Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol: Plot, Characters, and Victorian Context

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Charles Dickens structures 'A Christmas Carol' into five distinct chapters termed 'Staves', mirroring the musical structure of a festive song. Each Stave marks a defined phase in Ebenezer Scrooge's moral transformation across Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Which supernatural visitor visits Ebenezer Scrooge in Stave Two of the novella?

A) The ghost of Jacob Marley
B) The Ghost of Christmas Present
C) The Ghost of Christmas Past
D) The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

2. In Stave Three of 'A Christmas Carol', the Ghost of Christmas Present reveals two wretched children sheltered beneath its robes, introducing them to Scrooge:

'This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom...'

How does Dickens use the allegorical figure of the boy, Ignorance, to convey his message about Victorian society?

A) To criticise individual poor children for refusing schooling and employment
B) To argue that lack of education is caused solely by criminal tendencies in the working class
C) To warn that society's failure to educate the poor will lead to inevitable catastrophe
D) To demonstrate that material deprivation is a greater social threat than a lack of learning

3. In Stave One of 'A Christmas Carol', Scrooge responds to the gentlemen collecting for the destitute by asking: 'Are there no prisons?' and 'And the Union workhouses? ... Are they still in operation?' Dickens uses Scrooge's reliance on these harsh institutions to critique contemporary Victorian social policy.

Which piece of legislation established the system of Union workhouses that Scrooge cites as adequate provision for the poor?

A) The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834
B) The Factory Act 1833
C) The Mines Act 1842
D) The Ten Hours Act 1847

4. The table below shows two contrasting employers depicted in Ebenezer Scrooge's past and present:

Employer	Workplace Atmosphere	Attitude Toward Employees
Fezziwig	Joyous, hospitable, warm	Generous and benevolent
Ebenezer Scrooge	Cold, cheerless, restrictive	Miserly and oppressive

According to the table, which core theme is developed by contrasting Fezziwig with Ebenezer Scrooge?

A) The economic necessity of strict workplace discipline in commerce
B) The inevitable loss of business profits resulting from workplace generosity
C) The social responsibility of employers to support their workers' well-being
D) The historical transition from traditional apprenticeships to industrial factories

5. Jacob Marley's ghost visits Scrooge bound by a ponderous chain made of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy steel purses. Marley laments that he forged this burden during his earthly existence and must now wander without rest.

What does the physical chain worn by Marley's ghost symbolise?

A) The legal penalties imposed on fraudulent Victorian business partnerships

B) The inevitable moral corruption experienced by every professional merchant

C) The unavoidable physical suffering caused by standard Victorian working conditions

D) The burden of selfish obsession with money and financial neglect of others

6. In Stave Five of 'A Christmas Carol', Scrooge wakes on Christmas Day resolved to alter his ways. On the morning after Christmas, Bob Cratchit arrives late to the counting-house, where Scrooge sits waiting for him.

How does Scrooge demonstrate his transformation to Bob Cratchit on the morning after Christmas?

A) He gives Cratchit full ownership of the counting-house property in the city

B) He offers Cratchit an immediate full partnership in the commercial firm

C) He grants Cratchit several weeks of paid winter holiday to care for Tiny Tim

D) He raises Cratchit's salary and promises to assist his struggling family

7. In Stave One of Charles Dickens's 'A Christmas Carol', Scrooge's nephew Fred visits the counting-house to wish his uncle a merry Christmas and invite him to dinner. During their argument, Scrooge challenges Fred's decisions regarding family and marriage.

How does Scrooge react to Fred's explanation that he got married because he fell in love?

A) He regards falling in love as the only thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas.

B) He warns Fred that raising a family will lead directly to debt and reliance on the Poor Law.

C) He accuses Fred of marrying purely to spite his family and gain social status in the city.

D) He criticises Fred for choosing marriage instead of establishing a profitable business partnership.

8. Charles Dickens published 'A Christmas Carol' in December 1843 after reading parliamentary reports detailing child labour in mines and factories. He aimed to deliver a powerful sledgehammer blow on behalf of the poor through an accessible popular novella.

What was Dickens's primary social purpose in publishing 'A Christmas Carol' in 1843?

A) To show that poverty is an inevitable individual failing that cannot be remedied by social reform

B) To encourage wealthy Victorians to accept personal moral responsibility for the welfare of the poor

C) To argue that private charitable giving should be abolished in favour of strict state-run assistance

D) To persuade the government to expand the reach of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act and union workhouses

9. In Stave Two, the Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge his past parting with Belle, where she releases him from their contract because his nature has altered.

When the Ghost of Christmas Past forces Scrooge to observe this scene, what does Belle state has displaced her in his affections?

A) A relentless ambition for civic and political power

B) A golden idol representing the pursuit of wealth

C) A growing terror of public poverty and disgrace

D) A cold pride in intellectual and moral superiority

10. In Stave Four of 'A Christmas Carol', Dickens introduces the final spirit to visit Scrooge. Unlike the previous visitors, this phantom communicates without words and elicits immediate dread.

Which visual features distinguish the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come from the other spirits in 'A Christmas Carol'?

A) It is dressed in pure white with a clear jet of light springing from the crown of its head.

B) It wears a simple green robe bordered with white fur and carries an antique scabbard without a sword.

C) It is shrouded in a deep black garment that conceals its head and body, leaving only an outstretched hand visible.

D) It is wound about with a long chain made of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, and heavy purses.

11. In Stave One, when two gentlemen collect money for the poor, Scrooge refuses to donate and asks if the prisons and workhouses are still in operation. When told that many would rather die than go there, Scrooge replies: 'If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.'

Which contemporary economic theory does Dickens satirise through Scrooge's reference to the 'surplus population'?

A) Malthusian population theory, which argued that population growth inevitably outstrips food supplies and the poor should not receive relief

B) Marxian class struggle theory, which argued that the industrial working class must overthrow wealthy factory owners

C) Smithian free-market theory, which argued that an 'invisible hand' naturally distributes wealth fairly across all social classes

D) Owenite cooperative theory, which argued that industrialists should fund education and model villages for destitute workers

12. In Stave Four of 'A Christmas Carol', the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come shows Scrooge scenes of businessmen callously discussing a wealthy man's death, vagrants pawning stolen items, and a young couple celebrating their debt relief. The reader understands throughout that these scenes concern Scrooge, but Scrooge fails to recognise himself.

How does Dickens primarily create dramatic irony through Scrooge's reactions in Stave Four?

A) Scrooge deliberately pretends not to recognise his own possessions at the rag-and-bone shop to avoid accepting his fate.

B) Scrooge assumes the scenes show a generic moral lesson rather than his own death, while the reader recognises that he is the deceased man.

C) Scrooge falsely believes that the spirit has shown him the death of Marley, while the reader knows Marley died seven years earlier.

D) Scrooge assumes that the dead man's identity has been concealed from everyone, whereas the reader knows the spirit has spoken his name aloud.

True/False Questions

13. Read the following thematic statement about Dickens's 'A Christmas Carol':

'In 'A Christmas Carol', Dickens presents Scrooge's transformation as being driven primarily by his fear of eternal torment, showing that moral change requires the threat of punishment rather than genuine empathy.'

Is this statement true or false?

☐ True ☐ False

14. In Stave Five of 'A Christmas Carol', Tiny Tim dies because Scrooge does not provide financial support to the Cratchit family.

☐ True ☐ False

15. In Stave Two of 'A Christmas Carol', Scrooge's sister Fan visits his boarding school to bring him home because their father has treated him more kindly.

☐ True ☐ False

16. Charles Dickens published 'A Christmas Carol' during the Georgian era in the late eighteenth century.

☐ True ☐ False

Fill in the Blank Questions

17. To align the structural design of 'A Christmas Carol' with its musical title, Dickens titles each of the five chapter divisions a _____.

18. In Stave One of Charles Dickens's 'A Christmas Carol', the ghost bound in heavy chains of cash-boxes, keys, and padlocks who visits Ebenezer Scrooge to warn him of impending torment is _____ Marley.

19. In Stave Three of 'A Christmas Carol', the Ghost of Christmas Present reveals two wretched children hidden beneath its robes who personify the plight of the poor: a boy named _____ and a girl named Want.

20. In Stave One of Charles Dickens's 'A Christmas Carol', when two gentlemen visit seeking a charitable donation for the destitute, Scrooge demands to know whether the prisons, the union workhouses, and the _____ remain in full vigour.

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★ Answer Key ★

Multiple Choice Questions

1 **C**
The Ghost of Christmas Past

2 **C**
Warn that failing to educate the poor leads to catastrophe

3 **A**
Poor Law Amendment Act 1834

4 **C**
Employers' social responsibility to workers

5 **D**
Selfish obsession with money and neglect of others

6 **D**
Raises Cratchit's salary and helps his family

7 **A**
More ridiculous than a merry Christmas

8 **B**
Wealthy Victorians taking responsibility for the poor

9 **B**
A golden idol (pursuit of wealth)

10 **C**
Deep black garment, one outstretched hand

11 **A**
Malthusian population theory

12 **B**
Scrooge does not realise he is the dead man

True/False Questions

13 **False**

14 **False**

15 **True**

16 **False**

Fill in the Blank Questions

17 **stave**

18 **Jacob**

19 **Ignorance**

20 **Treadmill**