

Discussion Questions for *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

Some questions adapted from the TNT Learning Educator's Guide at <http://www.turnerlearning.com/tntlearning/christmascarol/summaries.html> and from <http://www.leastern.com/ChristmasCarol/CCCarol.html>

1. Had you read *A Christmas Carol* before? Did anything surprise you in the book? I was surprised by the humor. For example, this passage near the beginning:

[Scrooge] lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and forgotten the way out again.
2. This is a very short book, and not the only Christmas story that Dickens wrote. Why do you think that it and its message endured and became such a part of English-speaking culture?
3. Did you have a favorite part? What image or line or scene sticks with you the most, if one does?
4. How would you characterize Bob Cratchit's attitude toward Scrooge? Scrooge's attitude toward Cratchit? Besides literal heat, what might be the symbolism of the tiny coal fire that Cratchit has in the office?
5. Why does Scrooge say that Fred should not be happy? What does this reveal about Scrooge's priorities?
6. What is the significance or symbolism of the fact that bells announce Marley's ghost?
7. Why is the Ghost of Christmas Past young, small, cloaked in white and shining bright? What does he mean when he says that Scrooge made his cap and has forced him to wear it?
8. What has Marley's ghost been doing since his death?
9. What is Scrooge's initial attitude toward the spirit?
10. What is different about Scrooge when he says "Remember it? I could walk it with a blindfold?"
11. How does Scrooge's relationship with his sister Fan play into the story?
12. What does the name Fezziweg suggest? When the spirit challenges Scrooge by asking if Fezziweg truly deserves such high praise for such a little party, how does Scrooge respond? How might Scrooge's claim that Fezziweg "had the power to make us happy and to make us unhappy" reflect upon Scrooge himself?
13. How does Scrooge try to extinguish the light of the first spirit? Does he succeed? What is the light a symbol of?
14. How is what Scrooge is thinking as he lies in bed waiting to see if the spirit appears different from the previous chapter? How has Scrooge's attitude toward his being escorted by a ghost changed?
15. How is Scrooge affected by seeing the Cratchit family?
16. What is the point of the visits with the Ghost of Christmas Present to the lighthouse and the ship?
17. Why does Fred refuse to speak against Scrooge? How does his wife differ on this matter? Fred and his wife and Bob and his wife have different views on Scrooge. What does this say about each of them?
18. What does the Ghost of Christmas Present mean when it says the boy and the girl under his robes, Ignorance and Want, are "Man's"?
19. How does Scrooge feel about the spirit of Christmas yet to come?
20. What is the lesson Scrooge learns when the ghost shows him the Cratchit family after Tim's death? Why is this lesson needed when Scrooge's attitude has already changed so much?
21. Is Scrooge's transformation believable?