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Introduction

The holiday season would not be complete without a visit from the three Christmas Spirits and the transformation of Scrooge. This unit for Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* will allow students to experience Scrooge's story and examine their own ideas and beliefs about Christmas.

Since Dickens' vocabulary and sentence structure present a challenge to modern readers, the story has been introduced by dividing Section One into two parts, with separate Hands-On Projects, Co-operative Learning Activities, etc. It is strongly suggested that much of the reading be done orally with special attention to the rich, but probably unfamiliar, vocabulary. Teachers who use this unit will find the following features to supplement their own valuable ideas.

- Sample Lesson Plans
- Pre-reading Activities
- A Biographical Sketch and Picture of the Author
- A Book Summary
- Vocabulary Lists and Suggested Vocabulary Activities
- Chapters grouped for study, with each section including:
 - *quizzes*
 - *hands-on projects*
 - *co-operative learning activities*
 - *cross-curriculum connections*
 - *extensions into the reader's own life*
- Post-reading Activities
- Book Report Ideas
- Research Ideas
- A Culminating Activity
- Three Different Options for Unit Tests
- Bibliography
- Answer Key

We are confident that this unit will be a valuable addition to your planning, and we hope your students will gain a new understanding of Scrooge and Charles Dickens through these activities.

A Christmas Carol

by Charles Dickens

(Scholastic, 1987)

A Christmas Carol is set in London, England in 1843; the time is Christmas Eve. We meet Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly “man of business” without friends, unable to give or receive human kindness. Scrooge hates Christmas and all the sentiments of the season.

During the day, Scrooge is greeted by several Christmas well-wishers. His nephew Fred, his only relative, wishes Scrooge a Merry Christmas. Scrooge replies, “Bah. Humbug.” He then dismisses two gentlemen collecting for the poor of the city. A small boy stops to brighten his day with a Christmas song. Angry, Scrooge picks up a ruler and chases the child away.

At the close of business, Cratchit, Scrooge’s clerk, asks if he can have Christmas Day off. Scrooge reluctantly agrees, unhappy at paying a day’s wages for no work in return. After eating Christmas Eve dinner alone, Scrooge is visited by the first of four supernatural spirits. His old business partner, Jacob Marley, returns from the grave to warn that Scrooge must change his earthly ways or suffer a terrible fate after death. Marley further explains that Scrooge will be visited by three spirits and urges him to pay attention to the message that each spirit brings.

The first spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Past, takes Scrooge on a journey into the past. He sees himself as a young boy, alone and friendless. He is reminded of his own apprenticeship. He sees his first love and regrets having left her behind to pursue his career. Feeling remorse for his actions, Scrooge begs the spirit to take him home.

His second visitor, the Ghost of Christmas Present, takes Scrooge through the city of London, showing him how the season’s spirit has enriched the lives of all who accept it. The ghost takes Scrooge to Bob Cratchit’s house where he sees Tiny Tim for the first time and learns of his illness.

The third and most frightening of all the ghosts is the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, confronting Scrooge with his own death and showing him there will be no one to mourn him or miss him when he is gone.

Waking on Christmas morning, Scrooge is a changed man. He vows to keep Christmas throughout the year and follow the lessons of the spirits. He becomes known as the man who could keep Christmas well.



Vocabulary Lists

On this page are vocabulary lists which correspond to each sectional grouping of *A Christmas Carol* as outlined in the table of contents. Ideas for activities using these words can be found on page 9.

Charles Dickens used a wide range of words in the English language, and studying his vocabulary broadens our own understanding and mastery of good literature.

Section One (*Marley's Ghost*)

unhallowed	executor	legatee	covetous	solitary
entreaty	trifle	implore	replenish	intimation
impropriety	resolute	lunatic	credentials	ominous
multitude	tremulous	rapture	congeal	caustic
garret	misanthropic			

Section Two (*The First of the Three Spirits*)

opaque	recumbent	tunic	lustrous	conductive
reclamation	jocund	instantaneous	latent	laden
expend	transition	loath	condescension	decanter
tumult	capacious	deftly	corroborate	
brigands	pillaged			

Section Three (*The Second of the Three Spirits*)

consolation	seething	demeanour	compulsion	intricate
glee	demurely	conspicuous	swarthy	bilious
subsequently	prematurely	shabby	ubiquitous	ensued
withered	goblets	exulted	blithe	dismal
grog	abyss			

Section Four (*The Last of the Spirits*)

repute	disgorge	reek	slipshod	beetling
flaunting	repent	scanty	revered	avarice
beseech	relents	faltered	essence	tarry
inexorable	replete	foreshadow	intercede	strive
repulse	dwindle			

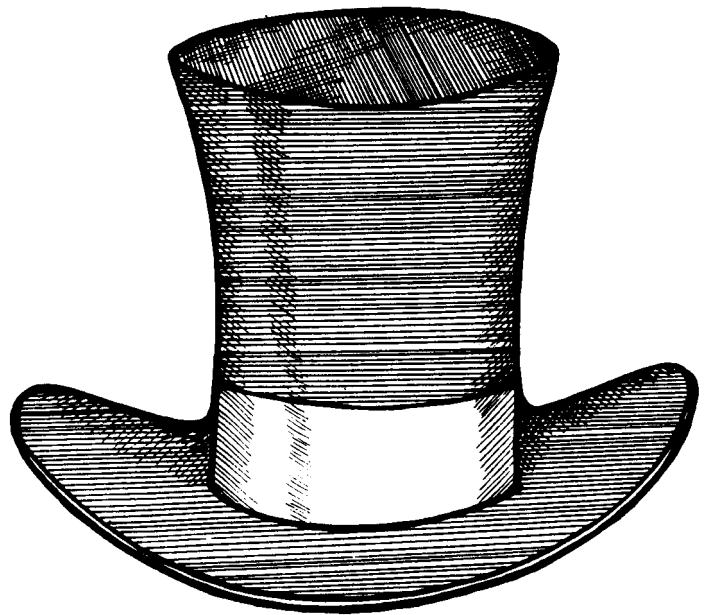
Section Five (*The End of It*)

gruel	peals	jovial	loitered	poulterer
recompense	portly	pang	sidled	array
jiffy	feign	waistcoat	endeavour	borough
hearty	sealing wax	illustrious	amends	dispelled
extravagance	giddy			

Vocabulary Activity Ideas

You can help your students master and retain the rich vocabulary used in *A Christmas Carol* by providing them with a variety of activities. Here are a few to try.

- **Play Matching Hats.** Each student makes two sets of hats. On one hat the student writes the word and on the other the definition. The number of hats the student needs will depend on the teacher. Each student may be responsible for a certain number of vocabulary words from the list or for the entire list. Hats may be made after each section so the students will have a complete set by the end of the novel. To play, all word hats are placed face up in a stack on the table. All the definition hats are spread out face up on the table. (The students will see one word card and all the definition cards.) The students working in pairs or small groups take turns matching words and definitions. If no one can match the given word with the definition, the word is placed at the bottom of the word pile. The one with the most matches at the end of the game is the winner. To increase the difficulty of the game, a time limit may be used.
- **Compile a “Dickens Dictionary.”** To build your students’ alphabetising skill as well as learning new words, compile a class dictionary on chart paper or in composition books. As words are added, record and discuss alternative meanings and usage. Students will appreciate Dickens’ mastery of our complex and flexible language.
- **Compile a deck of synonym cards,** using correct sentences that contain italicised words from the vocabulary lists—for example, “The gentlemen implored Scrooge to donate money to the poor.” On the back, write three possible choices for a synonym—for example, asked, ordered, begged. Hold small team or individual challenges to identify the closest meanings.
- **Practice correct word form.** Provide sentences with blanks needing the correct form of a root word that appears at the end of the sentence—for example, “The gentlemen kept _____ Scrooge to contribute money to help the poor of the city (implore).” Encourage students to use their dictionaries for help.



Quiz Time!

Part One: Before Marley's Visit

1. On the back of this paper, write a sentence or two describing Ebenezer Scrooge. Be sure you can support your ideas with events from the story.
2. List three things in Part One that prove the setting is England, 1843.

3. List the other characters in Part One. Explain each character's relationship to Scrooge.

4. Explain how Scrooge's lifestyle is inconsistent with his wealth.

5. Does Scrooge enjoy life? Use examples from the story to explain your answer.

6. Would you have wanted Scrooge to be your friend? Explain.

Part Two: Marley's Visit

1. Who is Marley? What is Marley's relation to Scrooge?

2. What is Marley's purpose in the story?

3. List several ways Marley and Scrooge are alike.

4. List several differences between Marley and Scrooge.

5. What signals does Dickens use to let the reader know that Scrooge will have an unusual evening?
