

A Christmas Carol

Answer these questions to test your basic knowledge of A Christmas Carol, its characters and events:

- 1) Who says 'I wear the chain I forged in life'? What themes does this key quote link to?
- 2) How many sets of visitors does Scrooge have at the office on Christmas Eve? What do each of them show to Scrooge?
- 3) What does Scrooge say the poor should do if they don't want to go to the Union workhouses? What contextual understanding links to ideas in this section on the novella?
- 4) Why is Bob Cratchit cold at the office? How is his character used as a contrast to Scrooge?
- 5) Whose face does Scrooge see in his door knocker? What themes could this link to?
- 6) Who says 'keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine'? What themes could this interaction link to?
- 7) What do the ghosts outside Scrooge's window in Stave One carry around with them? What themes could this link to?
- 8) Why does the young Scrooge depend on books at school? Why does Dickens include these scene?
- 9) How does Scrooge respond to seeing Fezziwig's party?
- 10) How do Scrooge's actions show Belle that she needs to break their engagement?
Does Dickens want us to feel sorry for Scrooge at this point – explain your answer.
- 11) Who is 'brave in ribbons'? What does this reveal about society at the time?
- 12) Why does Bob toast Scrooge at Christmas? What does it reveal about his character?
- 13) Why does Dickens show Christmas being celebrated in so many different places?
What themes does this link to?
- 14) Why is Ignorance more dangerous than Want? How powerful is the symbolism used in this section of the story?
- 15) How does the charwoman justify her theft of the dead Scrooge's belongings? What theme is explored here?
- 16) Who is 'the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard'? Why is this section of the story important?
- 17) What is the significance of the churchyard being overgrown with weeds? What does it symbolise?
- 18) Why is Bob late for work on Boxing Day? What does this help to show?
- 19) Why doesn't Scrooge mind people laughing at him when he changes his ways?
- 20) Why does Dickens end the novella with Tiny Tim's words?

Exam Question

In Stave Four, what does the conversation between the merchants tell us about the world of business and money-making?

They scarcely seemed to enter the city; for the city rather seemed to spring up about them, and encompass them of its own act. But there they were, in the heart of it; on Change, amongst the merchants; who hurried up and down, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups, and looked at their watches, and trifled thoughtfully with their great gold seals; and so forth, as Scrooge had seen them often.

The Spirit stopped beside one little knot of business men. Observing that the hand was pointed to them, Scrooge advanced to listen to their talk.

"No," said a great fat man with a monstrous chin, "I don't know much about it, either way. I only know he's dead."

"When did he die?" inquired another.

"Last night, I believe."

"Why, what was the matter with him?" asked a third, taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box. "I thought he'd never die."

"God knows," said the first, with a yawn.

"What has he done with his money?" asked a red-faced gentleman with a pendulous excrescence on the end of his nose, that shook like the gills of a turkey-cock.

"I haven't heard," said the man with the large chin, yawning again. "Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know."

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh.

"It's likely to be a very cheap funeral," said the same speaker; "for upon my life I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?"

"I don't mind going if a lunch is provided," observed the gentleman with the excrescence on his nose. "But I must be fed, if I make one."

Another laugh.

"Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all," said the first speaker, "for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Bye, bye."

Think about:

- What it tells us about that world
- How Dickens wants us to respond to that approach to life [30 marks]

Exam Question 2

Read the extract from Stave Two, when Scrooge revisits a moment from his past with Belle.

For again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past.

"It matters little," she said, softly. "To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve."

"What Idol has displaced you?" he rejoined.

"A golden one."

"This is the even-handed dealing of the world!" he said. "There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!"

"You fear the world too much," she answered, gently. "All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?"

"What then?" he retorted. "Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you."

She shook her head.

"Am I?"

"Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man."

"I was a boy," he said impatiently.

How does Dickens present Scrooge's attitude to money here, and in the rest of the novella?

Think about:

- How Dickens presents Scrooge's attitude to money in the extract
- How Dickens presents Scrooge's attitude to money in the novella as a whole

[30 marks]

An Inspector Calls

Answer these questions to test your basic knowledge of the play's characters.

- 1) Who is described as 'half-shy, half assertive', who as 'very pleased with life' and who as a 'young man-about-town'? Where are these quotes from and why are they important?
- 2) What were the different names used by the girl who committed suicide? Why are her various names important?
- 3) What impression do we get of Mrs Birling when we first meet her? How does this impressions change/ develop throughout the play?
- 4) How would you describe Mr Birling when he discovers that the Inspector is an imposter? What does this reveal about his character?
- 5) What impression does the Inspector's physical appearance create? What else contributes to his authority on stage?
- 6) What character has the fewest lines to speak in the play? What does this reveal about key themes/ context?
- 7) Who is the alderman who visited the Palace Theatre bar? What does the discussion about his behaviour allow Priestley to show?
- 8) What servants to the Birlings employ? What does this reveal about their social class and lifestyle?
- 9) Who is absent from the engagement dinner? What does this allow Priestley to explore?
- 10) What is the name and title of Mr Birling's friend in the police force? Why does Birling mention him, what is he trying to achieve?

Exam Question

How does J.B Priestley explore love in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- The ideas about love in the play
- How Priestley presents ideas about love by the way he writes

[30 marks + 4 marks AO4]

Exam Question 2

How does Priestley's portrayal of the Inspector make him such a powerful and moral figure?

Write about:

- The Inspector's character and role in the play
- How Priestley presents ideas about power and morality by the way he writes

[30 marks + 4 marks AO4]

Macbeth

Answer these questions to test your basic knowledge of the main events and characters from the play.

- 1) Who kills Macbeth? Why does his death come as a surprise to Macbeth and the audience?
- 2) How many men reign as king of Scotland throughout the play? Who was the king at the time the play was written?
- 3) Whom does Lady Macbeth frame for the murder of Duncan? How does she deal with her part in the murder?
- 4) Who kills Banquo? What is the motive behind the crime?
- 5) How does Lady Macbeth die? Has her character changed much by this point in the play?
- 6) Who discovers Duncan's body? What is their reaction to his death?
- 7) Whom does Macbeth see sitting in his chair during the banquet? What themes could this scene link to?
- 8) What vision does Macbeth have before he kills Duncan? Why does Shakespeare include this in the play?
- 9) With whom are the Scots at war at the beginning of the play? Why does Shakespeare open the play in this way?
- 10) Which nation's army invades Scotland at the end of the play? How would the reigning king (James) have reacted to this?
- 11) Who is the goddess of witchcraft in the play? Why are there so many supernatural elements in the play?
- 12) Who kills Donalbain? What does his death show?
- 13) What happens to Lady Macbeth before she dies? What does this help to show?
- 14) Who kills Lord Siward's son?
- 15) Where are Scottish kings crowned?
- 16) Why is Macduff able to kill Macbeth despite the witches' prophecy?
- 17) Where is Duncan killed?
- 18) Who flees Scotland to join Malcolm in England?
- 19) What was the weather like the night that Duncan was murdered?
- 20) How does Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane?

Exam Question

Read the following extract from Act 1, Scene 7 of Macbeth and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth is thinking about reasons why he should not murder the king, Duncan.

He's here in double trust;
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

Starting with this moment in the play, how do you think that Shakespeare presents the idea of ambition in the play?

Write about:

- What Macbeth says at this point in the play
- How Shakespeare presents the idea of ambition in the play as a whole

[30 marks]

Exam Question 2

Read the following extract from Act 5, Scene 1 of Macbeth and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking and being observed by a doctor and her gentlewoman.

LADY MACBETH

Out, damned spot! out, I say!--One: two: why,
then, 'tis time to do't.--Hell is murky!--Fie, my
lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we
fear who knows it, when none can call our power to
account?--Yet who would have thought the old man
to have had so much blood in him.

Doctor

Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH

The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?--
What, will these hands ne'er be clean?--No more o'
that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with
this starting.

Doctor

Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gentlewoman

She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of
that: heaven knows what she has known.

LADY MACBETH

Here's the smell of the blood still: all the
perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little
hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doctor

What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gentlewoman

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the
dignity of the whole body.

Doctor

Well, well, well,--

Gentlewoman

Pray God it be, sir.

Doctor

This disease is beyond my practise: yet I have known
those which have walked in their sleep who have died
holily in their beds.

LADY MACBETH

Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so
pale.--I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he
cannot come out on's grave.

Doctor

Even so?

LADY MACBETH

To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate:
come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's
done cannot be undone.--To bed, to bed, to bed!

Starting with this moment in the play, how do you think that Shakespeare presents the character of Lady Macbeth?

Write about:

- What Lady Macbeth says and does at this point in the play
- How Shakespeare presents her character as a whole throughout the play

[30 marks]

Power and Conflict Poetry

Answer these questions to test your basic knowledge of the five poems that we have studied so far.

Bayonet Charge

- 1) The poem starts very abruptly, as if in the middle of a narrative. What is the effect of this?
- 2) Comment on the poet's use of punctuation in the first verse. How would you describe its effect?
- 3) What do you understand by the simile on line 6?
- 4) How does the pace of the poem seem to slow down in the second verse? At what point does the action recommence?
- 5) Look again at line 1 and the simile in lines 12-14. What do these lines suggest about the impact this experience had on the soldier?
- 6) What is your response to the image of the hare in lines 16-18?
- 7) 'King, honour, human dignity, etcetera'. Why are these 'luxuries' to the soldier?
- 8) Why do you think the poet has chosen to write this poem using the third person?
- 9) How does the poet capture the soldier's sense of rising terror in the final verse?
- 10) What happens to the soldier's sense of patriotism in the final line?

Exposure

- 1) What do you learn about the condition of the soldiers in the first verse?
- 2) Why does the speaker use the pronouns 'we' and 'our', rather than 'I' and 'my'?
- 3) What is unusual about the speaker's attitude to dawn?
- 4) What does the 'wind's nonchalance' suggest?
- 5) In the fifth verse the speaker suddenly shifts to a different scene. What is the scene and why does he do it?
- 6) What is the speaker's attitude towards home in the sixth verse?
- 7) What do you understand by the lines, 'For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid; Therefore, not loath, we lie out here; therefore were born'.
- 8) In the final verse, the speaker thinks about the night to come. What does he think will happen?
- 9) The phrase 'but nothing happens' is repeated four times in the poem. What is the effect of this?
- 10) Why does the speaker refer only to mice and crickets when he thinks about home?

The Charge of the Light Brigade

- 1) What is one effect of the relentless rhythm that the poet uses? When does it change during the poem and why?
- 2) Why do you think the poet chooses to use the third person for the narrative?

- 3) In what way does Tennyson use language to suggest the dangers the cavalrymen faced?
- 4) Identify five verbs in the third and fourth verses that suggest the violence of battle.
- 5) Pick out one example of strong repetition in each verse. Explain what effect this technique has on the reader.
- 6) What do you understand by the lines, 'Not though the soldier knew Someone had blundered'?
- 7) The word 'wondered' has two meanings. How do you think those meanings fit in the line 'All the world wonder'd'?
- 8) Tennyson uses three different images for the valley where the charge took place. Find and list them.

Poppies

- 1) Who is the speaking voice in the poem?
- 2) Why might the mention of poppies at the start of the poem be significant?
- 3) Why does the mother resist the impulse to rub noses with her son? What does this suggest about her emotions?
- 4) Is the mother hopeful that her son will return? Explain.
- 5) What do you understand by the simile 'like a wishbone'?
- 6) How does the speaker remind us of the child that her son once was?
- 7) How does the speaker describe her words to her son? What does this suggest about her recollection of the moment?
- 8) Find two places in the poem where the speaker experiences emotional conflict?
- 9) The poem contrasts domestic words and phrase related to details of war. Find two domestic details in the poem.

War Photographer

- 1) What is the image in the first verse? What does it suggest about the photographer's attitude towards his job?
- 2) How does his homeland offer him a contrast to the places he goes for his job?
- 3) How does the photograph in the third verse affect him?
- 4) In what way does the speaker suggest the impersonality of the magazine editor?
- 5) What is suggested by the phrase 'between bath and pre-lunch beers'?
- 6) Where is the photographer in the final two lines?
- 7) What is your interpretation of the final two lines?
- 8) Do you think the newspaper editor also has a difficult job? Explain your answer.
- 9) What do the lines '...his hands which did not tremble then though seem to now' suggest?
- 10) What is the effect of the image 'a half-formed ghost'? Give two possible meanings.

London

- 1) What picture of life in London is presented in the poem?
- 2) How would you describe the poet's mood?
- 3) The word 'every' is repeated six times over five lines. What is the effect of the repetition if this word?
- 4) The poem is tightly structured in terms of rhythm and rhyme. What is the effect of this?
- 5) In the third verse, how does Blake encompass the whole of society in his depiction of London?
- 6) Why do you think Blake used the adjective 'black'ning' to describe the church?
- 7) Pick out another interesting adjective that Blake uses and analyse its effect.
- 8) Do you have a sense that Blake blames anyone or anything for the miserable state of London's population?
- 9) Blake focuses particularly on the plight of children. Why do you think he does this?
- 10) What do you understand by the phrase 'mind-forged manacles'?

My Last Duchess

- 1) Who is the Duke speaking to in the poem? Why is he visiting the Duke?
- 2) How do we know he has given this speech before?
- 3) What do we learn of the Duchess's character?
- 4) Pick out an example from the Duke's monologue that shows his obsession with power and status.
- 5) What is the effect of the Duke's use of caesura in lines 45-46?
- 6) Give two examples of the Duke's use of colloquial language. Why does Browning choose to use this?
- 7) What is it about the Duchess's behaviour that particularly enraged the Duke?
- 8) What is the effect of the Duke's long description of the Duchess's appearance in the painting?
- 9) Pick out two phrases that suggest the Duchess is still alive for the Duke, through the painting.
- 10) What poetic form does Browning use here? Identify three features of this form.

Ozymandias

- 1) Who is speaking for most of the poem?
- 2) What poetic form does Shelley use?
- 3) Which details tell us about Ozymandias's character?
- 4) What is the literal meaning of Ozymandias's name? Why is this ironic?
- 5) Does the traveller have more admiration for the sculptor or his subject? Explain.
- 6) What do the words 'antique land' in line 1 suggest?
- 7) There is irony in the final line. Explain where you think the irony lies.
- 8) There are three voices in the poem. Who are they and what is one effect of having this many voices?

- 9) In what way could Ozymandias be said to live on, even though his kingdom has disappeared?
- 10) Who do you think Ozymandias refers to by 'ye mighty' (line 11)?

Storm on the Island

- 1) How would you describe the speaker's tone of voice in the poem?
- 2) How have the islanders adapted for the storms?
- 3) What is the landscape of the island like?
- 4) What does the speaker say about trees and the sea?
- 5) Pick out three words that are military terms used to describe the storm.
- 6) What does the use of the pronouns 'we' and 'our' suggest about the islanders?
- 7) Pick one striking use of alliteration and assonance in the poem. What is the effect?
- 8) The storm is an attack of 'nothing'. Explain what the poet means by this oxymoron.
- 9) Who do you think the speaker is talking to? Why does the speaker try to reassure his listener?

The Prelude

- 1) What explanation does the boy give for finding the boat?
- 2) Find a phrase that indicates that the boy acted furtively, in secret.
- 3) The boy took the boat without permission. Is this important, given what happens? Explain.
- 4) What is the boy's mood at the start of the trip?
- 5) How does he navigate the boat?
- 6) Pick out one image that suggests he was a strong oarsman.
- 7) Which line marks a change in the tone of the poem?
- 8) Why does the huge peak seem to grow in size?
- 9) How did the experience affect the boy afterwards?
- 10) What do you understand by the lines, 'But huge ad mighty forms, that do not live Like living men'? (lines 42-43)

Exam Question

Compare the methods poets use to explore feelings about war in 'Poppies' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.

[30 marks]

Poppies

Three days before Armistice Sunday
and poppies had already been placed
on individual war graves. Before you left,
I pinned one onto your lapel, crimped petals,
spasms of paper red, disrupting a blockade
of yellow bias binding around your blazer.

Sellotape bandaged around my hand,
I rounded up as many white cat hairs
as I could, smoothed down your shirt's
upturned collar, steeled the softening
of my face. I wanted to graze my nose
across the tip of your nose, play at
being Eskimos like we did when
you were little. I resisted the impulse
to run my fingers through the gelled
blackthorns of your hair. All my words
flattened, rolled, turned into felt,
slowly melting. I was brave, as I walked

with you, to the front door, threw
it open, the world overflowing
like a treasure chest. A split second
and you were away, intoxicated.
After you'd gone I went into your bedroom,
released a song bird from its cage.
Later a single dove flew from the pear tree,
and this is where it has led me,
skirting the church yard walls, my stomach busy
making tucks, darts, pleats, hat-less, without
a winter coat or reinforcements of scarf, gloves.

On reaching the top of the hill I traced
the inscriptions on the war memorial,
leaned against it like a wishbone.
The dove pulled freely against the sky,
an ornamental stitch. I listened, hoping to hear
your playground voice catching on the wind.

JANE WEIR

Exam Question 2

Compare the ways poets present feelings about power in 'London' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.

[30 marks]

London

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

WILLIAM BLAKE