A CHRISTMAS CAROL · YEAR 10 · LESSON 5

Stave 1: Marley’s Ghost

“I wear the chain I forged in life”: fear, setting and redemption

- Analyse how Dickens builds tension before Marley appears
- Explain what the chain symbolises
- Link Marley’s warning to redemption

AO1 · AO2 · AO3

STARTER · 5 MINUTES · RETRIEVAL

Quick-fire recall

1. What does Scrooge call Christmas?
2. Which law is linked to workhouses?
3. Which thinker argued about “surplus” population?
4. What does “allegory” mean?
5. What is Scrooge’s reaction to the charity gentlemen?

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. What does Scrooge call Christmas? **Humbug**
2. Which law is linked to workhouses? **The Poor Law (1834)**
3. Which thinker argued about “surplus” population? **Malthus**
4. What does “allegory” mean? **A story with a moral meaning**
5. What is Scrooge’s reaction to the charity gentlemen? **He refuses to give anything**

Tally your score. Anything missed becomes a revision target.

THE BIG QUESTION

How does Dickens use Marley’s ghost to introduce the theme of redemption?

Aim

Analyse how Dickens builds tension before Marley appears

Aim

Explain what the chain symbolises

Aim

Link Marley’s warning to redemption

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

CRAFT

Gothic tension and symbolism

Setting

Gloomy rooms, darkness and fog mirror Scrooge’s **inner coldness**.

Gothic

Ghost stories were popular in Victorian Britain. Dickens uses suspense and sensory detail.

Symbolism

The chain of “cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds” is the weight of greed.

Redemption

Being saved from sin or error. Marley’s warning gives Scrooge “a chance and hope”.

EXTRACT · STAVE 1 · PART 1 OF 4

Before Marley arrives

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers and spent the rest of the evening with his banker’s book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a building up a yard. The building was old enough now, and dreary enough; for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices.

Now it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door of this house, except that it was very large; also, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also, that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the city of London. And yet Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker not a knocker, but Marley’s face.

EXTRACT · STAVE 1 · PART 2 OF 4

Before Marley arrives

Marley’s face, with a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but it looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look - with ghostly spectacles turned up upon its ghostly forehead. As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again. He said, “Pooh, pooh!” and closed the door with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine-merchant’s cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stairs. Slowly too, trimming his candle as he went.

EXTRACT · STAVE 1 · PART 3 OF 4

Before Marley arrives

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for its being very dark. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that. Sitting-room, bedroom, lumber-room, all as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little saucepan of gruel upon the hob. Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressing-gown, which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall. Lumber-room as usual. Old fireguard, old shoes, two fish-baskets, washing-stand on three legs, and a poker.

Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his cravat, put on his dressing-gown and slippers and his nightcap, and sat down before the very low fire to take his gruel.

EXTRACT · STAVE 1 · PART 4 OF 4

Before Marley arrives

As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room, and communicated, for some purpose now forgotten, with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that, as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. Soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

This was succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below, as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant’s cellar.

Then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

TASK 1 · ANNOTATE

Read again and annotate

1. Find **two quotations** that show the setting reflecting Scrooge.
2. Why does he check “nobody under the bed”? What does it suggest?
3. Highlight **language that builds tension** as the sounds approach.
4. Underline the simile for Marley’s face. Why “a bad lobster in a dark cellar”?
5. Find a sign that Scrooge **needs** redemption.

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

TASK 2 · ZOOM IN

Key quotation

> “I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will.”
>
> Stave 1 · Marley

1. **Symbol:** what does the chain stand for?
2. **Structure:** how does repetition (“link by link, and yard by yard”) help?
3. **Message:** what does “of my own free will” tell the reader about choice?
4. **Link:** how does this make Scrooge’s fate avoidable?

TASK 3 · MODEL

Model: Marley and redemption

Point	Marley’s ghost shows that redemption depends on choice.
Evidence	He says, “I wear the chain I forged in life”.
Analysis	The metaphor of the chain turns greed into a physical burden, and “forged” implies deliberate effort, so Marley’s suffering is the result of his own decisions.
Reader / writer	This warns Scrooge, and the reader, that change is possible while they are still alive.
Link	Marley’s warning of “a chance and hope” starts Scrooge’s journey.

TASK 4 · WRITE (12 MINUTES)

Write: how Dickens creates fear

Write **one paragraph**: How does Dickens create fear and unease before Marley arrives? Use **two** quotations from the extract.

Check yourself, then paste your paragraph into the chat

- Point about building tension
- Two short quotations
- Analysis of one word (e.g. “dismal”, “clanking”)
- Effect on the reader
- Link to Scrooge’s character

TASK 5 · WHOLE NOVEL · ONE LINKING SENTENCE FOR EACH

Link it to the rest of the novella

“Mankind was my business.”
Stave 1 · Marley’s regret

“a chance and hope of escaping my fate”
Stave 1 · Marley’s offer

“I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.”
Stave 4 · Scrooge accepts the lessons

“I am not the man I was.”
Stave 4 · the transformation begins

EXIT TICKET

3-2-1

1. **3** details that build fear in the extract
2. **2** things the chain could symbolise
3. **1** reason Marley appears first

Type your 3-2-1 in the chat.