

GCSE (9-1)

Specimen question (for use alongside Sample Assessment Material Component 1)

ENGLISH LITERATURE

J352

For first teaching in 2015

J352/01 Exploring modern and literary heritage texts

A Christmas Carol

Version 2

This resource has been created to support you with an update that we have made to our qualification for assessment from June 2020 onwards. We have introduced *A Christmas Carol* as an additional text because it is an accessible option and offers choice to meet a diverse range of learners' needs and interests.

This resource should be read alongside the Component 1 Sample Assessment Material <https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/169188-unit-j352-01-exploring-modern-and-literary-heritage-texts-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>.

Section B

19th century prose

Answer one question from this section.

A *Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

Choose **ONE** question.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

EITHER

- 17** Explore how Dickens presents the experience of Christmas in this extract and elsewhere in the novel. **[40]**

In this extract Scrooge's nephew has a sharp disagreement with Scrooge over the meaning of Christmas.

"Uncle!" pleaded the nephew.

"Nephew!" returned the uncle sternly, "keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine."

"Keep it!" repeated Scrooge's nephew. "But you don't keep it."

"Let me leave it alone, then," said Scrooge. "Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!"

"There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew. "Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

The clerk in the Tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark for ever.

"Let me hear another sound from *you*," said Scrooge, "and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! You're quite a powerful speaker, sir," he added, turning to his nephew. "I wonder you don't go into Parliament."

"Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow."

OR

- 18** '*A Christmas Carol* is mainly about Scrooge's transformation.' How far do you agree with this view?

Explore at least two moments from the novel to support your ideas. **[40]**

Mark Scheme for Question 17

Please bear in mind that other content may be equally valid and should be credited.

AO1:

- Consideration of the key elements of Scrooge's nephew's very positive account of Christmas and Scrooge's response. Throughout the extract all the nephew says focuses on 'good' in a social sense: one of unity, collaboration, common humanity and, twice, reference to the religious origins of the festival. In Scrooge's reaction, the key distinction is between 'good' and 'profit' in an exclusively commercial sense.
- Links to the wider text may include:
 - In Stave One the comparisons of the extreme weather and Scrooge's mood/attitudes; and then the contrast of the weather, and shops culminating in the Mansion House.
 - In Stave Two Old Fezziwig and his party and the vision of his erstwhile beloved and her family.
 - In Stave Three the portrait of the Spirit; the contrast of the snow clearing, the poulterers, fruiterers and, climactically, the grocers; followed by the account of the bakers with the Christmas dinners cooking in them.
 - The Cratchits' Christmas dinner mark 1 and the Cratchits' Christmas dinner mark 2; the nephew's Christmas dinner – all detailed and colourful accounts of eating, drinking and making merry in a variety of family and social situations. It is predominantly secular rather than religious: although there are sharp spiritual/moral interventions from time to time.

AO2:

- In the extract the contrast between the nephew and Scrooge's language about Christmas in their dialogue.
- The nephew's long exchanges compared to Scrooge's short and dismissive ones.
- More widely, Dickens's use of voices, their tone and register, and dialogue in scenes of celebration.
- The use of Christmas to present a time of change and transformation – Scrooge's exchanges with the spirits.
- There is a clear linear narrative culminating in a tense and suspenseful conclusion.
- The sharp exchanges, especially on Scrooge's immorality and inhumanity.

AO3:

- Dickens as the observer of a morally and socially unjust society.
- Understanding of the emphasis on religion in 19th century England linked to the themes of forgiveness, redemption and atonement.
- Loneliness and isolation versus family and friendships.
- Wealth and poverty.

AO4:

- With the exception of summer 2021, quality of written communication will carry a total of 4 marks for this question.

Mark Scheme for Question 18

Please bear in mind that other content may be equally valid and should be credited.

AO1:

- Each Stave marks a particular phase of Scrooge's transformation (from inhumanity, miserliness, worshipping wealth for the sake of wealth etc.) and atonement (for the sins of omission he has been guilty of).
- The role of the spirits in Scrooge's transformation.
- The joyous conclusion of the Cratchit Christmas Dinner is immediately preceded by the much longer account of the utter squalor and unloveliness of Scrooge's death with his vision of his tombstone at the end.
- A strong response might give a detailed comparison of the opening and closing scenes with detailed reference to relevant intervening moments.

AO2:

- The opening description 'Oh! But he was a tight fisted....' and the subsequent extended metaphor of foul weather/foul character.
- The exchanges with Marley's ghost and the developments that are dependent on the image/metaphor of the 'chain'.
- The 'flashback' to his early life and the relentless criticism of Belle as she disengages him: and his specious, self-justifying responses. 'Why do you delight in torturing me?'
- His bleak and almost gothic vision of his own death. Contrasting with the very noisy, jovial, energetic, lively conclusion.

AO3:

- Dickens as the observer of a morally and socially unjust society.
- Understanding of the emphasis on both religion in 19th century England linked to the themes of forgiveness, redemption and atonement.
- Wealth and happiness.

AO4:

- With the exception of summer 2021, quality of written communication will carry a total of 4 marks for this question.

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