A CHRISTMAS CAROL · YEAR 10 · LESSON 16

Stave 4: Thieves, death and the grave

How Dickens shows the consequences of Scrooge’s life

- Analyse how Dickens presents the thieves’ setting
- Explain how the grave scene completes Scrooge’s lesson
- Link both to redemption and responsibility

AO1 · AO2 · AO3

STARTER · 5 MINUTES · RETRIEVAL

Quick-fire recall

1. What is tripling?
2. Why is the final spirit silent?
3. What does “Phantom” suggest?
4. What does the spirit point to?
5. Whose death is contrasted with Scrooge’s?

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 tripling? **A list of three**
2. Why is the final spirit silent? **To create suspense and dread**
3. What does “Phantom” suggest? **Something ghostly and frightening**
4. What does the spirit point to? **Scrooge’s own grave**
5. Whose death is contrasted with Scrooge’s? **Tiny Tim’s**

Tally your score. Anything missed becomes a revision target.

THE BIG QUESTION

How does Dickens use Stave 4 to push Scrooge towards redemption?

Aim

Analyse how Dickens presents the thieves' setting

Aim

Explain how the grave scene completes Scrooge's lesson

Aim

Link both to redemption and responsibility

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

CONTEXT

City, crime and consequences

The City

Scrooge’s world of business. Colleagues treat his death with **indifference**: “a very cheap funeral”.

Old Joe

Crime and poverty: Dickens believed they were linked.

Dramatic irony

Scrooge does not know who has died, but the reader begins to guess.

The grave

A “neglected” stone makes the cost of his life real.

EXTRACT · STAVE 4 · PART 1 OF 2

The thieves’ den

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offenses of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.

EXTRACT · STAVE 4 · PART 2 OF 2

The thieves’ den

Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a grey-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frowsy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement.

EXTRACT · STAVE 4 · PART 1 OF 3

Scrooge’s grave

A churchyard. Here, then, the wretched man whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation’s death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place.

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to one. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape.

“Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point,” said Scrooge, “answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?” Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

“Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead,” said Scrooge. “But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me.”

EXTRACT · STAVE 4 · PART 2 OF 3

Scrooge’s grave

The Spirit was immovable as ever. Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, Ebenezer Scrooge.

“Am I that man who lay upon the bed,” he cried, upon his knees.

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

“No, Spirit. Oh no, no.”

The finger still was there.

“Spirit,” he cried, tight clutching at its robe, “hear me. I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?” For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

“Good Spirit,” he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it: “Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life.” The kind hand trembled.

EXTRACT · STAVE 4 · PART 3 OF 3

Scrooge’s grave

“I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone.”

TASK 1 · ANNOTATE

Read again and annotate

1. Highlight the **sensory language** describing the neighbourhood (sights, smells).
2. Underline the **similes**. What do they suggest about poverty?
3. How is the churchyard described as “a worthy place”? What is the **irony**?
4. Find evidence Scrooge **suspects** the grave is his.
5. Which words show he is **desperate** to change?

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

TASK 2 · ZOOM IN

Key quotation

> “Am I that man who lay upon the bed?”
>
> Stave 4 · Scrooge at the grave

1. **Structure:** why a question?
2. **Staging:** what does “upon his knees” suggest?
3. **Language:** why is this the turning point?
4. **Context:** link to Victorian ideas about judgement after death.

TASK 3 · MODEL

Model: the grave scene

Point	The grave scene turns Scrooge’s fear into determination to change.
Evidence	He cries, “Am I that man who lay upon the bed?”
Analysis	The rhetorical question reveals his panic, and his position “upon his knees” suggests humility and prayer. The pause before “No, Spirit” shows denial giving way to acceptance.
Context	Victorian readers feared judgement and being forgotten, so the scene would be powerful.
Link	His promise to “honour Christmas in my heart” follows directly.

TASK 4 · WRITE (12 MINUTES)

Write: the grave

Write **one paragraph**: How does Dickens present Scrooge’s fear and change in the grave scene? Use **two** quotations.

Check yourself, then paste your paragraph into the chat

- Point about change
- Two quotations
- Analysis of a word or structure
- Effect on the reader
- Link to redemption

TASK 5 · WHOLE NOVEL · ONE LINKING SENTENCE FOR EACH

Link it to the rest of the novella

“I don’t know much about it, either way. I only know he’s dead.”
Stave 4 · the businessmen’s indifference

“It’s likely to be a very cheap funeral.”
Stave 4 · the cost of being unloved

“I don’t mind going if a lunch is provided.”
Stave 4 · the reaction to Scrooge’s death

“My little, little child.”
Stave 4 · Tiny Tim’s death, mourned with love

EXIT TICKET

3-2-1

1. **3** details of the thieves’ setting
2. **2** reasons the grave scene is powerful
3. **1** way Dickens contrasts two deaths

Type your 3-2-1 in the chat.