



Dear Educator:

This is a copy of the study guide that accompanies the Sacramento Theatre Company's production of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, adapted for the stage by Richard Helleesen, music and lyrics by David de Barry. We are so happy that your group is coming to see this play, and we hope that the study guide will assist you in preparing your students for the performance. The following material is included:

- ❖ Charles Dickens Fast Facts
- ❖ A list of major works, minor works, Christmas books and weekly magazines
- ❖ Charles Dickens' Biography
- ❖ A Chronology of Charles Dickens
- ❖ Charles Dickens' Family and Friends
- ❖ An essay on why Charles Dickens was successful and popular
- ❖ A timeline of Dickens' work
- ❖ Victorian London
- ❖ An essay about the division between the rich and poor
- ❖ Dickens and Christmas
- ❖ *A Christmas Carol* Essay
- ❖ *A Christmas Carol* Synopsis, Characters, Themes and Illustrations
- ❖ *A Christmas Carol* Public Readings
- ❖ Scrooge and Tiny Tim Facts
- ❖ Essay on Ignorance and Want
- ❖ Victorian Activities and Recipes from *A Christmas Carol*

See you at the show!

Sincerely,

Julie Law
Group Sales Manager
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Charles Dickens Fast Facts

Full Name: Charles John Huffam Dickens (Early Alias: Boz)

Date of Birth: Friday, February 7, 1812

Place of Birth: No. 1 Mile End Terrace
Landport, Portsmouth England

Parents: Father-John Dickens (1785-1851) & Mother-Elizabeth Dickens (1789-1863)

Education: Approximately, one year at William Giles' school in Chatham, Kent (age 9-11); nearly three years Wellington House Academy in London (age 13-15) and, beyond this, largely self-educated.

First Published Story: *A Dinner at Poplar Walk* published in Monthly Magazine
(December 1833)

Marriage: Married on April 2, 1836 to Catherine (Hogarth) Dickens (1815-1879) in St. Luke's Church, Chelsea. Later they were separated in 1858.

Children:

Charles Culliford (Charley) Dickens (1837-1896)

Mary (Mamie) Dickens (1838-1896)

Kate Macready (Katie) Dickens (1839-1929)

Walter Savage Landor Dickens (1841-1863)

Francis Jeffrey (Frank) Dickens (1844-1886)

Alfred D'Orsay Tennyson Dickens (1845-1912)

Sydney Smith Haldimand Dickens (1847-1872)

Henry Fielding (Harry) Dickens (1849-1933)

Dora Annie Dickens (1850-1851)

Edward Bulwer Lytton (Plorn) Dickens (1852-1902)

Date of Death: Thursday, June 9, 1870 due to a stroke.

Place of Burial: Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey, London

The Literary Genius

Major Works:

Sketches by Boz (1836)
Pickwick Papers (serialized monthly 1836-37)
Oliver Twist (serialized monthly 1837-39)
Nicholas Nickleby (serialized monthly 1838-39)
The Old Curiosity Shop (serialized weekly 1840-41)
Barnaby Rudge (serialized weekly 1841)
Martin Chuzzlewit (serialized monthly 1843-44)
Dombey and Son (serialized monthly 1846-48)
David Copperfield (serialized monthly 1849-50)
Bleak House (serialized monthly 1852-53)
Hard Times (serialized weekly 1854)
Little Dorrit (serialized monthly 1855-57)
A Tale of Two Cities (serialized weekly 1859)
Great Expectations (serialized weekly 1860-61)
Our Mutual Friend (serialized monthly 1864-65)
The Mystery of Edwin Drood - unfinished (serialized monthly 1870)

Minor Works:

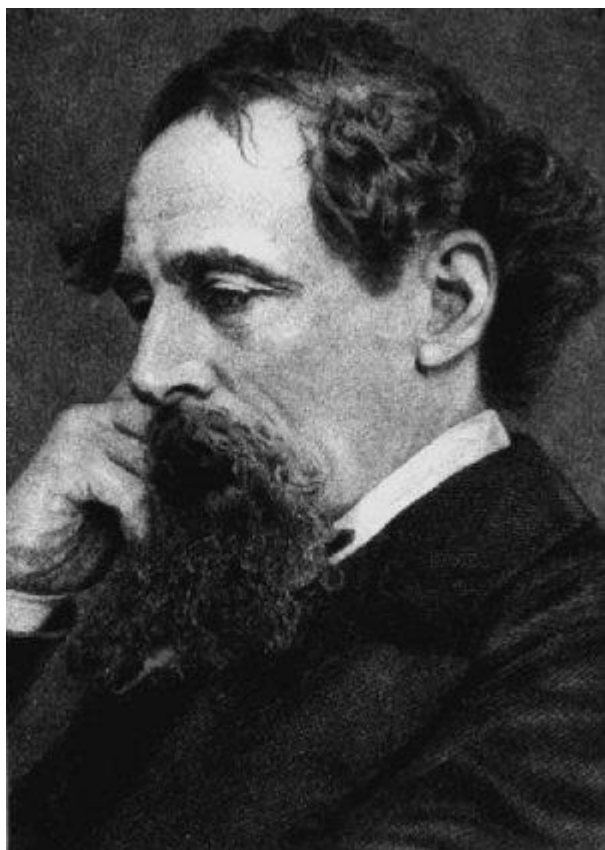
American Notes (1843)
Pictures from Italy (1846)
The Life of Our Lord (1846)
A Child's History of England (serialized weekly 1851-53)
Reprinted Pieces (1858)
The Uncommercial Traveller (1861)

Christmas Books:

A Christmas Carol (1843)
The Chimes (1844)
The Cricket on the Hearth (1845)
The Battle of Life (1846)
The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain (1848)

Weekly Magazines:

Master Humphrey's Clock (1840-41)
Household Words (1850-59)
All the Year Round (1859-70)



The Life of Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, England on February 7, 1812 as the son of John and Elizabeth Dickens. A clerk in the Navy Pay Office, his father was well paid but had a poor sense for finances and eventually lost his house. As was the custom, the entire Dickens family was taken to debtor's prison at Marsahlseas until the money was paid. Young Charles was spared from prison and removed from school to become the family breadwinner to work off the family payments. Charles was put to work for six shillings a week at Warren's Blacking Factory, a boot-blackening factory. Here he experienced a painful childhood putting

on labels to shoe polish canisters. In fact, the poor conditions of his factory work were so traumatic, Dickens was scarred psychologically for life. Later, his childhood, poverty and abandonment would be a major influence in his work.

When Charles turned twelve, the Dickens' were finally released and his father gave Charles the amazing opportunity to become a day pupil. Between the years of 1824-1827, Dickens studied at Wellington House Academy in London and at Mr. Dawson's school. At age fifteen, he was employed as a law office clerk for an attorney. Later, after studying shorthand, Dickens worked as a court and Parliamentary reporter. In 1829, he became a free-lance reporter at Doctor's Commons Courts where he found a passion for writing. In 1833, he published a series of sketches about London life and his reputation as a fine writer, reporter and observer of life was established. He wrote for *True Son*

12-year-old Charles was removed from school and sent to work at a boot-blackening factory earning six shillings a week to help support the family

(1830-32), *Mirror of Parliament* (1832-34) and the *Morning Chronicle* (1834-36). In 1834,

Dickens adopted the famous pseudonym “Boz.”

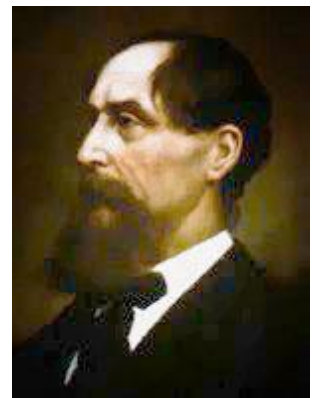
Dickens's career as a writer of fiction started in 1833 when his short stories and essays appeared in periodicals. His *Sketches By Boz* and *The Pickwick Papers*, a comic novel, were published in 1836. In the same year on April 2nd, he married the daughter of his friend George Hogarth, Catherine Hogarth. Due to the success of *The Pickwick Papers*, which ended in 1837, Dickens began a full-time career as a novelist who produced such early works as *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickelby*. In addition, Charles and Catherine had their first son in 1837, which became the first of ten children.

From 1840's and onward, Dickens spent much time traveling to Canada and the United States, campaigning against many of the social evils of his time. In December 1843, *A Christmas Carol*, the first of Dickens' Christmas books appeared. A year later, after touring Italy, Switzerland and France with his family, Dickens debuted his theatrical company where he frequently wrote, directed and acted in many plays. Fourteen years later in 1858, Dickens performed his first public readings for pay while separating from his wife.

Among his later works are *David Copperfield* (1849-50), where Dickens used his own personal experiences in the factory, *Bleak House* (1852-53), *A Tale Of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (1860-61). In 1860 Dickens moved to Gadshill Place, a mansion near Rochester, Kent. During 1869, his readings continued in England, Scotland and Ireland, until he collapsed from a mild stroke. Surviving, he began to write his final novel, *The Mystery Of Edwin Drood*. On June 8, 1870 at age 58, Charles Dickens suffered another stroke and died. The unfinished mystery novel *The Mystery Of Edwin Drood* was published in 1870.

“He was a sympathizer to the poor, the suffering and the oppressed; and by his death, one of England's greatest writers is lost to the world”

-The inscription on Dickens' tombstone in Poet's Corner



Charles Dickens: A Chronology of his Life



**Dickens' Birthplace
Portsmouth**

1812 Born on Friday, February 7th at Landport, a suburb of Portsmouth to John, a clerk in the navy pay-office attached to the dockyard, and Elizabeth Dickens.

1814 Father transferred to London with family.

1816 Father transferred to Chatham with family. Dickens gets some schooling, although he is already an avid reader.

Dickens was born here February 7, 1812. The house has been restored and furnished with period pieces.



Blacking Factory

1824 Father arrested for debt on February 2nd and consigned to Marshalsea, where family joins him. Separated from family and put to work at Warren's Blacking Factory Hungerford Market, where Dickens walks four miles to and from lodgings in Camden Town and visits his father on Sundays at prison. Eventually, family finds him lodging in Lant Street close to them. After father's release on May 28, family returns to Camden Town. Dickens then attends day school in Hampstead Road, London.

1827 Taken from school; becomes office boy of an attorney; decides to become a journalist.

1829 Free-lance reporter at Doctor's Commons Courts.

1831 Acts as parliamentary reporter during Reform Bill agitation.

1833 His first published story, "Dinner at Poplar Walk," appears in *Monthly Magazine*.

1834



Working as newspaper reporter, adopts the pseudonym "Boz." Father once again arrested for debt; Charles comes to his aid.



1835

Becomes engaged to Catherine Hogarth, daughter of his friend George Hogarth, an editor.

1836

- His first series of *Sketches by Boz* published; receives 150 pounds for the copyright.
- First number of *Pickwick Papers* appears on 30 March.
- Marries Catherine Hogarth on April 2nd.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becomes editor of <i>Bentley's Miscellany</i>. Publishes the second series of <i>Sketches by Boz</i> in December.
 <p>Dickens by Maclise 1839</p>	<p>1837</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins <i>Oliver Twist</i>, continues in monthly parts in <i>Bentley's Miscellany</i>. Catherine bears a son Charles, the first of seven sons and three daughters. <i>Pickwick Papers</i> finishes. <p>1838 Begins <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i></p> <p>1839 Resigns as editor of <i>Bentley's Miscellany</i>. Last part of <i>Oliver Twist</i> appears in April. <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i> finishes in October.</p>
1840	First number of <i>Master Humphrey's Clock</i> , which becomes his next two stories, appears.
1840	Begins <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> .
1841	Finishes <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> in February. Begins <i>Barnaby Rudge</i> , which continues through November.
 <p>1842</p>	<p>1842 Travels through Canada and the United States. <i>American Notes</i> appears in October, creating a furor in America.</p> <p>1843 Begins <i>Martin Chuzzlewit</i>. <i>A Christmas Carol</i> the first of his Christmas books appears in December.</p> <p>1844 Tours Italy with family. Returns to London in December, when <i>The Chimes</i> is published. Leaves London for Genoa.</p> <p>1845 Debut of his amateur theatrical company. <i>The Cricket and the Hearth</i> published. Returns to England in July.</p>
1846	Begins <i>Dombey and Son</i> , which runs until April 1848. Dickens and his family travels to Lausanne, then Paris. <i>The Battle of Life</i> appears in December.
1847	Returns to England.
1848	Writes autobiographical fragment. Directs and acts in amateur theatricals. Publishes final Christmas book, <i>The Haunted Man</i> in December.
1849	<i>David Copperfield</i> begins running.
1850	<i>David Copperfield</i> finishes in November. Founds and edits the weekly <i>Household Words</i> .
1851	Begins work on <i>Bleak House</i> .
1852	<i>Bleak House</i> begins to appear monthly.
1853	<i>Bleak House</i> ends in September. Tours Italy with Wilkie Collins. Returns to England. Gives the first of many public readings from his own works. Summers in Boulogne.
1854	<i>Hard Times</i> appears weekly in <i>Household Words</i> until August. . Dickens and his family spends summer and fall in Boulogne.

1855	Travels with family to Paris in October. <i>Little Dorrit</i> begins to appear monthly.
1856	Collaborates with Wilkie Collins on a play, <i>The Frozen Deep</i> . Purchases Gad's Hill, an estate he had admired as a child.
1857	<i>Little Dorrit</i> ends in June. Dickens and his family spend summer at renovated Gad's Hill. Hans Christian Anderson, whose fairy tales Dickens admires greatly, visits. His theatrical company performs <i>The Frozen Deep</i> for the Queen. Falls in love with Ellen Ternan, a young actress.
1858	In London, undertakes his first public readings for pay. Separates from Catherine Hogarth.
1859	His London readings continue. Begins new weekly, <i>All the Year Round</i> . <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> appears, continues through November.
	<p>1861 Embarks on yet another series of public readings in London. <i>Great Expectations</i> finishes in August.</p> <p>1863 Continues public readings in Paris and London.</p> <p>1864 <i>Our Mutual Friend</i> begins to appear monthly. Health begins to fail, much because of over work.</p> <p>1865 Railway accident badly shakes him and Ellen Ternan. <i>Our Mutual Friend</i> ends in November.</p> <p>1866 Continues public readings in England and Scotland.</p>
1867	Continues public readings in England and Ireland. With bad health, Dicken carries on, against doctor's advice. Embarks on an American reading tour.
	<p>1868 Finishes his American reading tour. His health worsens, but takes additional duties at <i>All the Year Round</i>.</p> <p>1869 Continues readings in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Shows symptoms of mild stroke; provincial readings canceled. Begins <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i>.</p> <p>1870 His final public readings take place in London. Suffers a stroke on June 8 at Gad's Hill, after a full day's work. Dies on June 8, and is buried at Westminster Abbey on June 14. Last of his unfinished <i>Mystery of Edwin Drood</i> appears in September.</p>

Family and Friends of Charles Dickens

Dickens described scenes of families living harmoniously next to cozy firesides in many of his stories, which were stark contrasts to his own family life. Growing up, the family situation was often unstable due to his father's trouble with debt; which, eventually, landed him in debtors' prison when Charles was twelve. Later Dickens' own family was marked by conflict when his relationship with his wife, Catherine, deteriorated. Additionally, Dickens' sons, much like his father, obtained numerous financial troubles. In fact, Dickens once lamented that he had "brought up the largest family with the smallest disposition for doing anything for themselves."

Dickens' circle of friends consisted of people prominent in the arts, journalism, publishing, politics and public life. He was a loyal friend who demanded loyalty in return and those who were not sympathetic to Dickens' side felt his wrath, in some cases, forever.



Dickens with daughters
Katie and Mamie - 1860

Parents



John Dickens (1785-1851) - Dickens' father was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. In 1809 he married Elizabeth Barrow with whom he had eight children. John loved to live the good life but was frequently unable to pay for it. He was imprisoned for debt in 1824 in the Marshalsea Debtor's Prison. After his release from prison he returned to the Navy Pay Office, retired, and later worked as a reporter. His money problems continued and when Charles gained fame as a writer he frequently embarrassed his son by seeking loans from Charles' friends and publishers behind his back. Charles retained a warm affection for his father while deploring his inability to manage money. John was the source of Charles' character Mr. Micawber in the autobiographical novel, *David Copperfield*.



Gad's Hill Place

As a child Dickens would walk with his father by Gad's Hill Place, a large impressive mansion outside Rochester. His father told him that with perseverance and hard work he could live in such a house.

Thirty-six years later, in 1856, Dickens bought it.



Elizabeth (Barrow) Dickens (1789-1863) - Dickens' mother, married John Dickens in 1809. Charles was the second of their eight children. Charles was removed from school to help support the family at Warren's Blacking Factory during John's imprisonment for debt. When John was released, he had a quarrel with Charles' employer and Charles was fired from the Blacking Factory. Trying unsuccessfully, his mother tried to have Charles return to work. For the rest of his life, Charles never forgave her and used her as the source of Mrs. Nickleby in *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Dickens' Siblings

Frances Elizabeth (Fanny) Dickens (1810-1848) Dickens oldest sister with whom he was very close in childhood. She was a talented woman and studied music at the Royal Academy of Music. Fanny married Henry Burnett and had a crippled son, Henry Jr, whom Dickens used as a model for both Paul Dombey and Tiny Tim. Fanny died of consumption at age 38.

Alfred Allen Dickens (1813-1814) Dickens' younger brother who died in infancy.

Letitia Mary Dickens (1816-1893) Dickens' younger sister, Letitia married an architect and artist Henry Austin in 1837. When Henry died in 1862, Charles secured a government pension for Letitia.

Harriet Dickens (1819-?) Dickens' sister who died in childhood.

Frederick Dickens (1820-1868) Dickens' younger brother who lived with Charles when he moved to Furnival's Inn in 1834 and during the early years of Dickens' marriage to Catherine. Frederick married and used his famous brother's name to obtain credit. Fred was later imprisoned for debt and spent the last years of his life an alcoholic. When he died at age 48, Charles mourned Fred's "wasted life".

Alfred Lamert Dickens (1822-1860) Dickens' younger brother who was both a civil engineer and sanitary inspector. When Alfred died in 1860, Charles helped support his family.

Augustus Dickens (1827-1866) Dickens' youngest brother. Dickens helped Augustus get a job with a shipping merchant in London. Augustus' wife became blind and he left her and went to

America with another woman with whom he married. He died at age 39 in Chicago and Charles gave support to both wives.

Wife Catherine



Catherine (Hogarth) Dickens (1815-1879) - Dickens' wife, with whom he fathered ten children. She was born in Scotland on May 19, 1815 and came to England with her family in 1834. Catherine was the daughter of George Hogarth, editor of the *Evening Chronicle* where Dickens was a young journalist. They were married on April 2, 1836 in St. Luke's Church.

Dickens found Catherine an increasingly incompetent mother/ housekeeper and seemed to blame her for the birth of their ten children. Their separation, in 1858, was much publicized and rumors of Dickens unfaithfulness abounded, which he denied in public. Dickens and Catherine had little correspondence after their break and Catherine moved into a house in London with her oldest son, Charley. Dickens retreating to Gad's Hill in Kent with Catherine's sister, Georgina, and all of the children except Charley. On her deathbed in 1879, Catherine gave her collection of Dickens' letters to her daughter Kate and instructed her to give the letters to the British Museum so "that the world may know he loved me once."

Dickens' Children



Charles Culliford (Charley) Dickens (1837-1896) - Dickens' first child, educated at Eton and studied business in Germany. Charley was the only child who lived with his mother after Dickens' separation with Catherine in 1858. In 1862 he married Bessie Evans, daughter of Dickens' former publisher, Frederick Evans. After a failed business venture, Dickens hired Charley as sub-editor of *All the Year Round*.

Mary (Mamie) Dickens (1838-1896) - Dickens' second child, named for Mary Hogarth. She never married and remained with Dickens until his death. She published a book of memoirs, *My Father as I Recall Him*.

Kate Macready (Katie) Dickens (1839-1929) Dickens' third child, named for Dickens' friend actor William Macready. She had a talent for art and attended Bedford College. She sided with her mother in the separation of her parents and married artist Charles Collins, brother of Dickens friend Wilkie Collins. Dickens felt she got married to escape the separation. When Collins, sickly for years, died she married artist Carlo Perugini. She later revealed her father's relationship with Ellen Ternan in Gladys Storey's book *Dickens and Daughter*.

Walter Savage Landor Dickens (1841-1863) - Dickens' fourth child named for English poet Walter Savage Landor. He was nominated for a cadetship in the East India Company and went to India in 1857 where he advanced to the rank of lieutenant in the 42nd Highlanders. He inherited his

grandfather's problems with money and got into debt. He died of an aortic aneurysm in Calcutta with his debts sent home to his father.



Francis Jeffrey (Frank) Dickens (1844-1886) - Dickens fifth child, who was named for Dickens friend Lord Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. He went to India in 1864 a month after his brother Walter died. He joined the Bengal Mounted Police and returned to England in 1871, the year after his father's death. He squandered his inheritance and later went to Canada where he joined the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police. He died in Moline, Illinois.



Alfred D'Orsay Tennyson Dickens (1845-1912) - Dickens' sixth child named for French artist Count Alfred D'Orsay and English poet Alfred Lord Tennyson. He immigrated to Australia in 1865 where he remained for 45 years. Later he lectured on his father's life and works in England and America, dying in New York on a lecture tour.

Sydney Smith Haldimand Dickens (1847-1872) - Dickens' seventh child who embarked on a career with the navy, which pleased his father very much. He got into debt and asked his father for financial aid which Dickens refused. He died at sea aboard the *Malta*.

Henry Fielding (Harry) Dickens (1849-1933) - Dickens eighth child named for English author Henry Fielding. Henry was the most successful of Dickens children. Educated at Cambridge, he became a lawyer, judge, and was knighted in 1922. Later he performed readings of his father's works and published books on Dickens' life.



Dora Annie Dickens (1850-1851) - Dickens' ninth child, born during the writing of *David Copperfield* and was named for David's wife. A sickly child, she died at eight months old.

Edward Bulwer Lytton (Plorn) Dickens (1852-1902) - Dickens 10th child and named for English Novelist and Dickens' friend Edward Bulwer-Lytton. He joined his brother Alfred in Australia at 16 years of age. He became a Member of Parliament in New South Wales and never returned to England.

The Success and Popularity of Charles Dickens

“The great novelist who was also the great entertainer, the greatest entertainer, probably in the history of fiction.”

- *Walter Allen, The English Novel*

Dickens had an amazing ability to capture the imagination of all audiences. With a keen sense of observation and wit combined with a command of the English language, Dickens essays, short stories and novels were made popular worldwide. He was truly a great entertainer. Many factors contributed to this fame, among which was the increase of technology during the Industrial Age; his political and social stance toward the working public and the publication of the serial novel.

The Industrial Age was marked as a time where huge technological advances were being made. During Dickens time, London was the largest and most spectacular city in the world. As the central economical global power, this city grew at a rapid rate with the addition of new streets, docks and factories. The 1830's brought the development of the railroad, which provided quick transportation for thousands of people while accelerating the expansion of the city. Additionally, new improvements in production processes for newspapers, magazines and books increased in both speed and efficiency for publications. It was these transportation devices and printing presses that helped spread Dickens' fame across the globe.



While Britain was experiencing the Industrial Revolution, human growth and literacy was on the rise. In the nineteenth century, everyone, from Queen Victoria to the street sweepers read Dickens novels. Thus, a variety of individuals from all class boundaries were able to read Dickens' compassion for the oppressed. His fictions provided a voice and witness for the causes and aggravations of the poor and working classes. Dickens' political and social views, which invoked passion and humanitarianism amongst his audiences, helped assure his increasing popularity across all class boundaries and time.

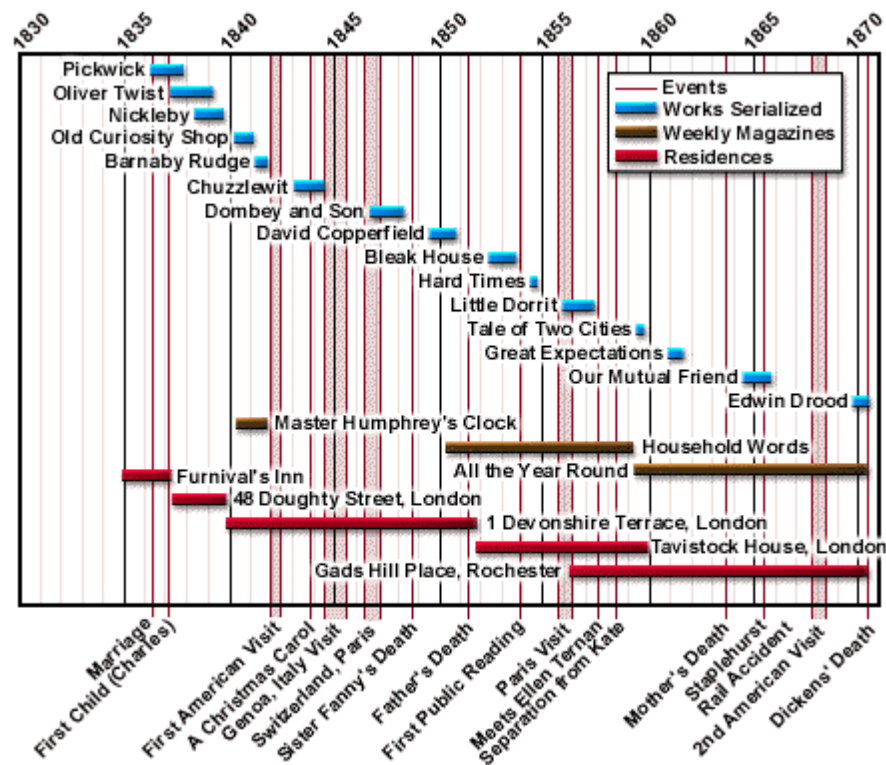
Another factor that added to Dickens' fame and popularity was the process in which he and his publishers choose to distribute his books. All of Dickens major stories were published serially, in monthly or weekly sections. It was too expensive for the poor and working class to purchase one full novel, so by dividing up the literary mass, people could reasonable pay for each installment. For example, a full-length novel cost about 31 shillings in 1836 while the average worker earned only 6 shillings per week. However, the price of one shilling for a monthly installment of 32 pages with 2 illustrations and advertisements was a much more sensible deal to the public. Dickens wrote each novel with this publication process in mind by ending each series with a suspenseful hook or “cliff-hanger.” By leaving people at



Cover for the 1st monthly number of *Dombey and Son*

the edge of their seats, Dickens ensured the purchase of his next issue while continuing his popularity amongst his readers.

Whether it was the rise of technological advancement during the Industrial Revolution; Dickens' ability to be a voice for the working and poor classes or the publication process of the serial novel, Dickens will continue to be known as a truly talented and timeless man.



Dickens, London and the Victorian Age

Charles Dickens wrote during the Victorian Age, an era named after Britain's Queen Victoria who ruled from 1819 to 1901. During Dickens' time, London reigned as the world's center for commerce, culture and government. England's Industrial Revolution contributed to many amazing benefits for both the city and its people; however, there were several downsides. The sacrifice for explosive economic growth and world trade domination was poverty, hunger and squalor.

By the time Charles Dickens had published his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-1837), industrialization had immensely changed the physical, social and cultural landscape of Great Britain. The emergence of the factory system had drawn country farmers and laborers to the great city in numbers unparalleled in history. In 1800, the population of London was approximately one million and by 1880, that number grew to 4.5 million. This tremendous population growth brought overcrowding, crime, pollution and disease.

If a late twentieth-century person were suddenly to find himself in a tavern or house of the period, he would be literally sick- sick with the smells, sick with the food, sick with the atmosphere around him."

- Peter Ackroyd, Dickens



Smithfield Market



Gustave Dore - Traffic at Ludgate Circus 1860

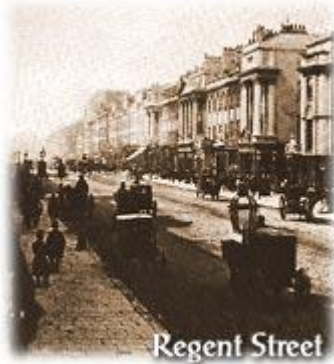
Imagine . . .

It was market-morning. The ground was covered, nearly ankle-deep, with filth and mire; a thick steam, perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle, and mingling with the fog, which seemed to rest upon the chimney-tops, hung heavily above. All the pens in the centre of the large area, and as many temporary pens as could be crowded into the vacant space, were filled with sheep; tied up to posts by the gutter side were long lines of beasts and oxen, three or four deep. Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of every low grade, were mingled together in a mass; the whistling of drovers, the barking dogs, the bellowing and plunging of the oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs, the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths, and quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and roar of voices, that issued from every public-house; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping and yelling; the hideous and discordant din that resounded from every corner of the market; and the unwashed, unshaven, squalid, and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng; rendered it a stunning and bewildering scene, which quite confounded the senses.

- Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist

A Day in Victorian London :Imagine Yourself in Early 19th Century London . . .

Its morning, you awake from your deep slumber. Stretching and then stumbling slowly to the window, you pull back the curtain to see Victorian London before you. The first thing you notice is the close proximity of buildings surrounding your home. The upper and middle class houses are adjacent to areas of unbelievable poverty and filth. Quickly getting dressed, due in the unbearable cold, you run downstairs and step out onto the street while admiring the commotion of life around you. The rich and poor alike are thrown together in the crowded city streets. Due to thousands of horse-drawn vehicles, street sweepers feebly attempt to keep the streets clean of manure, which is found scattered about. You observe that pollution affects all aspects of British life. In many parts of the city, raw sewage readily flows into gutters that empty into the Thames River, which is already filled with human and industrial waste. The air is dense and hazy from residential and industrial chimneys, belching coal smoke that results in soot that seems to settle everywhere.



Nearby, you hear the loud clamor of a factory. Factories are extremely dangerous and lethal areas where owners pay below poverty-level wages for 14-hour workdays. Many workers in these corrupt factories are young children. Back on the street, vendors hawking their goods add to the cacophony of street noises. Pickpockets, prostitutes, drunks, beggars, and vagabonds of every description add to the colorful London atmosphere.

Personal cleanliness is not a big priority, nor is clean laundry. While stopping in a tavern, the smell of unwashed bodies in the close, crowded room is stifling. You move toward the fireplace to escape the stench; however, it is unbearably hot by the fireplace and numbingly cold when you walk away from it.

Finally, night falls and the major streets are lit with feeble gas lamps and side streets are not lit at all. You decide to hire a link bearer who guides you down the dark small street with an oil lamp. Once inside your house, you light a candle that struggles against the darkness of night, casting haunting shadows on your bedroom walls.

Sanitation and Disease

Until the second half of the 19th century, London residents were still drinking water from the same Thames River where raw sewage was being deposited. Due to the tainted drinking water, disease slowly dawned on the Victorians. Several outbreaks of Cholera in the mid 19th century along with The Great Stink of 1858, when the stench of the Thames caused Parliament to dismiss for recess, brought a cry for action.

Sir Joseph Bazalgette, chief engineer of the new Metropolitan Board of Works (1855), put into effect a plan that was completed in 1875. This plan finally provided adequate sewers to serve the city and created laws, which required drinking water to have proper filtration. In addition, these laws prevented companies from supplying drinking water that was drawn from the most heavily tainted parts of the Thames.





Rich vs. Poor

A deep seeded division between England's rich and poor social classes developed during the Victorian Age. At one extreme, wealthy businessmen and royalty lived in luxury while the indigent poor begged for shillings in the urban filth. In short, class divisions truly became the symbol of the Victorian Era.

The Victorian concept of poverty allowed for little compassion. The poor, in general, were considered to be of inferior moral character and as such, their poverty was the result of their innate deficiencies. One exception to this social rule, were the physically debilitated - the blind and the physically challenged, for example. Consistent with these beliefs, British law provided for two kinds of welfare under the guidelines of The Poor Laws. These welfare types were the "undeserving poor" and the "deserving poor."

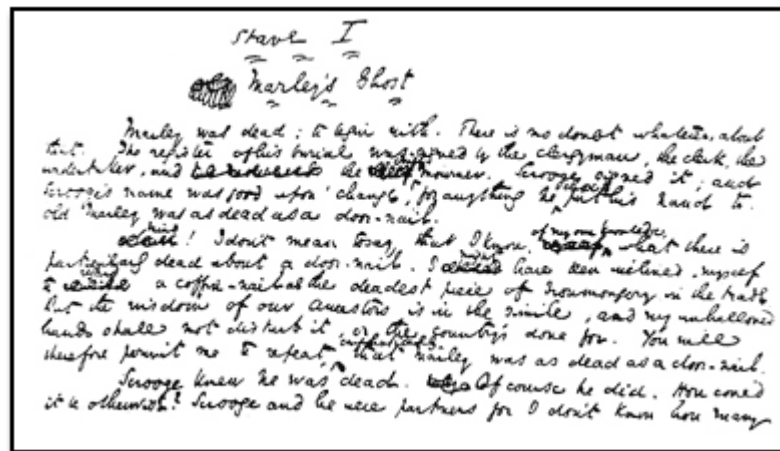
The "undeserving poor," those who could work but were poor due to their own inadequacy, were employed in state sponsored "workhouses." These institutions were specifically designed to be uncomfortable and provide a dirty, backbreaking day of labor. This way, the "undeserving poor" would be taught to dislike state welfare and would seek their own means of financial stability. Persons who spent beyond their means were faced with the prospect of debtor's prison, a humiliating situation where whole families took up temporary residence in dingy prisons until the debt was resolved. The "deserving poor," by contrast, were allowed "in-house" charity, consisting of handouts of food, clothing, and other basic necessities. This generosity towards the "deserving poor" was justified by their physical or mental disabilities.

On the bright side of progression . . .

The Victorian Era also saw early reform efforts with respect to issues of child labor, unfair factory wages and work schedules, voting rights, and prison reform. Reform bills in 1832, 1867, and 1885 dramatically reduced the financial and property qualifications of voters, which diminished the power of the moneyed elite. In the mid-1800's, reformers also began to demand reductions in the standard 14-hour workday for industries. Many bargaining processes effectively established shorter working days and weeks, safer work environments and restrictions on child labor.



ACTIVITY: Explain the contradiction of London in the Victorian era: the richest country of the time with some of the worst conditions imaginable. Additionally, listen carefully to Scrooge. What sorts of attitudes does he display toward the poor?



All of Dickens' novels were submitted to the printer in pen-and-ink (and blobs!). The typesetter would have to carefully decipher the sometimes illegible handwriting, written in the passion of the creative moment. The first typewriters came on the market in 1874, four years after Dickens' death. This is a portion of the original manuscript for the opening stave of *A Christmas Carol*.



DICKENS AND Christmas



Christmas, at the beginning of the Victorian period, was in decline. The medieval Christmas traditions, which combined the celebration of the birth of Christ with the ancient Roman festival of Saturnalia (a pagan celebration for the Roman god of agriculture) and the Germanic winter festival of Yule, had come under intense scrutiny by Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans. Additionally, with the Industrial Revolution in full swing, workers had little time to celebrate Christmas.

However, the romantic revival of Christmas traditions eventually flourished again due to Prince Albert's introduction of the German custom of decorating the Christmas tree; the revival of Christmas carols (which had all but disappeared at the turn of the century); the production of Christmas cards in the 1840s and, most importantly, the Christmas stories of Dickens. Although Dickens celebrated the festival of Christ's birth in numerous works, it is in *A Christmas Carol*, published on December 19th, 1843, that has preserved and restored the Christmas spirit and customs. This timeless classic was the predominant reason the joy of Christmas in Britain and America was rekindled.

Dickens' describes the holidays as "a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of other people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys". This was what Dickens described for as the "Carol Philosophy". Dickens' name had become so synonymous with Christmas that on hearing of his death in 1870 a little costermonger's girl in London asked, "Mr. Dickens dead? Then will Father Christmas die too?"



Victoria and Albert decorate the Christmas tree

Today, after more than 160 years, *A Christmas Carol* continues to be relevant, sending a message that cuts through the materialistic trappings of the season and gets to the heart and soul of the holidays.

Good Humoured Christmas Chapter

Excerpt from *The Pickwick Papers* Chapter 28:

We write these words now, many miles distant from the spot at which, year after year, we met on that day, a merry and joyous circle. Many of the hearts that throbbed so gaily then, have ceased to beat; many of the looks that shone so brightly then, have ceased to glow; the hands we grasped, have grown cold; the eyes we sought, have hid their lustre in the grave; and yet the old house, the room, the merry voices and smiling



Pickwick - Christmas at Dingley Dell

faces, the jest, the laugh, the most minute and trivial circumstances connected with those happy meetings, crowd upon our mind at each recurrence of the season, as if the last assemblage had been but yesterday!

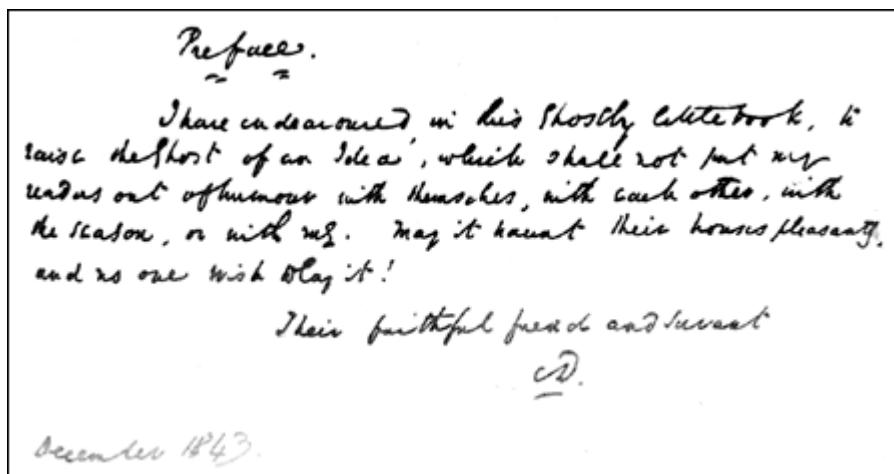
Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fireside and his quiet home!

A Christmas Carol

Preface to the Original Edition A Christmas Carol

I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.

Their faithful Friend and Servant,
C. D.
December, 1843.



Preface written in Dickens' own hand - from the original manuscript



For over 150 years, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* has been the quintessential holiday classic. An immediate success at its publication in 1843, Dickens' tale has long captured the imaginations of readers, filmmakers and viewers with its universal themes of gratitude, generosity and redemption. On a broader scope, *A Christmas Carol* masterfully illustrates the timeless conflict between good and evil, challenging us to examine the consequences of our

actions -- which, in our global community, have even greater impact than in Dickens' time.

Dickens' cherished little Christmas story, the best loved and most read of all of his books, began life as the result of the author's desperate need of money. In the fall of 1843 Dickens and his wife were expecting their fifth child. Requests for money from his family, a large mortgage on his Devonshire Terrace home, and lagging sales from the monthly installments of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, had left Dickens short of money.

As the idea for the story took shape and the writing began in earnest, Dickens became engrossed in the book. He wrote that as the tale unfolded he "wept and laughed, and wept again" and he "walked about the black streets of London fifteen or twenty miles many a night when all sober folks had gone to bed."

At odds with his publishers, Dickens paid for the production cost of the book himself and insisted on a lavish design that included a gold-stamped cover and four hand-colored etchings. He also set the price at 5 shillings so that the book would be affordable to nearly everyone.

The book was published during the week before Christmas 1843 and was an instant sensation but due to the high production costs, Dickens' earning from the sales was lower than expected. In addition to the disappointing profit from the book Dickens was enraged that the work was instantly the victim of pirated editions. Copyright laws in England were often loosely enforced and there was a complete lack of international copyright. He ended up spending more money fighting pirated editions of the book than he was making from the book itself.



Despite these early financial difficulties, Dickens' Christmas tale of human redemption has endured beyond Dickens' own vivid imagination. It was a favorite during Dickens' public readings of his works late in his lifetime and is known today primarily due to the dozens of film versions and dramatizations which continue to be produced every year.

A Christmas Carol Synopsis

Ebenezer Scrooge has lost his only friend, his business partner Jacob Marley. Seven years have passed since Marley's Christmas death, and Scrooge has not changed a bit. He still refuses to give to the poor, suggesting that for them perhaps the only place better than prison is the grave. He still only grudgingly gives his employee Christmas day off, and he still refuses his nephew's offer of Christmas dinner. He dismisses the whole holiday as a "Humbug." But, on this particular Christmas, ghosts home will visit his dreary.

First, Marley will arrive and, despite Scrooge's refusals, he promises that further spirits will arrive. Christmas Past will bring Scrooge on a tour of his unpleasant childhood and the loss of a fiancée; but he will show the good times too, when, as the employee of Fezziweg, Scrooge learned what a joyous holiday Christmas could be. Christmas Present will show him the celebrations going on without him: the sentimental family celebration of the Cratchits and the more rollicking party thrown by his nephew Fred. But Christmas Present will also warn Scrooge that without more money, the Cratchit family will lose its youngest and most fragile member, Tiny Tim.

The Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come will show Scrooge the world after Scrooge's death: His old business cronies will care not for his demise, his maid will steal the very blankets from his deathbed, and Tiny Tim will in fact pass from this world.

Scrooge awakens the next morning to find himself gloriously transformed. Not only can he once again laugh, but he will purchase dinner for the Cratchits, sing in church, and finally visit Fred. We are told that from this day forward Scrooge will become well known for his devotion to the Christmas holiday.

A Christmas Carol Characters

Ebenezer Scrooge

A man for whom Christmas is a humbug; he'll be given a chance at reclamation. He is visited by the ghost of his former partner Jacob Marley, who sends three more spirits in hopes of reforming Scrooge's heartless and penny-pinching ways.



Jacob Marley

Scrooge's long-time partner, dead seven years, comes back to help save his friend. Jacob, in life, was a penny-pinching miser like Scrooge and is suffering for it in the afterlife.

Bob Cratchit

Scrooge's faithful employee, who endures Scrooge's mistreatment until Scrooge, reformed by the visit of the three spirits, raises Bob's salary and vows to help his struggling family. The Cratchit family consists of Bob's wife, eldest daughter Martha, daughter Belinda, son Peter, two younger children: boy and girl and Tiny Tim

Mrs. Cratchit

Not as forgiving of Scrooge as her husband, but deeply loves her children and husband.

Tiny Tim

Cratchit's youngest son, who teeters on the brink of death, harbors nothing but goodwill in his heart. The forecast of Tim's death by the Ghosts of Christmas Present and Future is instrumental in Scrooge's reformation after which Tim is afforded proper medical attention and is cured.

Fred

Scrooge's only living relative, who never gives up on his Uncle Scrooge and faithfully asks him to Christmas dinner every year. This good-hearted nephew is the son of Scrooge's sister Fan.

Fan

Scrooge's sister, mother of his nephew Fred. She has died before the story begins but lives again in the shadows shown to Scrooge by the Ghost of Christmas Past.



Fezziwig

Scrooge was apprenticed to "Old Fezziwig" after he left school. Scrooge's old employer celebrates Christmas the old-fashioned way. "He had the power to make us happy," Scrooge says.

Ghost of Christmas Past

Shows Scrooge his lonely and difficult childhood and gradual decline into the miser he will become.



Ghost of Christmas Present

Shows Scrooge the joy that Christmas brings, both at the poor household of the Cratchits and at the home of his nephew.



Ghost of Christmas Future

Shows Scrooge the demise of Tiny Tim and of himself, leading to Scrooge's reformation.

Themes in A Christmas Carol

A Christmas Carol is built upon numerous contrasts: rich and poor, warmth and cold, plenty and hunger, family and loneliness, generosity and miserliness, affection and cruelty, dream and reality, past and present, and present and future.

THEMES

Error and Redemption	Scrooge's journey from a cruel miser to a generous humanitarian.
Class Divisions	Scrooge versus Bob Cratchit and the enormous gap between the "haves" and the "have nots."
The perils of wealth versus the virtues of Poverty.	Scrooge's pursuit of money is his spiritual downfall; Bob Cratchit's priorities are properly focused on family, love and companionship.
The false belief that law is justice.	Scrooge's wrong belief that the poor deserve their fate and that the law workhouses and prisons are sufficient for the poor.
Poor Children	Tiny Tim is a helpless victim of poverty; his health will deteriorate if his situation does not change.

Original Illustrations

Illustration was a very important part of Dickens' works. These illustrations were issued serially in monthly (two per issue) or weekly parts. The process of creating an illustration began with a sketch. These sketches were then etched onto steel plates, printed on special paper and bound into the book after an advertisement section and just before the text. The cover illustration was printed on heavy colored stock, usually green, which served as a wrapper for each of the monthly parts.

Dickens worked in close collaboration with his illustrators, supplying them with an overall summary of his book so that work on the two illustrations could begin before he wrote the novel. This close working relationship is important to readers today because it gives us a glimpse of the characters that Dickens imagined. Costume and scenic designers still use the illustrations as a basis for characterization, costume and set design in the dramatization of Dickens' works today.



John Leech (1817-1864)

Cartoonist and illustrator famous for his work for *Punch*. A lifelong friend to Dickens, Leech contributed many illustrations for Dickens' Christmas books and was sole illustrator for *A Christmas Carol*. Additionally, he was one of the actors in the amateur plays put on by Dickens' circle of friends.

John Leech provided eight illustrations for *A Christmas Carol*. Four woodcuts and four hand colored etchings:





Dickens was, first and foremost, an entertainer. From childhood and into adult life he loved the stage and the admiration he received from the public. He performed in amateur theatricals throughout his life and, had he not achieved early fame as a writer, he would almost certainly have made a career on the stage.

In 1853 he began giving public readings of his works, first for charity and then for pay in 1858. No other great author had ever performed their works in London, however; Dickens works were uniquely suited for performance. Throughout the 1860s Dickens performed several reading tours in Britain and made more money from the readings than from writing. With the promise of big money, along with stage manager George Dolby, he undertook a reading tour in America from December 1867- April 1868 that earned him 19,000 pounds. On his return to England, and with declining health, he began a farewell tour of Britain in October 1868. This tour included a very passionate and dramatic performance of the murder of Nancy from *Oliver Twist*. Other performances included scenes from *A Christmas Carol*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Pickwick*, and his favorite, *David Copperfield*. However, the most popular of his readings was *A Christmas Carol* for which Dickens wrote a condensed version that he could read in an hour and a half.

“You too, can be Scrooge!”

A Christmas Carol is a tale that describes an overnight transformation; it is a wakeup call for the stingy and bitter to become generous and caring. Many who have read or seen *A Christmas Carol* have been profoundly affected.

1. Jane Carlyle, wife of the stern Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle, reported that upon reading the tale, he was "seized with a perfect convulsion of hospitality, and has actually insisted on improvising two dinner parties."
2. According to a 19th century account, an American business owner took *A Christmas Carol* quite literally. After hearing the story for the first time on Christmas Eve, he proceeded to shut down his factory the next day, giving his employees the day off. In subsequent years, he sweetened the deal: not only did he close the factory doors on Christmas day, but he also distributed free turkeys to all his workers.
3. Early in the 20th century, the queen of Norway was said to know the story by heart. She sent gifts to disabled children throughout London with a note attached: "With Tiny Tim's love."

Activity: Have your students discuss the effect of the story on them. Do they feel compelled to act on what they feel? Do they find the responses above appropriate or meaningful? How might they celebrate *A Christmas Carol* today? Have your students re-write an event in their own lives that they would do differently if they were given a second chance.



Of all the affecting scenes from *A Christmas Carol* none touches the heart more than the death of the crippled Tiny Tim, foreshadowed to Scrooge by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, especially to Victorian readers. Large families and child mortality were common in the 19th century and many readers may have suffered firsthand the loss of a child.

Tiny Tim

Of all the affecting scenes from *A Christmas Carol* none touches the heart more than the death of the crippled Tiny Tim, foreshadowed to Scrooge by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, especially to Victorian readers. Large families and child mortality were common in the 19th century and many readers may have suffered firsthand the loss of a child.

Michael Patrick Hearn, in his book *The Annotated Christmas Carol*, reports that one observer of a public reading by Dickens of *A Christmas Carol* in Boston in 1867 noted that the passage of Tiny Tim's death "brought out so many pocket handkerchiefs that it looked as if a snow-storm had somehow gotten into the hall without tickets".

Activity: Ask your students to rewrite the story of Tiny Tim from his point of view. What was daily life like for him? What did London look like? Sound like? Smell like? What challenges did any young person face on the streets of London? What further challenges would face a physically challenged individual? What sorts of dangers lurked in the city?



Tiny Tim's Disease

In the December 1992 issue of the *American Journal of Diseases of Children* Dr. Donald Lewis, an assistant professor of pediatrics and neurology at the Medical College of Hampton Roads in Norfolk, Virginia, theorized that Tiny Tim in Charles Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol* suffered from a kidney disease that made his blood too acidic.

Dr. Lewis studied the symptoms of Tim's disease in the original

manuscript of the 1843 classic. The disease, distal renal tubular acidosis (type I), was not recognized until the early 20th century but therapies to treat its symptoms were available in Dickens' time. Dr. Lewis explained that Tim's case, left untreated due to the poverty of the Cratchit household, would produce the symptoms alluded to in the novel.

According to the Ghost of Christmas Present, Tim would die within a year. The fact that he did not die, due to Scrooge's newfound generosity, means that the disease was treatable with proper medical care. Dr. Lewis consulted medical textbooks of the mid 1800's and found that Tim's symptoms would have been treated with alkaline solutions that would counteract the excess acid in his blood and recovery would be rapid.

While other possibilities exist, Dr. Lewis feels that the treatable kidney disorder best fits "the hopeful spirit of the story."

Source - AP Science Writer Malcolm Ritter-1992



Ignorance and Want

Ignorance and Want

One major theme in *A Christmas Carol* was rooted in Dickens' observations of the poor children. In Victorian London, thousands of children were living in unimaginable poverty, filth, and disease. In 1839 it was estimated that nearly half of all funerals in London were for children under the age of ten. Those who survived grew up without education and resources; they virtually had no chance to escape the cycle of poverty. Dickens felt that this cycle of poverty could only be broken through education and became interested in the Ragged Schools in London.

Ragged Schools were free schools, run through charity, in which the poorest children received religious instruction and a rudimentary education. Dickens generally applauded the work of these schools although he disapproved of introducing religious doctrine at the expense of a practical education, which would help the pupil become a self-sufficient member of society. Despite the availability of these schools, most poor children remained uneducated due to the demand for child labor and the apathy of parents, wretchedly poor and uneducated themselves.

Dickens introduces these children in *A Christmas Carol* through the allegorical twins, Ignorance and Want. The Ghost of Christmas Present shows them, wretched and almost animal in appearance, to Scrooge with the warning: "This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased." Dickens continued to support education for the poor through his works but enforced education for all did not come about until 1870, the year of Dickens' death.

Fun Facts



Dickens called his little Christmas book a carol; carol being a song or ballad of joy celebrating the birth of Christ. He carries the pretense further by calling the chapters staves; a staff being an archaic form of stanza or verse of a song.

Victorian Activities and Recipes from A Christmas Carol



At Scrooge's nephew Fred's Christmas party they play blind man's buff, a popular Victorian parlor game. In this particular game the blind man, Topper, and Fred team up to allow Topper to be able to see through the blindfold so that he can catch a lady whom he has his eye on:

"There was first a game at blind-man's buff. Of course there was. And I no more believe Topper was really blind than I believe he had eyes in his boots. My opinion is, that it was a done thing between him and Scrooge's nephew; and that the Ghost of Christmas Present knew it. The way he went after that plump sister in the lace tucker, was an outrage on the credulity of human nature. Knocking down the fire-irons, tumbling over the chairs, bumping against the piano, smothering himself among the curtains, wherever she went, there went he. He always knew where the plump sister was. He wouldn't catch anybody else."

Origins of this game go back to ancient times - and originally the game may have been part of some tribal rite. Played in many parts of the world today, in some versions IT has the name of an animal and wears a symbol of the animal, in other versions there is also a rhyme about a spoon and porridge.

How The Game Is Played

Any number can play. IT is blindfolded, and is then spun around. Sometimes a rhyme is used during spinning IT. After the spinning, everyone scatters within a predefined area. IT tries to catch any player by touching them. If a player is caught, that player becomes IT. In one version of the game IT (still blind-folded) feels the face of the person who is caught and tries to identify who it is. If IT guesses correctly, the person identified becomes IT. If IT doesn't identify the person, then the game begins again with the same person as IT.



At the end of *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge proposes that he and Bob Cratchit will discuss all that Scrooge will do for Bob's family later that afternoon "over a bowl of Smoking Bishop" In his notes for the 1907 edition of *A Christmas Carol* E. Gordon Browne describes this Christmas punch:

The drink is made by pouring red wine, either hot or cold, upon ripe, bitter oranges. The liquor is heated or 'mulled' in a vessel with a long funnel, which could be pushed far down into the fire. Sugar and spices (chiefly cloves, star anise, and cinnamon) are added according to taste. It is sometimes called 'purple wine' and received the name 'Bishop' from its colour



Ingredients (Serves 6)

1 goose, 12 to 14 pounds, thawed
Salt and pepper
Grated rind of 2 oranges

Chestnut Stuffing:

6 slices of bacon, chopped
1 onion, chopped
2 cups sliced celery with leaves
½ cup chopped celery
1 can whole chestnuts, drained and broken
4 cups cooked wild rice
1 teaspoon crumbled sage
1 teaspoon crumbled thyme
1 teaspoon crumbled marjoram

- 1) Remove giblets from goose. Remove loose fat and reserve for liver toasts. Sprinkle goose inside and out with salt and pepper. Rub with orange rind.

Chestnut Stuffing

- 2) Fry bacon in a skillet until crisp. Add onion, celery, and parsley, and sauté for 5 minutes. Stir in chestnuts, rice, and herbs. Season to taste with salt.
- 3) Stuff goose with mixture. (Do not stuff goose until it is ready to be roasted.) Sew or skewer openings. Place goose breast side up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Roast in a preheated 350 degree F oven for 25 minutes per pound.
- 4) Place goose on serving platter. Garnish with pine sprigs and sliced blood oranges.



Discussion Topics & Questions

- 1) What is Scrooge's development throughout the story? How does he change throughout the play?
- 2) Discuss the causes of the changes that took place in Scrooge. What did he see in each time period, and how did this affect his relationships with the people in his life?
- 3) Do you believe that your fate can be altered by the choices you make? Why or why not?
- 4) Discuss what might have happened to Scrooge if the spirits had not visited him. Explain your reasoning.
- 5) How does Scrooge react to seeing Tiny Tim, and how does it change his feelings toward his clerk and the poor?
- 6) Is Tiny Tim's phrase, "God bless us, every one" relevant in today's culture? Why or why not? Use specific current events to explain your answer.
- 7) Who are Ignorance and Want and why are they important?
- 8) Compare and contrast this play with other versions of the story (examples: the original novel, *A Muppet Christmas Carol*, the Alistaire Zimm black and white film, etc.)

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