A CHRISTMAS CAROL · YEAR 10 · LESSON 3

Stave 1: Meeting Scrooge

“Hard and sharp as flint”: how Dickens introduces his protagonist

- Analyse the language Dickens uses for Scrooge
- Explain the effect of the intrusive narrator
- Write an analytical paragraph on character

AO1 · AO2 · AO3

STARTER · 5 MINUTES · RETRIEVAL

Quick-fire recall

1. Which year was the novella published?
2. What is allegory?
3. Who was Malthus?
4. What happened to Dickens’s father in 1824?
5. Which AO is language, form and structure?

Type each answer in the chat on “send”, or write them in your book. Score out of 5.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

Did you get them?

1. Which year was the novella published? **1843**
2. What is allegory? **A story with a hidden moral meaning**
3. Who was Malthus? **Economist who argued population outgrows food**
4. What happened to Dickens’s father in 1824? **Imprisoned for debt**
5. Which AO is language, form and structure? **AO2**

Tally your score. Anything missed becomes a revision target.

THE BIG QUESTION

How does Dickens present Scrooge at the start of the novella?

Aim

Analyse the language Dickens uses for Scrooge

Aim

Explain the effect of the intrusive narrator

Aim

Write an analytical paragraph on character

Success: I can support a clear argument with short quotations, analyse word choices and link to context.

CRAFT

How the narrator shapes our view

Third person

The narrator is **intrusive**: he judges Scrooge openly and mocks him.

The name

“Scrooge” may blend *screw* and *gouge*. The name has become a **metonym** for meanness.

Techniques to look for

Listing and **asyndeton**; similes; **pathetic fallacy**; personification.

AO3

Scrooge can be read as a **symbol** of Victorian capitalism and the Poor Law.

EXTRACT · STAVE 1 · PART 1 OF 5

Scrooge’s opening description

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn’t thaw it one degree at Christmas.

EXTRACT · STAVE 1 · PART 2 OF 5

Scrooge’s opening description

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn’t know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often “came down” handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, “My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?” No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o’clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men’s dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, “No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!”

EXTRACT · STAVE 1 · PART 3 OF 5

Scrooge’s opening description

But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call “nuts” to Scrooge.

EXTRACT · STAVE 1 · PART 4 OF 5

Scrooge’s opening description

Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already—it had not been light all day—and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

EXTRACT · STAVE 1 · PART 5 OF 5

Scrooge’s opening description

The door of Scrooge’s counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk’s fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn’t replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part.

TASK 1 · ANNOTATE

Read again and annotate

1. Highlight the **list** of adjectives. What does the asyndeton suggest?
2. Annotate the two similes: “**hard and sharp as flint**” and “**solitary as an oyster**”.
3. Find the **cold imagery**. What does it suggest about his nature?
4. How do the **animals and weather** react to Scrooge?
5. Find one sign that Scrooge **chooses** this isolation.

Post your best quotation and one word of analysis in the chat.

TASK 2 · ZOOM IN

Key quotation

> “a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!”
>
> Stave 1

1. **Structure:** why a long list with no “and”?
2. **Words:** compare “grasping” and “clutching”. What picture forms?
3. **Narrator:** how does the exclamation mark guide our reaction?
4. **Context:** what Victorian attitude might Dickens be attacking?

TASK 3 · MODEL

Model: character paragraph

Point	Dickens presents Scrooge as a man consumed by greed from the outset.
Evidence	He is “a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner”.
Analysis	The long asyndetic list leaves no room for any redeeming quality, while verbs like “grasping” and “clutching” suggest he holds on desperately to money. The harsh consonants also make his greed sound unpleasant.
Reader / writer	The reader is encouraged to dislike him, so his later change feels more dramatic.
Context	He can be read as a symbol of uncharitable Victorian capitalism.

TASK 4 · WRITE (12 MINUTES)

Write: Scrooge in Stave 1

Write **one paragraph** using a **different** quotation from the extract, such as the “flint”, “oyster” or “cold” imagery.

Check yourself, then paste your paragraph into the chat

- Point answers “how does Dickens present Scrooge?”
- Quotation is short and exact
- Single-word analysis (a verb, adjective or noun)
- Effect on the reader
- One context comment

TASK 5 · WHOLE NOVEL · ONE LINKING SENTENCE FOR EACH

Link it to the rest of the novella

“Bah!” said Scrooge, “Humbug!”
Stave 1 · his rejection of Christmas

“Are there no prisons?”
Stave 1 · his attitude to the poor

“merry as a schoolboy”
Stave 5 · the opposite of “hard and sharp as flint”

“It was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well”
Stave 5 · his transformation is complete

EXIT TICKET

3-2-1

1. **3** words Dickens uses to describe Scrooge
2. **2** techniques you could write about
3. **1** reason the narrator mocks him

Type your 3-2-1 in the chat.