A CHRISTMAS CAROL · YEAR 10 · LESSON 11

Stave 3: The Cratchit family

Poverty, family and Tiny Tim

- Analyse how Dickens presents the Cratchits
- Explain how Tiny Tim creates sympathy
- Link the family to social responsibility

AO1 · AO2 · AO3

STARTER · 5 MINUTES · RETRIEVAL

Quick-fire recall

1. What is the Ghost of Christmas Present sat on?
2. What does the rusty scabbard suggest?
3. Who is Bob Cratchit’s employer?
4. What does the spirit say about “the surplus population”?
5. What is Tiny Tim’s illness shown by?

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 is the Ghost of Christmas Present sat on? **A throne of food**
2. What does the rusty scabbard suggest? **Peace**
3. Who is Bob Cratchit’s employer? **Scrooge**
4. What does the spirit say about “the surplus population”? **Repeats Scrooge’s own words**
5. What is Tiny Tim’s illness shown by? **A crutch and an iron frame**

Tally your score. Anything missed becomes a revision target.

THE BIG QUESTION

How does Dickens use the Cratchit family to show the struggles of the poor?

Aim

Analyse how Dickens presents the Cratchits

Aim

Explain how Tiny Tim creates sympathy

Aim

Link the family to social responsibility

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

CONTEXT

Poverty with dignity

Bob’s wage

Only “fifteen ‘Bob’ a-week”. The family is crowded and cannot afford much.

Their Christmas

A small goose and a modest pudding are treated as a feast. Joy comes from love.

Tiny Tim

Disabled and ill. Medical care was hard to afford in Victorian Britain.

Message

The poor deserve help, not blame. Dickens shows them as **good**, to win sympathy.

EXTRACT · STAVE 3 · PART 1 OF 2

The Cratchit family: key quotations

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course—and in truth it was something very like it in that house.

Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves

Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

“Mr. Scrooge!” said Bob; “I’ll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!”

EXTRACT · STAVE 3 · PART 2 OF 2

The Cratchit family: key quotations

They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker’s. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time.

EXTRACT · STAVE 3 · PART 1 OF 3

Tiny Tim

…in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

“Why, where’s our Martha?” cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

“Not coming,” said Mrs. Cratchit.

“Not coming!” said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim’s blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. “Not coming upon Christmas Day!”

Martha didn’t like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

EXTRACT · STAVE 3 · PART 2 OF 3

Tiny Tim

“And how did little Tim behave?” asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart’s content.

“As good as gold,” said Bob, “and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.”

Bob’s voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire.

[…]

“God bless us every one!” said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

EXTRACT · STAVE 3 · PART 3 OF 3

Tiny Tim

He sat very close to his father’s side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

“Spirit,” said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, “tell me if Tiny Tim will live.”

“I see a vacant seat,” replied the Ghost, “in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.”

“No, no,” said Scrooge. “Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared.”

“If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race,” returned the Ghost, “will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.”

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.

TASK 1 · ANNOTATE

Read again and annotate

1. Highlight the **verbs** that show the family working together.
2. What does the exaggerated “**feathered phenomenon**” suggest about their goose?
3. Underline the words that describe their **poverty**. Which are most powerful?
4. Find the **turning point** in “They were happy, grateful…”.
5. How does the narrator want us to **feel** about the Cratchits?

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

TASK 2 · ZOOM IN

Key quotation

> “They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed […] But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time.”
>
> Stave 3

1. **Structure:** what does “But” change?
2. **List:** why a triple list of positives?
3. **Words:** what does “contented” suggest about their attitude?
4. **Context:** why would Victorian readers be surprised?

TASK 3 · MODEL

Model: the Cratchits and poverty

Point	Dickens presents the Cratchits as poor but loving to challenge Victorian views that the poor were undeserving.
Evidence	The family is “not well dressed”, yet “happy, grateful, pleased with one another”.
Analysis	The conjunction “But” turns their material lack into emotional wealth, while the triple of positive adjectives gives them dignity.
Context	Many Victorians believed the poor were lazy or immoral; Dickens contradicts this.
Link	Tiny Tim’s illness shows the real cost of ignoring them.

TASK 4 · WRITE (12 MINUTES)

Write: the Cratchits

Write **one paragraph**: How does Dickens present the Cratchit family's poverty in this extract? Use **two** quotations.

Check yourself, then paste your paragraph into the chat

- Point focused on poverty
- Two short quotations
- Word-level analysis
- Effect on the reader
- Context link

TASK 5 · WHOLE NOVEL · ONE LINKING SENTENCE FOR EACH

Link it to the rest of the novella

“I see a vacant seat,” replied the Ghost, “in the poor chimney-corner”
Stave 3 · the cost of neglect

“Bob had but fifteen ‘Bob’ a-week”
Stave 3 · low wages

“My little, little child.”
Stave 4 · Bob grieves

“to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die”
Stave 5 · the family is saved

EXIT TICKET

3-2-1

1. **3** ways Dickens shows their poverty
2. **2** ways he shows their love
3. **1** reason Tiny Tim matters to Scrooge

Type your 3-2-1 in the chat.