

## Approved for use in all levels of English I instruction

### Summary of the Work:

Miserly old Scrooge receives a visit, on Christmas Eve, from the ghost of Marley, his late business partner. Marley shows him visions of Christmas past, Christmas present—including Scrooge’s responsibility for a great deal of unhappiness—and Christmas future. The future holds his own death and Marley shows him what that will be like for him. On Christmas Day, Scrooge is a changed man. For the first time he is kind to his ill-paid and much-bullied clerk, Bob Cratchit, and generally behaves like the kind old fellow people are happy to meet.

### Rationale:

*A Christmas Carol* is a representative work from the Victorian time period in the development of English Literature. Its emphasis on the plight of the working poor and the effects of greed upon them captures the tenor of the times. Therefore, it is a short—five-chapter—and accessible example of the times and the fiction of the novelist critics have called the most popular of all English novelists, Charles Dickens.

### Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

-Benet, William Rose., Ed. *The Reader’s Encyclopedia*, 196.  
-“Charles Dickens.” *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*. Vol. 23. Gale Research, 1998. Reproduced in Biography Resource Center. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Thomson Gale. 2008.  
<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/BioRC>  
-Seymour-Smith. Ed. *Novels and Novelists*, 126.  
-Stapleton, Michael. Ed. *The Cambridge Guide to English Literature*, 165.

- \* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.
- \* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

### Noted Distinction:

- Dickens wrote before the Pulitzer and the Nobel Prizes and other writing awards were established. However, numerous TV, film, cartoon, radio, and stage versions have been and continue to be produced throughout the world. The popularity and the staying power of this timeless classic serve as concrete “awards” for this beloved novella.

### Readability:

- Lexile Score:
- Readability Level: 8.6

### Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

### Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

### Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: 2001

### Notes on the Text:

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

Dickens’ novella is a good sampling of the major themes of his works, including his overriding concern for the poor and the destitute of the day. Scrooge, the main character, is emblematic of those who cannot “see” the plight of others. During his adventures with his nocturnal visitors, his eyes are opened and he begins to “see” who he was, who he is, and who he might become; in the end, he “sees” the plight of the poor for the first time and resolves to come to their aid.

### Connection to the Curriculum:

*A Christmas Carol*, a novella by English novelist Charles Dickens, is appropriate for the senior English curriculum, which emphasizes examples of famous literature from around the globe. This piece from the Victorian Period of English Literature accurately portrays a slice of English life from that time period and is a good representative work of that era.

### Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*

Most students know at least one of the many film versions of the tale, but have never read the story itself. The rich characterization, symbolism, narrative description and key plot elements are missing from many of those versions. Thus, the close reading of the original text brings innumerable rewards to the students as they encounter Dickens’ language and universal themes for the first time. The viewing of the one film that critics say *does* do justice to the intent of the original work—the 1951 British production starring Alastair Sim—provides students with effective comparison/contrast opportunities.