

INDEPENDENT STUDY COMPANION

A CHRISTMAS CAROL



A LIVING BOOK STUDY - LEARNING BOOKLET

Name: _____

TASKS: DAY 1

Week 1 - Stave 1: Marley's Ghost

READ:

The opening of the book, up to Scrooge meeting his nephew Fred and the two charity collectors at the counting-house.

NARRATION:

How does Dickens describe Scrooge? Find three words or images from the description of him as 'a squeezing, wrenching, grasping...' man.

EXTENSION:

History: find out about Victorian counting-houses and clerks. How is Bob Cratchit's working day different from an office worker's today?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 2

Week 1 - Stave 1: Marley's Ghost

READ:

Marley's Ghost's visitation to Scrooge.

NARRATION:

Describe Marley's ghost using your senses - what does Scrooge see, hear, and feel? What does the chain represent?

EXTENSION:

Why might Christmas Eve have been a popular night for telling ghost stories in Victorian times?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 3

Week 1 - Stave 1: Marley's Ghost

READ:

Re-read Marley's warning to Scrooge.

WRITING OPPORTUNITY:

'I wear the chain I forged in life.' Explain this line in your own words. What has Marley done in his life to deserve this fate?

GCSE EXTENSION:

Analyse the chain as a symbol. Plan a short response to: 'How does Dickens present Marley as a warning to Scrooge?'

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 4

Week 2 - Stave 2: The First of the Three Spirits

READ:

The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge to his old school, and to Fezziwig's Christmas party.

NARRATION:

Contrast young Scrooge with the Scrooge we met in Stave 1. What has changed?

EXTENSION:

Art: illustrate Fezziwig's Christmas party.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 5

Week 2 - Stave 2: The First of the Three Spirits

READ:

The story of Belle, and the end of her engagement to Scrooge.

WRITING OPPORTUNITY:

Write a diary entry as young Scrooge, or as Belle, on the day the engagement ends.

EXTENSION:

Discuss: what does Scrooge choose instead of love? Why do you think he makes that choice?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 6

Week 2

READ:

Re-read the opening of Stave 1, where Scrooge turns away the charity collectors.

HISTORY TASK:

Research Charles Dickens' own childhood: his father's imprisonment for debt, and his time working in a blacking factory. Record key dates in your Book of Centuries.

EXTENSION:

Discuss: how might Dickens' own life have shaped this stave?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 7

Week 2 - Stave 3: The Second of the Three Spirits

READ:

The arrival of the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Cratchits' Christmas dinner.

NARRATION:

What does Tiny Tim's line 'God bless us, every one!' tell us about him and his family?

EXTENSION:

PSHE: discuss family, poverty and joy. Can a family be happy with very little money?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 8

Week 2 - Stave 3: The Second of the Three Spirits

READ:

Fred's Christmas party, and the Ghost's journey to a lighthouse, a coal mine, and a ship at sea.

GEOGRAPHY TASK:

Map the places visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present in this section.

EXTENSION:

Discuss: why does Dickens show Christmas being celebrated in so many different places at once?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 9

Week 3

READ:

The appearance of Ignorance and Want beneath the Ghost's robes.

DISCUSS:

'This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both...' Why might this be the most important passage in the whole book?

GCSE EXTENSION:

Plan a response to: 'How does Dickens use allegory here to comment on Victorian society?'

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 10

Week 3 - Stave 4: The Last of the Spirits

READ:

The arrival of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, and the businessmen discussing a death.

NARRATION:

How does Dickens make this spirit feel more frightening than the other two?

EXTENSION:

Discuss: why does a story about change often build to its darkest moment before the ending?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 11

Week 3 - Stave 4: The Last of the Spirits

READ:

The Cratchits mourning Tiny Tim, and Scrooge finding his own neglected grave.

WRITING OPPORTUNITY:

Write Scrooge's internal monologue as he kneels at his graveside.

EXTENSION:

Discuss: what does Scrooge finally promise the spirit?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 12

Week 3

READ:

Response day - no new reading.

COMPARE THE THREE SPIRITS:

Draw a table with three columns, one for each spirit. For each, note: what it looks like, what it shows Scrooge, and what he learns from it.

EXTENSION:

Art: storyboard the three spirits side by side.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 13

Week 4 - Stave 5: The End of It

READ:

Scrooge waking on Christmas morning, sending the turkey, and meeting the charity collector again.

NARRATION:

'I am as merry as a schoolboy!' Find evidence in this stave that Scrooge has changed.

EXTENSION:

Drama: read this scene aloud as a performance.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 14

Week 4 - Stave 5: The End of It

READ:

The ending, including Scrooge's visit to Fred's for Christmas dinner.

DISCUSS:

Has Scrooge really changed for good? What tells you this isn't a temporary fright?

WRITING OPPORTUNITY:

Write the final paragraph of a modern retelling, ending on your own version of 'God bless us, every one!'

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 15

Week 4 - Wrap-up

READ:

No new reading - watch a film adaptation instead, if you can.

DISCUSS:

Compare the film to the book. What is similar? What is different, and why might a filmmaker make those changes?

GCSE EXTENSION:

Full practice question: 'Dickens presents Scrooge as a character who changes. Write about how Dickens presents this change, and why it might matter to a Victorian reader.' Plan and write a timed response using your quotation bank.

Your response:

QUOTATION BANK

Collect 6-8 key quotations as you read. For each, note the stave, the technique Dickens uses, and the effect it creates.

Quotation	Stave	Technique	Effect

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS FACT FILE

Christmas cards

Christmas trees

Carols

Christmas dinner

Fun facts
