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A Christmas Carol
BY CHARLES DICKENS



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All references come from the *Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Press* edition of *A Christmas Carol*, copyright 2004.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Vocabulary Word Search****Objective:** Defining vocabulary words and completing a word search**Activity**

A clear understanding of the words and terms below will help you when we begin reading *A Christmas Carol*. Locate each term in a dictionary or other reference source and record a concise definition here. Then, find each word in the puzzle below and circle it to complete this worksheet. Look closely! Words in the puzzle may appear backwards, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally.

stave – _____
_____executor (legal term) – _____
_____legatee – _____
_____bestow – _____
_____humbug – _____
_____homage – _____
_____misanthrope – _____
_____apparition – _____
_____livery – _____
_____infernal – _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Stave I

Characterization

Objective: Deciding which character traits best define a character

Activity

Decide with your group which five of the below character traits best describe Scrooge's character. Make an "x" by your selections. After choosing, jot down the reasoning behind your choices at the bottom of this page, referring to specific events from the text as necessary. Be prepared to share and defend your choices with the rest of the class.

- | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| ___ evil | ___ humorless | ___ faithless | ___ petty |
| ___ brave | ___ observant | ___ cowardly | ___ honest |
| ___ rational | ___ immature | ___ hot-headed | ___ lonely |
| ___ self-aware | ___ cynical | ___ persistent | ___ shy |
| ___ no-nonsense | ___ tough | ___ conflicted | ___ sensitive |
| ___ smart | ___ loyal | ___ a "leader" | ___ tactless |
| ___ daring | ___ careful | ___ perceptive | ___ cold |
| ___ sympathetic | ___ businesslike | ___ unemotional | ___ hard-working |
| ___ hard-hearted | ___ a "follower" | | |

Name: _____

Date: _____

Stave II

Style

Objective: Understanding the elements of style

Activity

A number of different elements come together to make up a writer's style. They include (but are not necessarily limited to) diction, sentence length, sentence type, and the absence or presence of various literary devices. Carefully read the following excerpts and complete the Style Comparison Chart below.

From *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, by Frederick Douglass:

I was seldom whipped by my old master, and suffered little from any thing else than hunger and cold. I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold. In hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked--no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees. I had no bed. I must have perished with cold, but that, the coldest nights, I used to steal a bag which was used for carrying corn to the mill. I would crawl into this bag, and there sleep on the cold, damp, clay floor, with my head in and feet out. My feet have been so cracked with the frost that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes. We were not regularly allowed food. Our food was coarse corn meal boiled. This was called mush. It was put into a large wooden tray or trough, and set down upon the ground. The children were then called, like so many pigs, and like so many pigs they would come and devour the mush; some with oyster-shells, others with pieces of shingle, some with naked hands, and none with spoons. He that ate fastest got most; he that was strongest secured the best place; and few left the trough satisfied.

From *Walden*, by Henry David Thoreau:

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. I sat at a table where were rich food and wine in abundance, and obsequious attendance, but sincerity and truth were not; and I went away hungry from the inhospitable board. The hospitality was as cold as the ices. I thought that there was no need of ice to freeze them. They talked to me of the age of the wine and the fame of the vintage; but I thought of an older, a newer, and purer wine, of a more glorious vintage, which they had not got, and could not buy. The style, the house and grounds and "entertainment" pass for nothing with me. I called on the king, but he made me wait in his hall, and conducted like a man incapacitated for hospitality. There was a man in my neighborhood who lived in a hollow tree. His manners were truly regal. I should have done better had I called on him.

From *Swann's Way*, by Marcel Proust:

It was not only the brilliant phalanx of virtuous dowagers, generals and academicians, to whom he was bound by such close ties, that Swann compelled with so much cynicism to serve him as panders. All his friends were accustomed to receive, from time to time, letters which called on them for a word of recommendation or introduction, with a diplomatic adroitness which, persisting throughout all his successive 'affairs' and using different pretexts, revealed more glaringly than the clumsiest indiscretion, a permanent trait in his character and an unvarying quest. I used often to recall to myself when, many years later, I began to take an interest in his character because of the similarities which, in wholly different respects, it offered to my own, how, when he used to write to my grandfather (though not at the time we are now considering, for it was about the date of my own birth that Swann's great 'affair' began, and made a long interruption in his amatory practices) the latter, recognising his friend's handwriting on the envelope, would exclaim: "Here is Swann asking for something; on guard!"

Name: _____

Date: _____

Stave V

Dramatic Sketches

Objective: Composing and performing skits related to the novel

Activity

Each small group will be assigned one of the following skit options. Once you know which option you have been assigned, work together to come up with a script for a 7-10 minute skit. You will be performing your skit for the entire class. Scripts do not need to be memorized for the performance; however, each group is required to turn in a copy of its script after the performance.

Props are optional, and, if used, they need not be lavish. Remember: The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come does not speak in *A Christmas Carol*; this ghost's contribution to your skit's "dialogue" will therefore have to be a bit more creative, as he "speaks" with gestures. **IMPORTANT: Skits may include humor, but must not contain any instances of violence or profanity.**

Scenario One: Write a skit that takes place on a talk show, starring a talk-show host of your choice, the three ghosts, and Scrooge as guests. Have the host question the ghosts as to their methods of convincing Scrooge to change his ways, in addition to questioning Scrooge about his transformation.

Scenario Two: Write an infomercial (extended commercial). The *Christmas Carol* ghosts have decided to market their services to those who have a "Scrooge" in their lives, and guarantee that their methods will transform every Scrooge into a saint. Include testimonials (perhaps from Scrooge's employees and family) and dramatizations of the ghosts' methods at work. Don't forget to give the ghosts' new business a catchy name!

Scenario Three: Write a skit that takes place roughly ten years after the day Scrooge gives Cratchit a raise. It may involve the ghosts, Cratchit, Scrooge, Tiny Tim, or any other of the novel's characters. It might be funny; it might be sad; it might take place on another holiday: you decide!

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Christmas Carol

Objective: Writing and performing a carol about *A Christmas Carol*

Activity

Regardless of one's religion, it is almost impossible to grow up in America today without being exposed to Christmas carols. Grocery stores and malls start playing them in late October and go on through December; you might also hear them on television shows and commercials or in films.

In small groups, write new lyrics to the tunes of old carols. Each group will perform its "new carol" for the class. Your carols **must** deal specifically with an incident from the text of *A Christmas Carol* (or with the book as a whole). In addition, your carols must have at least **three** verses and a chorus (or repeated refrain) that you return to between verses.

It is up to your group to decide which old carol you will take your melody from. Some popular tunes that might lend themselves well to your task include "Jingle Bells," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "Frosty the Snowman," "The Twelve Days of Christmas," and "Winter Wonderland," but feel free to choose any carol your group agrees on—preferably one all are familiar with before you begin the assignment.

Remember: like pop and rap lyrics, most carol lyrics rhyme. Keep this in mind as you work together to compose your lyrics. Don't forget to give your carol a title!

Feel free to use light props or musical instruments (jingle bells, for example) when performing as a group in front of the class, but it is essential that your audience be able to hear your lyrics clearly, so keep it simple. After the performance, each group must turn in one **typed** copy of your carol's lyrics to be graded.