A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Plot

Stave 1 *Marley's Ghost*	Ebenezer Scrooge is at work in his counting house. Scrooge's turns down his nephew, Fred's, invitation to his Christmas party & the request of two men who want money for charity. Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his dead partner, Jacob Marley, who tells Scrooge that, due to his own 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.
Stave 2 *The First of the Three Spirits*	He wakes and the Ghost of Christmas Past soon appears to him - they embark on a journey into Scrooge's past. Invisible to those he watches, Scrooge revisits his childhood school days; his apprenticeship with a jolly merchant named Fezziwig, & his engagement to Belle, who leaves Scrooge as he loves money too much to love another human being. Scrooge sheds tears of regret before returning to his bed.
Stave 3 *The Second of The Three Spirits*	Scrooge anticipates the second ghost, sitting up in bed waiting. He is surprised when no spirit arrives. Instead, he follows a light & finds himself in a transformed version of his own room. The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge Christmas as it happens that year. Scrooge sees the Cratchit family eat a tiny meal in their little home ;Bob Cratchit's crippled son, Tiny Tim, whose kindness & humility warm Scrooge's heart and Fred's Christmas party. Toward the end of the day the ghost shows Scrooge two starved child-like figures; Ignorance & Want. He vanishes as Scrooge notices a dark, hooded figure coming.
Stave 4 *The Last of the Spirits*	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 & is shocked to read his own name. He is desperate to change his fate & promises to change his ways. He suddenly finds himself safely tucked in his bed.
Stave 5 *The End of It*	Scrooge rushes out onto the street hoping to share his newfound Christmas spirit. He sends a turkey to the Cratchit house & 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 & is kind, generous & warm.

Exam steps

1. Write out your short-hand quotes (1 letter/1 word per quote)
2. Read & highlight extract question.
3. Read & highlight extract.
4. Write extract essay.
5. Read & highlight whole-novel question.
6. Plan quotes.
7. Write whole-novel essay.

POINT/MINI-PLOT/SHORT QUOTE/DEVICE/EFFECT/CONTEXT

For example - Dickens presents Scrooge as outside society in his contrasted description of other key characters./In the time of the Cratchit's grief at Tiny Tim's death/Bob Cratchit regularly describes his family as, "we". /The simple repeated plural pronoun/implies such closeness, even in their bereavement, in fact maybe because of it they turn to one-another./ The Vicorians' unswerving belief in the power of the family is illustrated as succinctly as in the famous Christmas portrait depicting Victoria and Albert with their children around their tree.

Character

Ebenezer Scrooge	Selfish business man who transforms into a charitable philanthropist
Fred	Scrooge's nephew, complete contrast to Scrooge. Represents Christmas spirit in human form; warm, good-natured.
Jacob Marley	Scrooge's dead business partner who returns as a ghost to warn Scrooge to change his ways
Bob Cratchit	Scrooge's clerk who has little money. Loves his family & is shown to be happy &morally upright.
Tiny Tim	Bob's poorly son whose story plays a part in inspiring Scrooge's transformation.
Mrs Cratchit	Bob's wife – ideal wife & mother.
Ghost of Xmas Past	A thing of contradictions; a combination of young &old, winter & summer, white haired &unwrinkled. The light shining from its head is symbolic; memory, enlightenment, guidance
Ghost of Xmas Present	'A Jolly giant who bore glowing torch' – personifies everything that is generous & giving about Christmas
Ghost of Xmas Yet to Come	The most 'traditional' spook; robed & hooded- resembles the Grim Reaper. Accompanies Scrooge in darkest part of story.
Fezziwig	Scrooge's ex-employer. A role model for how employers should behave.
Belle	A woman Scrooge was in love with who left him because of his greedy nature.
Fan	Scrooge's sister whom he has great affection for when visiting his past.

The Exam

Example Question: Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present Scrooge as an outsider to society?

Information: 45 minutes. No choice of question. One extract followed by two bullet points, looking at first the extract, then the whole novella. You must learn your key quotes as you will NOT have a copy of the novella in the exam

A01- Demonstrate an understanding of the question & text, use quotations to evidence understanding. (12 Marks)

A02- Carefully analyse the language & comment on the intended effect on the reader. Ensure that you include subject terminology. Comment where you can on structure/form. (12 Marks)

A03- Show understanding of 19th century contextual information (6 Marks)

Themes

Greed & generosity/ Poverty & wealth/ Redemption/ Social responsibility/ Christmas/ Family/ Capitalism/ Class/ Guilt/ The supernatural/ Isolation/ Free will /Youth & age

Vocabulary

- Asyndetic/syndetic lists
- Allegory
- Ambiguity
- Antithesis
- Contrast
- Dickensian
- Gothic
- Grotesque
- Morality Tale
- Malthusian
- Metaphor
- Non-Chronological
- Omniscient
- Parable
- Pathetic fallacy
- Personification
- Poverty
- Philanthropist
- Protagonist
- Simile
- Symbolism
- Social Commentary
- Supernatural
- Virtuous
- Victorian

Stretch yourself

Be original/ be critical/ apply context not just mention it/ be sure to comment on linked themes

Context

Dickens' biography
* The second of 8 children
* 1824 - Father sent to prison for bad debt.
*Charles sent to work in a shoe blacking factory, a terrible time for him.
* He used his childhood experiences in his writing & his sympathy for children in poverty & their families is prevalent.
* Dickens travelled extensively in Europe & America & spoke out against the Slave Trade – he was a champion of what we would call 'human rights' & his works have a strong moral undertone.

Victorian London – Throughout most of Dickens' adult life the monarch was Queen Victoria. The Victorian Era was a time of change in many ways, driven by the changing economy in which there was less of a reliance on agriculture & a move into the Industrial Revolution (when goods changed from being made by hand to being made by machines in factories). Britain became a super power & the population, particularly in London, grew rapidly.

Malthus (a respected academic & economist) – Dickens shows his disgust with the Malthusian principle that population will always grow faster than food & should be controlled by diseases & starvation.

Class inequality – In general Victorian Society was divided into classes; upper, middle, working class. The upper class were the ruling class & were afforded luxuries & everything you need to succeed in life, namely a good education & access to health care.

Childhood - The result of the expansion of manufacturing processes & the need for coal was child labor. Children as young as for worked 12-14 hours per day, many dying of disease or being killed or maimed in accidents.

The 1834 poor Law Amendment Act & The Work House – Introduced to reduce the cost of looking after the poor. After this, if people in poverty wanted help they had to go to the workhouse to get it. The poor were terrified about the prospect of the workhouse as the conditions were appalling. Dickens describes them in 'Oliver Twist'

Ragged Schools – set up by well-meaning people for the poor in cities, offering free education. For many children this was the only education they received. The need for proper education was a priority for Dickens. After he visited one of these schools he wrote that the pupils were 'abandoned of all help; speeding downwards towards destruction'