "boiled in pudding", Stave 5 → "knew how to keep Christmas well."
- Family: Rejects Fred → later embraces him, eats Christmas dinner together.
- Bob Cratchit: From miserly employer → benevolent benefactor ("raise your salary").

Spirits guide but don't force him → Scrooge chooses change.

EBENEZER SCROOGE



CHARACTER TRAITS ⚡

- Callous: ignores the poor, selfish ("decrease the surplus population").
- Miserly/Materialistic: money > people (Belle: "an idol has displaced me").
- Unsociable/Isolated: "secret and self-contained... solitary as an oyster".
- Cold-hearted: "cold within him... froze his old features".
- Sceptical: dismisses Marley's ghost at first.

SCROOGE'S DEVELOPMENT 🔄

- Stave 1 ❄️ Miserly, rejects Christmas. Harsh to charity collectors, employees, family.
- Stave 2-3 🕯️ Past: regret (Belle, Fanny). Present: sees joy of Cratchits, generosity of Fred, suffering of Ignorance & Want. Begins to feel empathy.
- Stave 4 🍂 Future: his own lonely death, Tiny Tim's death. Realises consequences of greed. Pleads: "Assure me that I yet may change...".
- Stave 5 🌟 Transformation complete: charitable, sociable, father figure to Tiny Tim. "I will honour Christmas in my heart... and keep it all the year."

KEY THEMES THROUGH SCROOGE 🌱

- ISOLATION: Self-inflicted, mirrors his coldness. Overcome by reconnecting with family & society.
- REDEMPTION: Shows it's never too late to change. Even the "covetous old sinner" can transform.
- MATERIALISM → Morality: wealth should serve others (contrast Marley vs Fezziwig).
- CHRISTMAS: joy, unity, generosity

LANGUAGE & TECHNIQUES 🗨️

- Asyndetic listing: "squeezing, wrenching, grasping..." → relentless greed.
- Simile: "solitary as an oyster" → closed-off but potential for hidden 'pearl'.
- Cold imagery: "cold" → Scrooge's unfeeling nature.
- Exclamatory statements: "Humbug!" → brusque tone.
- Rhetorical questions: highlight selfishness & later self-reflection.
- Symbolism: Marley's chains = greed; Tiny Tim = innocence/vulnerability.

KEY QUOTES

- "Decrease the surplus population" (selfishness).
- "Over the mantelpiece" (regret).
- "Assure me that I yet may change" (fear/repentance).
- "I will honour Christmas in my heart" (transformation).

BOB CRATCHIT

- Foil to Scrooge → poor but loving | Represent working class | Symbol of family, faith & compassion | Highlight poverty & inequality.
- Shows poverty with dignity to Scrooge (poor but rich).

DEVELOPMENT

- Stave 1: deferential, powerful clerk in "dismal little cell".
- Stave 3: loving father, celebrates Christmas despite poverty.
- Stave 4: grief at Tiny Tim's death contrasts Scrooge's coldness.
- Stave 5: situation improves after Scrooge's change.

IMPORTANCE

- Highlights social inequality between hardworking poor.
- Obedient → calls Scrooge "sir".
- Forgiveness → Scrooge even when irritated.
- Belief in hard work, benefits Scrooge's transformation → wages.

LANGUAGE

- Polite diction: "Founder of our race" (Scrooge's cruelty).
- Key quote: "He was a warm hearted man" (Scrooge's hypocrisy).

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SYMBOLISM & INTERPRETATIONS

- Represent the working poor → hardworking but trapped in poverty.
- Symbolic family → Dickens idealises them to highlight social injustice and stir reader sympathy.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST



- Appears in Stave 2, shows Scrooge his past → forces reflection + regret.
- Represents memory, truth + hope.
- Shows Scrooge he wasn't always bitter.
- Represents Scrooge's loss of innocence + change is possible.

CHARACTER TRAITS

- Surreal, ethereal, ambiguous (child + old man mix).
- Gentle but firm – insists Scrooge learn from his mistakes.
- Light symbolism → enlightenment, hope.
- Represents Scrooge's loss of innocence → moral purity, redemption.

LANGUAGE & STYLE 🗨️

- Imperatives ("Rise!", "Walk!") → commands show authority.
- Short/simple sentences → direct + forceful message.
- Questioning → makes Scrooge confront memories.

SYMBOLISM 🌟

- Mixture of age + youth → memory is fragmented, part truth/part distortion.
- Light → truth + enlightenment, guiding Scrooge to reflection.
- Quiet/distant voice → suggests past is far away yet influential.

ROLE IN SCROOGE'S CHANGE 🔄

- Shows lonely childhood → evokes sympathy + roots of bitterness.
- Revisits Belle + Fezziwig → regret for lost love + contrast between greed vs generosity.
- Forces Scrooge to confront emotional past (tears → emotional "block" broken).
- Helps reader sympathise with Scrooge → shows he wasn't always heartless.

KEY QUOTES 🗨️

- "Rise! And walk with me!" → commanding, urgent.
- "These are but shadows of the things that have been" → memory not changeable.
- "A solitary child, neglected by his friends" → lonely roots of bitterness.
- "Fell upon the heart of Scrooge with a softening influence" → memory melts coldness.

CHARACTERS

POVERTY 💰

Scrooge: "Are there no prisons? ... And the Union workhouses?"

- A02: Rhetorical questions → cold, uncaring tone, shows ignorance.
- A03: Reflects harsh Victorian attitudes; supports inhumane Poor Law/workhouses; Dickens critiques capitalist neglect of the poor.

Scrooge: "Decrease the surplus population."

- A02: Dehumanising language → sees poor as numbers, not people.
- A03: Reflects harsh Victorian attitudes influenced by Malthus; Dickens critiques lack of compassion for poor.

Ghost of Christmas Present: "This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both."

- A02: Allegorical figures → symbolise dangers of social neglect.
- A03: Warning to Victorian readers: poverty + ignorance threaten social collapse if ignored.

DEATH & LOSS 💀

Marley's Ghost: "I wear the chain I forged in life."

- A02: Extended metaphor → greed binds him eternally.
- A03: Warning of spiritual punishment in afterlife; links to Christian beliefs about sin.

Narrator (about corpse): "Unwatched, unwept, uncared for."

- A02: Tricolon + repetition of "un-" → bleak image of lonely death.
- A03: Dickens warns readers that selfishness leads to isolation; social + spiritual consequences.

Bob Cratchit (about Tiny Tim's death): "My little, little one..."

- A02: Repetition of "little" → fragility + deep parental grief.
- A03: Highlights vulnerability of poor children in Victorian London, tugs at reader's emotions to inspire change.

Narrator (about Scrooge): "Unwatched, unwept, uncared for..."

- A02: Tricolon + repetition of "un-" → bleak image of lonely death.
- A03: Dickens warns readers that selfishness leads to isolation; legacy.

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS 👨‍👩‍👧

Narrator: "Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator... his sole mourner."

- A02: Repetition of "sole" → emptiness, isolation.
- A03: Suggests shallow, business-like relationships; lack of love/family; highlights Scrooge's loneliness.

Narrator: "Mrs Cratchit made the gravy... Master Peter mashed the potatoes... Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce..."

- A02: List of actions → togetherness, cooperation.
- A03: Cratchits embody warmth and love, contrasting Scrooge's isolation; shows family's centrality.

Tiny Tim: "God bless every one."

- A02: Exclamation → optimism, faith.
- A03: Christmas spirit, goodwill; Tim symbolises hope for collective compassion.

Fred: "I don't know what you mean by punishment."

- A02: Calm, forgiving tone.
- A03: Represents warmth + compassion; contrasts Scrooge's harshness; values family + humanity.

Cratchits: "We were poor, but they were poor too, and we were poor with one advantage, we were poor together."

- A02: Triple parallelism → joy found in shared struggle.
- A03: Working-class solidarity; message for readers.

Narrator (about Cratchits): "Nobody said or thought of a small pudding."

- A02: Superlative "nobody" → shows gratitude despite poverty.
- A03: Contrast with Scrooge's isolation; promotes family + social health.

Narrator (Fred): "His hearty laugh."

- A02: Adjective "hearty" → conveys warmth + inclusiveness.
- A03: Symbol of Christmas spirit + family love, foil to Scrooge's bitterness.

TRANSFORMATION & REDEMPTION 🔄

Scrooge: "I am not the man I was."

- A02: Declarative → certainty, transformation.
- A03: Marks Scrooge's redemption; Dickens shows Scrooge's change on the season.

Narrator: "He was as merry as a schoolboy... as giddy as a drunken man."

- A02: Similes + repetition → joy, renewed spirit.
- A03: Transformation complete; Scrooge's joy conveys universal message of hope and social responsibility.

Narrator (about Scrooge): "Solitary as an oyster."

- A02: Simile → hard exterior, but potential "pearl" inside hints at capacity for change.
- A03: Dickens shows even the hardest can redeem themselves; Christian message of hope.

Narrator (about Scrooge at the end): "He became as good a man as the good old city knew."

- A02: Superlative "as good" → complete transformation.
- A03: Redemption possible for all → Dickens offers didactic hope for reform.

CHRISTMAS 🎄

Scrooge: "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."

- A02: Violent hyperbole + grotesque imagery → hostility, bitterness.
- A03: Satirises Scrooge's hatred of Christmas; contrasts with festive joy; highlights his need for change.

Narrator (on turkey gift): "The prize turkey."

- A02: Superlative + noun phrase → highlights extravagance + generosity.
- A03: Scrooge now uses wealth for good; Dickens shows how rich should help the poor.

POWER
QUOTES BY
THEME

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MR. ZEE'S RESOURCES