



Objective Tests
with
Writing and Thinking Prompts
and Answer Keys
for
A Christmas Carol
By Charles Dickens

A Teaching Guide
by Margaret Whisnant

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Stave One Marley's Ghost

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. There was no doubt that Marley was (A) the best friend Scrooge ever had, (B) the only person willing to be Scrooge's business partner, (C) as dead as a door-nail.
- _____ 2. Scrooge had been (A) Marley's partner, sole friend, and sole mourner, (B) saddened by Marley's death, (C) denied any part in settling Marley's affairs or access to the property he left behind.
- _____ 3. Scrooge was tight-fisted, solitary, and (A) always carried his own low temperature about with him, (B) the richest man in the city, (C) gruff with those who mistakenly called him by his dead partner's name.
- _____ 4. How did Scrooge feel about the fact that people did not speak to him and went out of their way to avoid him? He (A) was offended but didn't consider anyone worthy of his complaint, (B) was too busy running his business to notice, (C) liked it that way.
- _____ 5. Though it was three o'clock the Christmas Eve that Scrooge sat in his counting-house, (A) the nearby shops were deserted and people had hurried home to celebrate the holiday, (B) dense fog had come pouring in causing it to be quite dark and making nearby houses appear as phantoms, (C) the last ember in the fire that warmed Scrooge's office had gone out.
- _____ 6. Scrooge's clerk couldn't replenish his small fire because (A) there was not a single chunk of coal left in the office, (B) Scrooge deducted the cost of each coal from his pay, (C) the coal-box was in Scrooge's room, and Scrooge would threaten to fire him if he came in with the shovel.
- _____ 7. How did Scrooge respond to his nephew's wishing him a merry Christmas? He (A) said "Bah! Humbug!" and asked his nephew what reason he had to be merry since he was poor, (B) laughed and called Christmas a celebrations those who had no important business to conduct, (C) refused to speak, but grunted his disapproval.
- _____ 8. Scrooge was (A) as poor as his nephew, (B) the owner of quite a bit of property, but he had very little cash, (C) rich.
- _____ 9. Scrooge thought people who celebrated Christmas were fools because (A) it was a waste of time that could have been used making money and paying bills, (B) it didn't make them any richer, they were a year older, and it did them no good, (C) being merry was for children, not for serious adults.
- _____ 10. How did Scrooge's nephew feel about Christmas? He saw it as a time when people (A) could forget their worries and enjoy time away from the drudgeries of work for one day, (B) created happy memories and and passed the joy along to their own children, (C) freely opened their hearts to think of those less fortunate than themselves with kindness, forgiving, and charity.



Old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house.

Stave Two The First of the Three Spirits

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. It was past two when Scrooge went to bed, but when he awoke the church clock struck twelve.
- _____ 2. Marley's ghost bothered Scrooge, and he was not able to fully convince himself that it was all a dream.
- _____ 3. The Ghost of Christmas Past appeared exactly at half past midnight, hovering above Scrooge's bed with a great thunderous roar.
- _____ 4. The Ghost had the appearance of an old man with a child's proportions, white hair but not a wrinkle in its face, a white tunic trimmed with summer flowers, and a branch of fresh, green holly in its hand.
- _____ 5. The specter's belt sparkled and glittered from one part to another, causing its appearance to change from a partial figure to a full image. *"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past."*
- _____ 6. The creature was the Ghost of Scrooge's past.
- _____ 7. As Scrooge begged him to do, the Ghost covered his head with his cap so that the light beaming from the top of it disappeared.
- _____ 8. It was, the Spirit said, Scrooge and people like him who had made the cap he carried and had forced him to wear it so that the light did not shine.
- _____ 9. The Ghost said that it had come for Scrooge's welfare and reclamation.
- _____ 10. Scrooge struggled and resisted the Spirit when it reached out its strong hand and clasped him by the arm.
- _____ 11. Because of the freezing weather, the Ghost advised Scrooge to dress warmly before they began their journey into the past.
- _____ 12. The first place the Spirit took Scrooge was to a winter day in the open country where he had been a boy.
- _____ 13. Scrooge had no memory of the place where he had been transported, and the Ghost had to lead him into the little market-town.
- _____ 14. The people Scrooge and the Spirit met had no consciousness of their presence.
- _____ 15. Scrooge was filled with gladness hearing the travelers wish each other merry Christmas, but he sobbed when the Ghost spoke of the solitary child and the school.



Stave Five The End of It



the Time before him
Christmas
the door knocker
come and see him

sobbing
the boy in Sunday clothes
back payments
pleasure and happiness
Tiny Tim

a drunken man
the big prize turkey
a delighted smile
his nephew
merry Christmas

laugh
a cab
danced
Bob Cratchit

From the list above, choose the word or phrase that fits each of the clues below and write it in the blank. **All** answers will be **used at least once**. **Some** answers will be **used more than once**.

- _____ 1. Scrooge said there were a great many of these included in the sum he promised the portly old gentleman.
- _____ 2. As Scrooge shaved, his hand continued to shake and he also did this.
- _____ 3. Much to his delight, Scrooge found that he had returned to his room and had not missed this.
- _____ 4. After his walk, Scrooge went to see this person.
- _____ 5. Scrooge had this sent to Bob Cratchit, and he thought it was a good joke that his clerk wouldn't know who it was from.
- _____ 6. As Scrooge had hoped, this person was late coming into the office the day after Christmas.
- _____ 7. Scrooge had been doing this during his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet when he found himself back in his own room.

A Christmas Carol

By Charles Dickens



Something to Think About. . . Something to Write About. . .

1. Dickens playfully began his ghostly Christmas story with the simile *Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail*. He couldn't determine, he wrote, what there was *particularly dead about a door-nail*, and furthermore he believed that a coffin-nail was *the deadest piece of iron-mongery in the trade*. Rather than risk ruining the country, he decided not to question the wisdom of his ancestors and use the *dead as a door-nail* simile without any changes.
 - What are several similes that are a common part of your day-to-day conversations? Like Dickens, can you think of better ways to make the same comparisons? Can you create a simile that fits modern technology?
 - Our language is peppered with similes, some of which are used so often they have become trite. Write several **new** similes. Explain what they mean and how they should be used.
2. From the list below, choose the **four** words that you think **best** describe Scrooge as the person he was before the appearance of Marley's ghost. Use events from the story as well as the words' definitions to explain why you chose particular terms.

<i>grouchy</i>	<i>reprehensible</i>	<i>melancholy</i>	<i>caustic</i>
<i>reclusive</i>	<i>pitiful</i>	<i>insensitive</i>	<i>gruff</i>
<i>despicable</i>	<i>miserly</i>	<i>avaricious</i>	<i>antagonistic</i>
<i>repugnant</i>	<i>loathsome</i>	<i>callous</i>	<i>lonely</i>

About Your Novel Teaching Guide

Objective Tests

The objective tests have multiple functions. In addition to their obvious application, they also serve as tools that can *improve **comprehension skills** by providing practice in understanding plot structure and recognizing important story elements.*

Rationale:

Focus on the Plot. . .

Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot of a novel, and consequently **comprehend** the story. They are in tune with cause and effect, behavior and consequence, sequence—the heartbeat of the narrative.

This “plot rhythm” forms the framework for the objective tests. The chain of events that tell the story have been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of sequential questions, none of which require **interpretation**. They are intended to **draw student attention to the fact that something happened**, not to what the incident means. That comes later.

In addition to their testing function, teachers may use the pages to strengthen their students’ ability to **Summarize**: With only the questions as a guide, have students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven or fewer. When they work with twenty or more questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

Report the News: Ask your students to write a newspaper article based on the events identified in a set of questions and the *who, what, when, where, why* elements. Some information needed to complete this assignment may be located in previous chapters.

Twist the Plot: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, etc.—to demonstrate how changing a single (or several) events would (or would not) change the story. This process can be used to help students become proficient in distinguishing major plot movers from minor story details.

The Characters. . .

Too often, when they are asked to describe a story character’s personality, the only answer many students can muster is “nice.” This portion of the Novel Teaching Pack, coupled with related activities from ***Something to Think About, Something to Write About***, is a smorgasbord of opportunities for those teachers who wish to eradicate “nice” from their students’ vocabularies!

Questions that identify a character’s personality and/or motivation are purposely and carefully included with the plot movers. Again, the questions do not require **interpretation**. They simply establish that someone did or said something—knowledge that is invaluable when character analysis is required.

Implied Meaning and Story Clues. . .

The objective tests include items that establish the existence of story components carrying ***implied meaning***. **Story clues** that tantalize the reader with hints of future events also appear as question. At this point in the novel study, as before, **interpretation** is not the goal. **Awareness** of the **facts** is the target.

Developing/Improving Listening Skills. . .

Listening skills are rightfully included on every list of state competency requirements. Rather than always requiring students to answer test questions on a printed page, why not surprise them occasionally by doing the test orally and meeting competency goals at the same time?

Discussion Guide Capability. . .

The objective tests are helpful discussion guides. Use individual items on these pages to draw student attention to sequence, cause and effect, story clues (foreshadowing), character traits, recognizing and interpreting implied meanings, etc. These “thinking out loud” sessions are an **important building block** for the next learning phase.

Something to Think About. . .

Something to Write About. . .

In this section, students pack up what they already know about the novel and go exploring into its every nook and cranny. Some activities require the simplest interpretation or application, while others will challenge the most proficient thinkers. There is a high probability that young scholars, even reluctant ones, will label some of the selections as *fun*.

Rationale:

Guidelines. . .

Most of the items in this section are based on the skills presented in the ***Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom's Taxonomy)***. There are two reasons for this choice. First, it mirrors the Novel Teaching Pack's primary purpose of building a variety of sophisticated thinking skills on a foundation of basic knowledge. Second, in following the taxonomy guidelines, activities that align to CCSS emerge automatically.

Levels of Difficulty. . .

A variety **difficulty levels** to accommodate the needs of individual students, including the gifted, is an integral part of this component. However, **all** items from this section are intended to **challenge** and **sharpen** thinking abilities.

Activities. . .

Something to Think About/Something to Write About includes activities that require students to choose and use precise, appropriate, and meaningful **vocabulary**. These exercises involve choosing a word or a group of words to describe a character's personality or behavior. The following example is from ***Because of Winn-Dixie***.

Opal comforted Winn-Dixie during thunderstorms, holding on to him tight so that he wouldn't run away. She decided that the best way to comfort Gloria was to read a book to her, loud enough to keep the ghosts away.

From the list of words below, all of which can correctly describe Opal's behavior, which *two* do you think are the best? Cite facts from the story and the words' definitions to support your choices.

<i>empathetic</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>nurturing</i>	<i>warmhearted</i>
<i>sympathetic</i>	<i>loving</i>	<i>devoted</i>	<i>benevolent</i>
<i>unselfish</i>	<i>generous</i>	<i>thoughtful</i>	<i>considerate</i>

In each case students work with a given collection of terms, all of which can be correctly applied to the character(s) in question. However, the individual words have varying strengths of meaning. It is the student's task to analyze both the character's behavior and the words, make choices, and then cite events from the story to support his/her selection.

Options, options, and more options. . .

Something to Think About, Something to Write About gives teachers **pick-and-choose options** for

<i>individualizing assignments</i>	<i>homework</i>
<i>group work</i>	<i>short-term and long-term projects</i>
<i>whole class activities</i>	<i>differentiating assignments for two or more classes</i>
<i>capitalizing on student interest</i>	

Final Note

The Novel Teaching Packs are designed for use as supplementary material that supports a total reading program. It is my goal to provide busy teachers with a classroom-ready, practical resource loaded with motivational and learning opportunities for their students. It is my hope that your purchase will prove to be a hard-working instructional component for years to come. Thanks for choosing one of my products for your classroom.



Margaret Whisnant, Author