

Chapter 3 - The Ghost of Christmas Past

Scrooge slept fitfully. When he awoke the clock was chiming the hour of one o'clock. A light flashed in the room and the curtains of his bed parted. Scrooge found himself face to face with an unearthly visitor. It had the face and body of a child, but long grey hair and muscular arms, and there was a jet of light shining out from the top of its head. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand and under its arm it held its hat - a giant candle snuffer.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past," said the Ghost in a soft and gentle voice.

"Long past?" enquired Scrooge.

"No. Your past," it answered. "Rise and walk with me!"

Gently, the Ghost took Scrooge by the arm and guided him through his bedroom wall and back through the years.

First, they came to a classroom where a lonely boy sat reading. Scrooge recognised his boy-self, left in school over the Christmas holiday by his unloving father.

"Poor boy!" said Scrooge, in pity for his former self. Scrooge brushed aside a tear.

Next, Scrooge saw a later Christmas. His kind sister, Fan - who was now dead - had come to take him home. Remembering Fan, Scrooge realised that it was only today that he had refused her son's welcoming invitation to share Christmas dinner with his family,

"Fan was always a delicate creature," said the Ghost. "But she had a large heart!"

"So she had," cried Scrooge, beginning to feel mean.

Next, the Ghost took them to a merry Christmas party at the first office Scrooge had worked in. A fire blazed, candles shone and there was food, a fiddler, wine and laughter. Scrooge watched his young self and his companions making merry. He thought of his own clerk, poor, cold Bob Cratchit. Scrooge saw that he had the power to make Bob happy or unhappy.

"I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now!" said Scrooge.

"My time grows short," observed the Ghost. "Quick!"

The scene changed and again Scrooge saw himself. He was older, a man in the prime of life. His face didn't have the hard, rigid lines it bore now, but it had begun to show the signs of greed. He was not alone, and sitting beside the younger Ebenezer Scrooge was the woman he had hoped to marry. She had watched Ebenezer's love for her fade, as his passion for money grew. Sadly she had broken their engagement.

"Spirit!" said Scrooge. "Show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?"

Scrooge couldn't bear it any longer. He seized the Ghost's hat, snuffed out its light, fell into bed and slept.

A Christmas Carol - Chapter 3

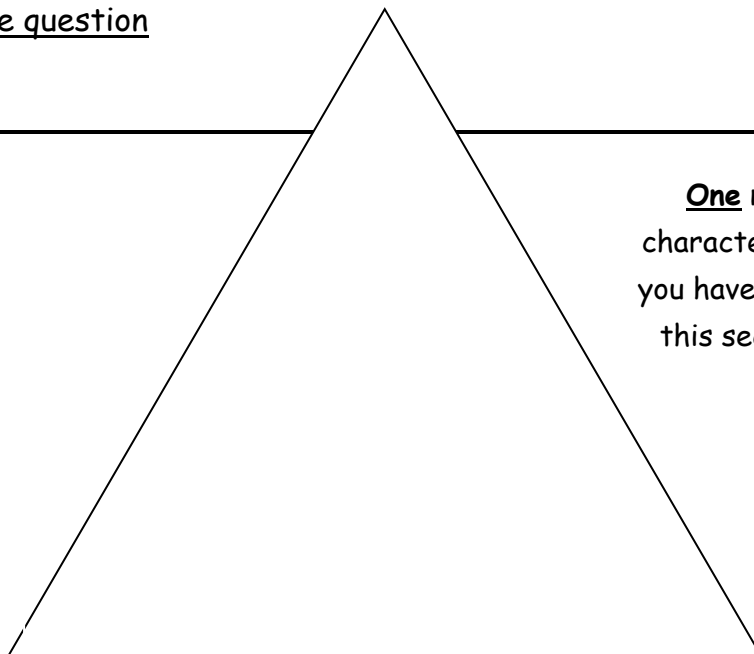
LC: Can I apply comprehension strategies?

I can find the right section of text to help me answer the question.

1. What time did the first ghost come and visit him?
2. Was Scrooge scared by the ghost of Jacob Marley? Prove your answer with evidence from the text.
3. Find and copy three words or phrases that describe the ghost of Christmas past.
4. Which of the three words you have chosen do you think gives the most effective description and why?
5. Where did the spirit take Scrooge?
6. Why is the ghost in a hurry?
7. How do you think Scrooge is feeling at this point in the story?
8. Challenge question

One new character that you have met in this section.

Two reasons why you think the ghost has shown him his childhood.



A Christmas Carol - Chapter 3 (G+)

LC: Can I apply comprehension strategies?

I can support my ideas with evidence from the text.

1. What time did the first ghost come and visit him?
2. Was Scrooge scared by the ghost of Jacob Marley? Prove your answer with evidence from the text.
3. Which of the words that the author has chosen to describe the ghost do you think has the strongest effect on the reader and why?
4. Where did the spirit take Scrooge?
5. Why is the ghost in a hurry?
6. Give two reasons why you think the ghost has shown him his childhood, with evidence from the text.
7. What do you think will happen next? Justify your prediction with evidence from the text.

Challenge question

For each of the following characters, explain how they may be feeling at this point in the story. Use evidence from the text to support your ideas.

- a) Scrooge
- b) The Ghost