

GCSE – A Christmas Carol – English Knowledge Organiser

Expectations and content

What is this unit about and why do we teach it?

- Students study Dickens' iconic and festive novella about redemption, compassion and social responsibility for the nineteenth century novel component of the exam (paper 1). Building on analytical skills from KS3, students enhance their ability to look for deeper meaning in a text. Skills in this unit are comparable to An Inspector Calls or Lord of the Flies, dependent on which they study, both analytically and thematically.

Key Vocabulary taught:

- Malthusian
- Redemption
- Parsimonious
- Avaricious
- Political diatribe
- Lost youth
- Humanity
- Socialism
- Responsibility

Key terminology taught:

- Analytical paragraph
- Antithesis
- Allegory
- Symbolism
- Motif
- Metaphor
- Simile
- Themes
- Foreboding

If your child needs support

Suggested activities to help:

- Re-read the novella
- Storyboard Scrooge's journey to redemption - where does he visit and who does he meet?
- Watch one of the many films adaptations or the novella.
- There is a breadth of knowledge online about the Victorian age - research the context and how it influenced Dickens' work.
- Dickens is a world famous novelist - research his work, his craft and his style. Find out what inspired him to write about the ideas and themes in 'A Christmas Carol'
- Write a letter to Scrooge persuading him to change his ways - why is it important that he redeems himself?
- Create a factfile for each character including key scenes, key quotations and their relationship to Scrooge. How does each character influence Scrooge?
- Define the key vocabulary and explain how each word relates to A Christmas Carol. Explain how this vocabulary may also be relevant to An Inspector Calls or Lord of the Flies, dependent on their study.
- Compare the character of Scrooge to any other character from the poems or texts you have studied.

If your child needs extension

Questions to discuss with your child:

- How have the events from Scrooge's past shaped his personality and does this warrant our sympathy?
- How might you use your memories and imagination to help you live a better life?
- How could you be more socially responsible and compassionate?

Challenging activities to complete:

- A Christmas Carol is about Scrooge's redemption - how else might Scrooge have found redemption and forgiveness without the help of the ghosts. Rewrite the story!
- 'Dickens allows his imagination to come between his writing and his subject, and his underlying attitudes can be evasive' - write an essay in response to this statement.
- Create a modern day 'Scrooge' full of avarice and miserly qualities - how might the character of Scrooge need to be adapted for the 21st century?

• **Suggested further reading:**

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens

A critique of the injustice, poverty and social discrimination in Victorian England.

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

A Victorian classic about the importance of responsibility.

The Afterlife of Holly Chase by Cynthia Hand

A modern adaptation of A Christmas Carol.