

Preface

Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* is loaded with perplexing vocabulary. *There is no doubt whatsoever about that.* To further complicate the matter, it is woven into the stiff writing style of the 19th century, typically without clues for unlocking meaning. Even when Dickens provides some contextual clarity, the unfamiliar customs and language patterns that were the norm in his day often leave young readers scratching their heads.

Nevertheless, *A Christmas Carol* has a core collection of terms that continue to show up in modern writing. Furthermore, the story itself is timeless. There are so many reasons why it's required reading in countless middle and high school classrooms. My goal in creating this vocabulary study is to support students and teachers with a resource that will bring a degree of clarity to at least part of the complicated language.

Components and Strategies

- **Word Choices**

Words likely to be encountered in middle and high school literature were prime candidates for the master list. *A Christmas Carol* also boast about 100 terms known to have appeared as SAT vocabulary. This fact was another important consideration.

- **Word Lists with Definitions and Stave Numbers**

Words in this study are presented exactly as they appear in the story— adjectives, adverbs, past tense verbs, etc.—rather than as dictionary entries. *Indignantly*, for example, rather than *indignant*.

A whole book list of the 135 target words in alphabetical order and Stave numbers is provided for teacher convenience. Including exact page numbers is problematic since this public domain story appears in textbooks, various paper backs, and on the internet.

For student use (at the teacher's discretion), stave-by-stave word lists, organized in book order, with text-applicable definitions are included.

- **Dictionary Digs**

This series of six, two-page printables is structured in book order and follows the stave-by-stave word lists and definitions. Requiring the interpretive use of a dictionary (or the materials provided), the multiple choice questions feature all of the 135 target words in modern context.

This material is designed to be used **before reading**—stave by stave—to give students an initial sense of a word's meaning before it is encountered in the text.

- **Vocabulary in Context**

In this four-part resource, twenty words from each stave are placed back into story context but with their modern meaning as guides. Using a word list and definition clues, students must place the correct term in a story fact, a story quote, or a combination of the two. These pages are suitable as reviews or as tests.

- **Vocabulary Application**

The goal for this group of three activities is to give students practice applying Dickens's vocabulary in updated context. *Sentence Sense* and *Sentence Sense Challenge* are modeled after SAT formatting.

Teachers may choose to use these activities as reviews or as tests.

Together, the activities in this resource highlight each of the 135 target words at least twice.



Margaret Whisnant, Author

Vocabulary Study

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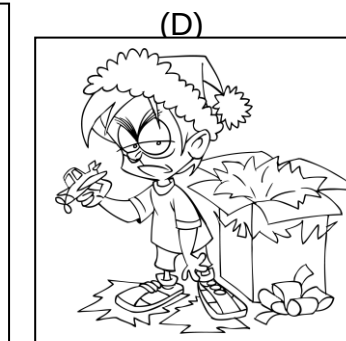
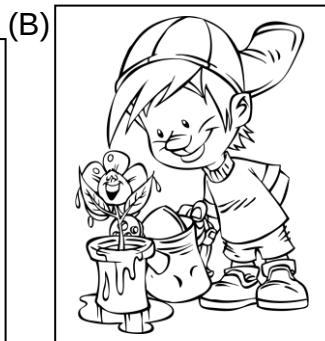
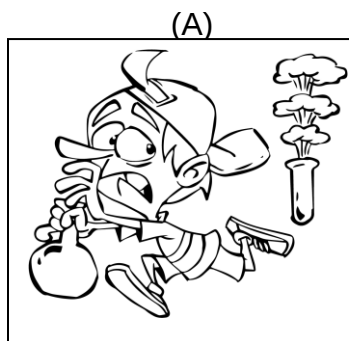
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Dictionary Digs

Stave One: *Marley's Ghost* Part One—Pages 1-20

Use a dictionary to answer the following questions about some important words from the story. Write the letter of the correct answer in the blank provided.

- _____ 1. Which of the following characteristics *best* describes **misanthropic** behavior?
(A) naive, (B) mischievous, (C) hateful, (D) paranoid
- _____ 2. *Morgan's downcast eyes and the conflicting details in his story revealed it as a palpable lie.*
In the sentence above, what kind of lie was Morgan telling?
(A) one based on ignorance, (B) an unintentional one, (C) a well disguised one,
(D) an obvious one.
- _____ 3. An *antonym* for the word **destitute** is
(A) affluent, (B) impoverished, (C) devoid, (D) acclimated.
- _____ 4. During family dinner, Dad likes to **regale** us with stories from his childhood.
The word *regale* in the above sentence, implies that Dad's stories are
(A) confusing, (B) entertaining, (C) boring, (D) made up.
- _____ 5. If Mrs. Reilly's suggestion received **scant** attention from the committee, then the committee
(A) thought Mrs. Reilly's idea was excellent.
(B) discussed Mrs. Reilly's proposal for a long time.
(C) paid very little attention to Mrs. Reilly's idea.
(D) didn't quite understand what Mrs. Reilly was proposing.
- _____ 6. Which of the following cartoons *best* illustrates the meaning of **morose**?



- _____ 7. Which word is **not** a synonym of **veneration**?
(A) salutation, (B) reverence, (C) adoration, (D) admiration
- _____ 8. *Machala was resolute in her decision to apply for a week-end job at the mall.*
The word that can replace *resolute* and give the above sentence an opposite meaning is
(A) stubborn, (B) uncertain, (C) congenial, (D) unyielding.
- _____ 9. What color is a **ruddy** complexion? (A) red, (B) pale, (C) ashen, (D) olive
- _____ 10. A **facetious** remark (A) must be taken seriously, (B) is intended to create confusion,
(C) is not meant to be taken seriously, (D) is filled with great admiration.
- _____ 11. An *antonym* of **congenial** is (A) pleasant, (B) unfriendly, (C) unpredictable,
(D) affable.

Vocabulary in Context : *Stave One: Marley's Ghost*

The following sentences are composed from a story fact, a direct quote (in italics), or a combination of the two. Use the vocabulary list and the clues in parenthesis to fill in the blanks with the correct words.

ruddy **ominous** **resolute** **congenial** **melancholy**
morose **impropriety** **indignantly** **palpable** **facetious**

1. When Scrooge left his office that fateful Christmas Eve, he *took his* _____ (without pleasure or joy) *dinner in his usual* _____ (gloomy) *tavern*. (same word in both blanks)
2. To Scrooge, the word "liberality" was _____ (an indication that something unpleasant was coming), for he knew it meant the gentlemen visiting his office intended to ask him to make a charitable donation.
3. Scrooge was being _____ (using humor inappropriately) when he suggested the poor who would rather die than go to a workhouse should just go ahead and do it and decrease the surplus population.
4. Scrooge's nephew asked his rich uncle why he was so _____ (ill-humored) with the idea of being merry at Christmas.
5. Outside Scrooge's counting house, a cold fog came rolling in, creating _____ (clearly visible) brown air that obscured vision and made buildings appear as phantoms.
6. His handsome face _____ (having a reddish color) from *rapid walking in the fog and frost*, Scrooge's nephew entered his uncle's counting house and wished him a merry Christmas.
7. When Scrooge's nephew insisted that keeping Christmas had done him good, thought he had not profited from it, Bob Cratchit applauded involuntarily but immediately realized his _____ (blunder), poked his fire, and *extinguished the last frail spark*.
8. Scrooge's nephew was sorry that his uncle was so _____ (stubborn and unyielding) in his refusal to join him and his family for Christmas dinner.
9. ". . . *If I could work my will*, "said Scrooge _____ (fiercely), "*every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. . . !*"
10. The young caroler who tried to serenade Scrooge, fled into the fog and frost, which was more _____ (pleasant) than Scrooge and his threatening ruler.



Scrooge's Nephew Arrives
(Public Domain Image 1905)

Sentence Sense

From the list of four possible answers, choose the word that correctly completes the sentence and write it in the blank to the left.

- _____ 1. Mother planned my birthday party down to the most _____ detail.
sordid opaque intricate infernal congenial
- _____ 2. At first, Randy was _____ about learning to snow ski, but now he
thinks it's the most fun ever.
conductive apprehensive ferocious incessant incredulous
- _____ 3. Amber performed her piano solo so _____, she received a
standing ovation.
prodigiously demurely indignantly tacitly portly
- _____ 4. Mr. Bauer's students spent the first five minutes of class _____
him pick up his guitar and sing another Beatles' tune.
seething disdainful flaunting obscuring entreating
- _____ 5. The New-Years-Eve _____ didn't seem to mind that the clock
had struck midnight three hours before.
boisterous specters revelers menagerie refuse
- _____ 6. Three small dogs ran _____ down the sidewalk while their owner
shouted and sprinted not far behind.
diverted ominous latent rampant profound
- _____ 7. Janell was _____ that she had studied and passed the test and
no cheating had been involved.
latent adamant gratis odious caustic
- _____ 8. To free up some shelf space, Mrs. Lipton decided to box all her
_____ books and donate them to a local charity.
surplus waning morose celestial dismal

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Sentence Sense Challenge

In the blank to the left, write the **letter** of the **word set** that correctly completes the sentence.

- _____ 1. In _____ to their Dad's request for a weekend of peace and quite, Thomas and Martin were _____ for the full 48 hours.
(A) deference, congenial
(B) affability, genial
(C) mirth, vile
(D) tartness, scant
- _____ 2. An _____ rain pounded on the city streets day after day, so that pedestrians were _____ to come outside for even the most important errand.
(A) livid, loitered
(B) inaudible, essence
(C) incessant, loath
(D) boisterous, resolute
- _____ 3. Leann was _____ when she looked at the _____ shoes her mother expected her to wear to school in front of all her friends.
(A) morose, obscure
(B) incredulous, hideous
(C) despondent, portly
(D) comely, facetious
- _____ 4. Aunt Florence _____ at the scene under her grandson's bed, where a week's worth of candy bar wrappers, food cartons, and lost socks had sculpted a pile of _____ that _____ of sweat and decomposing catsup.
(A) implored, loitered, wretched
(B) congealed, credulity, implored
(C) implored, gratis, beguiled
(D) recoiled, refuse, reeked
- _____ 5. If Logan hadn't _____ my story and convinced Mr. Odell of my innocence, I would have spent a _____ week grounded from all of my favorite activities.
(A) repulsed, surplus
(B) corroborated, melancholy
(C) enshrouded, ominous
(D) diverted, obscure

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