A CHRISTMAS CAROL- CHARLES DICKENS

PLOT

1	Ebernezer Scrooge is at work in his counting house. Despite the Christmas Eve cold, he refuses to spend money on coals for the fire. Scrooge's turns down his nephew, Fred's, invitation to his Christmas party and the request of two men who want money for charity.
2	Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his dead partner, Jacob Marley, who tells Scrooge that, due to his greedy life, he has to wander the Earth wearing heavy chains. Marley tries to stop Scrooge from doing the same. He tells Scrooge that three spirits will visit him during the next three nights. Scrooge falls asleep.
3	He wakes and the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge into the past. Invisible to those he watches, Scrooge revisits his childhood school days, his apprenticeship with a jolly merchant named Fezziwig, and his engagement to Belle, who leaves Scrooge as he loves money too much to love another human being. Scrooge sheds tears of regret before being returned to his bed.
4	The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge Christmas as it will happen that year. Scrooge watches the Cratchit family eat a tiny meal in their little home. He sees Bob Cratchit's crippled son, Tiny Tim, whose kindness and humility warm Scrooge's heart. The spectre shows Scrooge his nephew's Christmas party. Scrooge asks the spirit to stay until the very end. Toward the end of the day the ghost shows Scrooge two starved children, Ignorance and Want. He vanishes as Scrooge notices a dark, hooded figure coming.
5	The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come takes Scrooge through a sequence of scenes linked to an unnamed man's death. Scrooge, is keen to learn the lesson. He begs to know the name of the dead man. He finds himself in a churchyard with the spirit pointing to a grave. Scrooge looks at the headstone and is shocked to read his own name. He is desperate to change his fate and promises to change his ways. He suddenly finds himself safely tucked in his bed.
6	Scrooge rushes out onto the street hoping to share his newfound Christmas spirit. He sends a turkey to the Cratchit house and goes to Fred's party, As the years go by, he continues to celebrate Christmas with all his heart. He treats Tiny Tim as if he were his own child, gives gifts for the poor and is kind, generous and warm.

CHARACTERS

Ebernezer Scrooge	A selfish business man who transforms into a charitable philanthropist.
Jacob Marley	Scrooge's dead partner who returns as a ghost to warn scrooge to change his ways.
Bob Cratchitt	Scrooge's clerk who doesn't have much money. He loves his family and is shown to be happy and morally upright.
Tiny Tim	Bob's ill son whose story plays a part in inspiring Scrooge's transformation.
The ghost of Christmas Past	A strange combination of young and old, wearing white robes and looking like a candle.
The ghost of Christmas Present	A portly, jovial gentleman surrounded by a warm glow. He brings joy on the most needy townsfolk.
The ghost of christmas yet to come	A robed and hooded spirit who confronts Scrooge with his own tombstone.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1824 – Dickens' father is sent to jail for debt and Dickens has to give up his education until his father inherits some money and he goes to a private school

Dickens was put to work in a warehouse, pasting labels on bottles. He had experience of poverty.

Dickens became a writer of fiction and journalism, reporting on court cases and working for radical newspapers on his disillusionment with politics and the class system.

1832 – The Great Reform Bill gave many middle class property owners the right to vote for the first time. Large sections of the middle classes, the working classes and women still didn't have the right to vote.

1834 – Poor Law Amendment Act – Led to a cut in aid given to paupers to help them stay in their own homes. Workhouses were created which poor people would have to live and work in, if they were unable to pay for their own housing.

September 1843 – Dickens visits a "Ragged School."

December 1843 Dickens writes A Christmas Carol focusing on how many of society's ills can be blamed on greed for money and status.

THEMES

- Greed
- Predestination
- Free will
- Poverty
- Class
- Stratification
- Isolation
- Transformation
- Family
- Guilt
- Generosity
- Redemption
- Capitalism
- Social
- Responsibility
- Justice
- Supernatural
- Morality

STYLISTIC FEATURES

- Allegory
- Narrator
- Pathetic fallacy
- Prolepsis
- Symbolism

KEY QUOTES

."Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge…a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster."

"No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge."

"He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again."

"Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail."

"Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid colour, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression."