



# A Christmas Carol

## Lesson 3: The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

### Lesson Plan and Resources

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### Clip Resources

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come shows Scrooge his possible future.

**Clip 1:**  
***A Christmas Carol (2018)***

Written by Simon Callow & Tom Cairns

[▶ Watch here](#) 

**Clip 2: *A Christmas Carol: a Ghost Story (2022)***

Written by Mark Gatiss

[▶ Watch here](#) 

### Skills and Objectives

#### GCSE Literature Assessment Objectives

AO1	Read, understand and respond to texts
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate
AO3	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written

#### GCSE Language Assessment Objectives

Reading AO2	Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views
Reading AO3	Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts
Writing AO5	Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences
Spoken Language AO8	Listen and respond appropriately to spoken language, including to questions and feedback to presentations

# Scene Setting

## Where we are in the novel and television adaptations:

Scrooge is shown his possible future through the lens of the terrifying Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. After witnessing the callous reaction to his own demise from a range of people (not that he yet knows they are talking specifically about him), he asks, 'Let me see some tenderness connected with a death'...' This where we pick up the story.



## Starting Points

### Pre-reading

Explore the image of the illustration from an early edition of A Christmas Carol (**Resource 3.1**).

Ask students to consider: What emotions or feelings do you feel as a 'reader' of this picture? e.g. sympathy. What emotions or feelings is Scrooge is experiencing in the picture? e.g. distress. Finally, what emotions or feelings are conveyed by the Ghost? e.g. solemnity; foreboding. These could be written up in different colours, corresponding to the different perspectives.

Before reading the extract, discuss students' first impression of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come based on the illustration? Does it look like a stereotypical ghost?

### Post-reading option

After reading the extract from Stave 4 of the novella (**Resource 3.2**) focus on the quote, 'Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they the shadows of the things that May be only?'

- Why might a person seek it?
- Who can offer redemption?
- When can redemption be most powerful?
- Does redemption last?

Define the word 'redemption' and use the following questions as prompts for discussing the extract:

### Revision

Explain to students that death was an important topic in Victorian life with rituals associated, such as wearing black, drawing curtains and stopping clocks. Some of these rituals are shown in the extract and clips, leading up to Tiny Tim's funeral, which is particularly poignant as he is a child. Some funerals today are based on Victorian ideas and traditions but our sensibilities have changed.

Play Clip 2, which visits the Cratchits after the death of Tiny Tim. Elicit how has this been adapted for a modern theatre audience with a strong family element.

# Main Activities

## Comparing Cratchits

Watch Clip 1 comparing it to the novella. Compare the structure of the two in a storyboard using **Resource 3.3**. Does the sentiment remain the same even though it is reversed? What does it omit?

## Creating drama

Watch Clip 1 and Clip 2. Which of the grave scenes is most dramatic? In groups of four, collate ideas in a T-chart, as below:

Clip 1 (Callow)	Clip 2 (Gatiss)
<i>The dark corridor</i>	<i>Fully-realised stage scene with the heavy gravestone</i>
<i>Direct address to the viewer – breaking the 4th wall</i>	<i>The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come revealed as Marley</i>
<i>The audience become the ghost</i>	<i>The dark pit</i>

Split the groups of four into twos. One pair will argue that the Gatiss adaptation is most dramatic and the other pair will support the Callow scene using the evidence collated. The groups could come to a final consensus or an overall class vote could be taken.

## Narrative voice

Some may argue that the omniscient narrator of the novella is intrusive, sharing their thoughts and opinions with the reader e.g. 'She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter -- he had need of it, poor fellow -- came in.'

How does the one-man adaptation in Clip 1 seek to represent the narrative voice as well as relaying the story and its characters? For example, the audience is advanced upon by the actor as if they are the ghost. Invite students to write up their idea using this writing frame.

*In the adaptation, the narrative voice is presented as..... For example..... The effect this has on the audience is..... However/Similarly, in the novella the narrator..... This is evident in '.....' The effect this has on the reader is...*

## Language

**Signs of faltering** – At the end of Stave 4, we read that 'For the first time the hand appeared to shake'. Its faltering hand suggests the stoic and silent Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is not so scary after all. Find other words from the novella that describe changes in the ghost (**Resource 3.2**).

Rewatch the two clips. In what ways does each adaptation reflect how the ghost changes? Use the **Resource 3.4** to track this softening of the ghost.

# Writing Outcomes

## Letter

Scrooge has received redemption but he must persuade Fred that he has undergone a positive change. Students should write in-role as Scrooge to Fred, persuading him how and why he has changed, what he has done to show this and what he will do in future.

Persuasive techniques that could be used are as follows:

- repetition e.g. I have changed, changed for the better!
- rhetorical questions e.g. How could I disappoint my dear sister?
- emotive language e.g. I am desperately sorry for my behaviour and beg your forgiveness.
- triplets e.g. I am kinder, more considerate and happier for it.

A class re-reading of Stave 5 of the novella would aid this task.

## Advert

Victorians took death very seriously and funerals were huge events, planned meticulously. Students should design an informative and persuasive advert for a funeral planning service. This could be in the style of a leaflet or poster promoting a company that handles death and funerals so as to avoid the issues Scrooge has encountered with the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.

## Turning Bob inside out

What more do we learn about Bob from his reactions to Tim's death and the way he tries to protect his family from grief? He says he is happy but grief seeps through in his expressions and, once alone, he breaks down.

Using **Resource 3.5**, students write what Bob is really feeling inside the body outline and how he is acting in front of his family on the outside. Students could use a mixture of quotes from the novella or adjectives inspired by the adaptations.

Once the preparation is complete, students complete an extended answer about Bob's shows of grief. Students may like to use the following sentence starters:

- To his family, Bob presents himself as...
- In contrast, Bob actually feels...
- On the outside, Bob seems...
- Conversely his true feelings are...



## Extensions

**Soundscapes** – watch the clips with just the audio. What does the sound add to the drama? e.g. Clip 2 has cawing crows and scraping of granite, whereas Clip 1 has eerie music. Which do students prefer and why?

Students could go on to research sound effects and music to accompany their own reading of the extract.

**Ghostly tales** – the Victorians loved a ghost story. This genre exploded in popularity as advances in science and technology occurred within the traditionally religious society of the mid-nineteenth century. Compare the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come to other Victorian ghosts in the ERA Literary archive:

<https://era.org.uk/lit-resource/the-woman-in-black-2012/>

<https://era.org.uk/lit-resource/henry-james-the-turn-of-the-screw-2004/>

**How to stage a ghost** – watch Clip 2, paying particularly attention to the Ghost. Students should imagine they are a theatre critic. What makes the Ghost scary? What is less successful about it?

Students could next imagine they are the director of their own stage adaptation. How would students stage the ghost to show the fear it instils in Scrooge but not over-scare the audience? How would it move? How would it be dressed? Would the ghost stay silent as it does in the novel or speak, for effect, at any point? Students could draw their Ghost and label it with their ideas.

## Glossary

### From the novella

**comforter** – a large thick scarf or blanket

**essence** – core qualities of something of someone

**inexorable** – unrelenting, impossible to stop

**repleted** – full up

**intercedes** – intervene on behalf of

**entreaty** – a humble request

# A Christmas Carol

## Resources for Lesson 3

### 3.1: Illustration from an Early Edition of *A Christmas Carol*

The Ghost of Christmas yet to come takes Scrooge to his own future grave. Explore the imagery of this illustration from an early edition of *A Christmas Carol*.



## 3.2 Stave 4: Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

Read how Dickens portrays this pivotal moment in the novella.

“Let me see some tenderness connected with a death,” said Scrooge; “or that dark chamber, Spirit, which we left just now, will be for ever present to me.”

The Ghost conducted him through several streets familiar to his feet; and as they went along, Scrooge looked here and there to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen. They entered poor Bob Cratchit’s house; the dwelling he had visited before; and found the mother and the children seated round the fire.

Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues in one corner, and sat looking up at Peter, who had a book before him. The mother and her daughters were engaged in sewing. But surely they were very quiet!

“‘And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them.’ ”

Where had Scrooge heard those words? He had not dreamed them. The boy must have read them out, as he and the Spirit crossed the threshold. Why did he not go on?

The mother laid her work upon the table, and put her hand up to her face.

“The colour hurts my eyes,” she said.

The colour? Ah, poor Tiny Tim!

“They’re better now again,” said Cratchit’s wife. “It makes them weak by candle-light; and I wouldn’t show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time.”

“Past it rather,” Peter answered, shutting up his book. “But I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother.”

They were very quiet again. At last she said, and in a steady, cheerful voice, that only faltered once:

“I have known him walk with—I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.”

“And so have I,” cried Peter. “Often.”

“And so have I,” exclaimed another. So had all.

“But he was very light to carry,” she resumed, intent upon her work, “and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble: no trouble. And there is your father at the door!”

She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter—he had need of it, poor fellow—came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid, each child a little cheek, against his face, as if they said, “Don’t mind it,



father. Don't be grieved!"

Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs. Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday, he said.

"Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?" said his wife.

"Yes, my dear," returned Bob. "I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child!" cried Bob. "My little child!"

He broke down all at once. He couldn't help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were.

He left the room, and went up-stairs into the room above, which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas. There was a chair set close beside the child, and there were signs of some one having been there, lately. Poor Bob sat down in it, and when he had thought a little and composed himself, he kissed the little face. He was reconciled to what had happened, and went down again quite happy.

They drew about the fire, and talked; the girls and mother working still. Bob told them of the extraordinary kindness of Mr. Scrooge's nephew, whom he had scarcely seen but once, and who, meeting him in the street that day, and seeing that he looked a little—"just a little down you know," said Bob, inquired what had happened to distress him. "On which," said Bob, "for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him. 'I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit,' he said, 'and heartily sorry for your good wife.' By the bye, how he ever knew that, I don't know."

"Knew what, my dear?"

"Why, that you were a good wife," replied Bob.

"Everybody knows that!" said Peter.

"Very well observed, my boy!" cried Bob. "I hope they do. 'Heartily sorry,' he said, 'for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,' he said, giving me his card, 'that's where I live. Pray come to me.' Now, it wasn't," cried Bob, "for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us."

"I'm sure he's a good soul!" said Mrs. Cratchit.

"You would be surer of it, my dear," returned Bob, "if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn't be at all surprised—mark what I say!—if he got Peter a better situation."

"Only hear that, Peter," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"And then," cried one of the girls, "Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself."

"Get along with you!" retorted Peter, grinning.

“It’s just as likely as not,” said Bob, “one of these days; though there’s plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim—shall we—or this first parting that there was among us?”

“Never, father!” cried they all.

“And I know,” said Bob, “I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.”

“No, never, father!” they all cried again.

“I am very happy,” said little Bob, “I am very happy!”

Mrs. Cratchit kissed him, his daughters kissed him, the two young Cratchits kissed him, and Peter and himself shook hands. Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God!

“Spectre,” said Scrooge, “something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?”

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come conveyed him, as before—though at a different time, he thought: indeed, there seemed no order in these latter visions, save that they were in the Future—into the resorts of business men, but showed him not himself. Indeed, the Spirit did not stay for anything, but went straight on, as to the end just now desired, until besought by Scrooge to tarry for a moment.

“This court,” said Scrooge, “through which we hurry now, is where my place of occupation is, and has been for a length of time. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come!”

The Spirit stopped; the hand was pointed elsewhere.

“The house is yonder,” Scrooge exclaimed. “Why do you point away?”

The inexorable finger underwent no change.

Scrooge hastened to the window of his office, and looked in. It was an office still, but not his. The furniture was not the same, and the figure in the chair was not himself. The Phantom pointed as before.

He joined it once again, and wondering why and whither he had gone, accompanied it until they reached an iron gate. He paused to look round before entering.

A churchyard. Here, then; the wretched man whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation’s death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place!

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape.

“Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point,” said Scrooge, “answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?”

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

“Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead,” said Scrooge. “But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!”

The Spirit was immovable as ever.

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE.

“Am I that man who lay upon the bed?” he cried, upon his knees.

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

“No, Spirit! Oh no, no!”

The finger still was there.

“Spirit!” he cried, tight clutching at its robe, “hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope!”

For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

“Good Spirit,” he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it: “Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!”

The kind hand trembled.

“I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!”

In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him.

Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom’s hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.

### 3.3 Storyboard Comparisons

Storyboard the events from Stave 4 the novella in the top part of the frame provided and the scenes from the stage adaptation in the bottom part of the frame.

Add a caption to each picture.

Use the storyboard to compare the order of events and the effects created.

The Cratchits after Tiny Tim's death

Novella			Stage adaptation		

### 3.4 Signs of Faltering

Use the table below to track the softening of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come at the end of Stave 4.

Novella quotation	Clip 1 (Callow)	Clip 2 (Gatis)
'The Spirit was immovable as ever.'		
'For the first time the hand appeared to shake'		
'The kind hand trembled.'		
'he saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress.'		

## 3.5 Turning Bob Inside Out

Make notes:

- inside the Bob outline to show his inner feelings
- outside the Bob outline to show how he deals with grief when he is with his family.

