

AO3: Context

Religion: Society was very religious, and many Victorians feared God's punishment, for not abiding to the strict moral code: Marley's penance would have frightened the upper class. In contrast, Dickens believed good Christians should be humble, charitable, faithful and selfless, rather than merely appearing religious. Christmas was becoming more secular and Dickens wanted to spread the message that charity, forgiveness and generosity should be all year round.

Poverty: John Malthus argued that poverty was inevitable and there wasn't enough to go around. Dickens, in contrast believed that the rich just needed to be more generous. Initially, Scrooge represents the uncaring attitudes of Malthus et al., who wrongly (or so Dickens said) thought that charity encouraged poverty and advocated workhouses. Dickens knew about the plight of the poor, having grown up in poverty, and wanted to raise awareness; hence the sympathetic Cratchits.

Charity/ Education: Industrial Revolution created a huge gap between rich and poor; however, it encouraged selfishness from the rich. Dickens believed in collective responsibility and Scrooge's change echoes this. He also thought education could prevent crime, poverty and disease; Ignorance is a personified representation of this problem. Dickens hoped that the ever-positive Tiny Tim would draw sympathy from upper class readers for children and the issues they faced.

Society: Industrial Revolution created jobs and drew large numbers of people together, which resulted in poor living conditions amongst the poor. The population grew rapidly and conditions worsened. Overcrowding, like the slums in S4, led to hunger, disease and crime. The slums were scary places for the rich, like Scrooge. Children suffered the worst (Tiny Tim / I&W) and it was very difficult to escape poverty. Dickens aimed to raise awareness for the poor: discouraging the rich's ignorance.

AO1 and 2: Symbolism

- Marley's chains symbolise his obsession with material wealth and money.
- Ignorance and Want are the personification of society's problems.
- Past's light represents truth from memories
- Present's scabbard symbolises peace on earth
- Yet to Come's shroud symbolises uncertainty
- Fire and light represent emotional warmth
- Music and dance symbolise happiness
- The bed is a recurrent motif, which suggests the ghosts want to access Scrooge's most private thoughts.
- Weather reflects Scrooge's character and emotions. Pathetic fallacy is often used by Dickens to set the tone.

'And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, every one!'

AO2: Technical analysis

The novella is **allegorical**, meaning it has a moral message hidden within it.

The reader inherently trusts the **omniscient narrator**, due to their light-hearted, conversational, and occasionally sarcastic, tone. They encourage us to dislike Scrooge, initially, before making us sympathise with him by the end.

Although the basic narrative is in chronological order, the spirits are able to manipulate **time** to suggest their power. The continual references to time (running out) drives the plot and builds tension.

Dickens regularly makes use of **contrasts** to emphasise a set of ideas or values. Scrooge's selfish nature, in Stave 1, is exacerbated by its **juxtaposition** with the selfless attitudes of Fred, Bob and the charity collectors, for example.

Repetition and **hyperbolic lists** help to exaggerate the atmosphere (often celebration). It can also act as to quicken the pace and add excitement.

Similes are frequently used to lighten the mood. Whereas, **metaphors** are often used to darken it.

Dickens often darkens the **mood** to highlight his message about social responsibility: Marley, I&W, Joe's shop.

Much like a piece of drama, pay attention to the **dialogue**. Descriptions of the speaker's manner and body language indicate their thoughts and feelings, as well as their choice of words. Compare the Cratchits before and after TT's death.

Is the happy ending **foreshadowed** by the fact that Scrooge's mean father had a change of heart? Anything is possible.

Sensory language is used to bring a scene to life. Likewise **personification** brings life to abstract concepts (I&W) or settings.



Questions are also cleverly employed by Dickens. The narrator asks questions to engage the reader or leaves them unanswered to force them to reflect. Past uses questions to make Scrooge consider his emotions. Present uses them to force Scrooge to consider his attitude. Scrooge's questions in S4 indicate his determination to change. Although they're aimed at Scrooge, the spirits' questions indirectly make the reader consider their own attitude.

Dickens frequently uses **symbols** to represent larger ideas within the novella. A longer list can be found in the black box, but one of the most famous is the use of fire to symbolise the Christmas spirit. Scrooge's '*small fire*' in S1 represents his lack of Christmas spirit. By S5 Scrooge is telling Bob to buy another '*coal scuttle*', representing his willingness to share his Christmas spirit with others.