

## How can I prepare for English Literature Component 2 - Section B?

The 19th century novella 'A Christmas Carol' is a source based question.



### Section B - A Christmas Carol

You are advised to spend 45 minutes on this question.

Explore the ways Dickens presents Bob Cratchit throughout the novella.

In your response you should:

- refer to the extract and the novel as a whole;
- show your understanding of characters and events in the novel;
- refer to the contexts of the novel. (40 marks)

You should use the extract below and your knowledge of the whole novel to answer this question.

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-humour Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly stuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

"You'll want all day tomorrow, I suppose?" said Scrooge.

"If quite convenient, Sir."

"It's not convenient," said Scrooge, "and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-past seven for it, you'd think yourself ill-used. I'll be bound!"

The clerk smiled faintly.

"And yet," said Scrooge, "you don't think me ill-used when I pay a day's wages for no work?"

The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

"A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" said Scrooge, buttoning his greatcoat to the chin. "But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning!"

The clerk promised that he would, and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long end of his white counterpane dangling below his waist (for he buttoned his greatcoat) went down a side-street, and at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times in honour of 'Tis being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could belt, to play at blind-man's buff.

### Top Tips

- Stay focused on the question
- Use the source for language analysis - zoom in on the vocabulary used tracking chronologically through the extract
- You must refer to both the extract and the whole text to achieve higher marks
- If you can not remember a quotation to support your idea briefly refer to a moment in the text but do not lapse into simply re-telling the narrative
- You have 45 minutes on this task

**Important** - for 'A Christmas Carol' you must link in context

### Step 1

Read the question carefully and highlight key points

What is the question asking you to think about?

### Step 2

Read the extract with a highlighter in your hand

Why is this extract important and where does it feature in the text?

Highlight brief relevant quotations

### Step 3 - Planning

List other ideas in response to this question from the whole text

... and number the order in which you are going to present your ideas

**Step 4** - Start with an **introduction** to provide an overview in response to the task

**Step 5** - Use your plan and the extract to write your analytical response

**Step 6** - Proofread your work

Charles Dickens Author Novella Staves Protagonist

Ebenezer Scrooge Marley's Ghost Supernatural Fezziwig Belle

Ghost of Past/Present/Yet-to-come

Write about the presentation of the theme of poverty.

How is the character of Bob Cratchit important to the novel as a whole?

How does Dickens create sympathy for Ebenezer Scrooge in 'A Christmas Carol'?

Show how Charles Dickens criticises aspects of Victorian society in 'A Christmas Carol'.

How are families and family life presented in 'A Christmas Carol'?

Show how Dickens presents the hardships of 19th century London in 'A Christmas Carol'.

Write about the presentation of the Cratchit family.

Explore the importance of Christmas in the novella as a whole.

How does Dickens present ideas about childhood in 'A Christmas Carol'?

How does Dickens show the importance of giving in 'A Christmas Carol'?

Explain the importance of Fred in the novella.

How does Dickens present the impact of the supernatural (ghosts) in the novella?



## **'A Christmas Carol' Key quotations**

### **Scrooge**

'A tight fisted hand at the grindstone.'

'Sharp as flint'

'Bah! Humbug!'

'You're rich enough'

'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.'

'You are changed' – Belle says this when she breaks off their engagement

'I hope to live to be another man'

'I am about to raise your salary' – To Bob Cratchit at the end of the novella

### **The Cratchits**

'Whatever has got your precious father then?'

'Not coming upon Christmas Day?'

'Martha didn't like to see him disappointed'

'Threadbare clothes'

'All the Cratchit family drew round the hearth'

### **Fred (Scrooge's nephew)**

'A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!' cried a cheerful voice

'And therefore, uncle, though it [Christmas] 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!'

## **The spirits**

'Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be that in the sight of Heaven you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child.'

'It is required of every man," the Ghost [of Marley] returned, "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." (Stave One)

'The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached' – The Ghost of Christmas Future

## **Context**

'Many would rather die than go to the workhouses' – the work house was feared because families were separated, there was insufficient food, people were treated cruelly. The government thought that if the work houses were horrible places, then working class people would not want to go there and this would be an incentive to work hard.

'Threadbare clothes' highlights the poverty of the Cratchits and many people in Victorian England

'it may be that in the sight of heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child'

'I wear the chains I forged in life': reflects Victorian Christian belief in punishment after death.

The three spirits are 'unearthly' – reflects Dickens' interest in the supernatural (most of his short stories were about the supernatural) as well as the rise of occult practices in England at the time.

Scrooge's school: 'dull red brick... damp and mossy... gates decayed' and in this grim Victorian school, Scrooge is 'neglected', highlighting the poor conditions and lack of care in schools.

Martha, the Cratchits' daughter represents many working class children who had to work to help keep the families out of the work house: 'we had a deal of work to finish up.'