A Christmas Carol

GCSE English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Analyse Dickens's first description of Scrooge (Stave 1).

Step 1 · List

'squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous': each word suggests holding on tightly to money.

Step 2 · Simile

'Hard and sharp': cold, unbreakable, unfeeling.

Step 3 · Second simile

'solitary oyster': closed up, isolated, yet with the hint of a pearl inside.

Step 4 · Effect

The reader dislikes Scrooge immediately, which makes his later change more powerful.

Answer: Dickens uses a violent list and cold similes to present Scrooge and isolated, while hinting he could be opened up.

Check: Method → connotation → effect on reader.

2. Now try one with the steps

Track Scrooge's change in four quotations.

Step 1 · Stave 1

Step 2 · Stave 2

Step 3 · Stave 3

Step 4 · Stave 5

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. In what year was A Christmas Carol published? Write the year. [1]

2. How many staves (chapters) does the novella have? Write the number. [1]

3. How many spirits does Marley say will visit Scrooge? Write the number. [1]

4. What is the name of Scrooge's clerk? [1]

5. Who is Fred? [1]

6. What does the simile 'solitary oyster' suggest about Scrooge? [2]

7. Explain the symbolism of Marley's chain. [2]

8. What context lies behind Scrooge's reference to 'the Union workhouses'? [2]

9. Why does Dickens include Fezziwig in Stave 2? [2]

10. Analyse the effect of Ignorance and Want. [3]

11. How does Dickens use Scrooge's own words against him in Stave 3? [2]

12. Write a thesis for: 'How does Dickens present the theme of responsibility?' [2]

13. Why might Dickens make the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come silent? [2]

14. Explain the effect of the triple simile 'as light feather … angel … schoolboy'. [3]

4. Before you hand it in

Writing about Scrooge real person who 'learns his lesson'.
'Dickens uses Scrooge's transformation to persuade readers that…'

Context paragraph about Dickens's childhood with no link.
Link specifically: the blacking factory experience may explain the sympathy shown to poor children such and Want.

Only writing about Stave 1 and Stave 5.
Use each Ghost of a stage in Scrooge's education.

Calling it a novel with chapters.
It is a novella divided into five staves.