

Date: 12/10/15

Charles Dickens

Title: Christmas Carol Opening

Fill in the gaps with the words below

Dickens' father, John, was a kind and likable man, but he was financially irresponsible, piling up huge _____ throughout his life. When Dickens was nine, his family moved to London. At twelve, his father was arrested and sent to debtors' _____. Dickens' mother moved seven of their children into prison with their father but arranged for Charles to live alone outside the prison, working with other child labourers' at a hellish job pasting labels on bottles in a _____.

The three months Charles spent apart from his family were severely _____. After his father was released from prison, Dickens returned to _____, eventually becoming a law clerk. He went on to serve as a court reporter before taking his place as one of the most popular English novelists of his time. At age 25, Dickens completed his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, which met with great success. This started his career as an English literary celebrity, during which he produced such masterpieces as _____, _____, *David Copperfield*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Dickens' novella *A Christmas Carol* was written in 1843, with the intention of drawing readers' attention to the troubles of England's _____. In the tale, Dickens combines description of hardships faced by the poor with a sentimental celebration of the _____ season. The miserable penny-pinching Ebenezer _____, who opens his heart after being confronted by three spirits, remains one of Dickens' most widely recognised and popular creations.

Great Expectations

Prison

Factory

Christmas

Traumatic

Debts

School

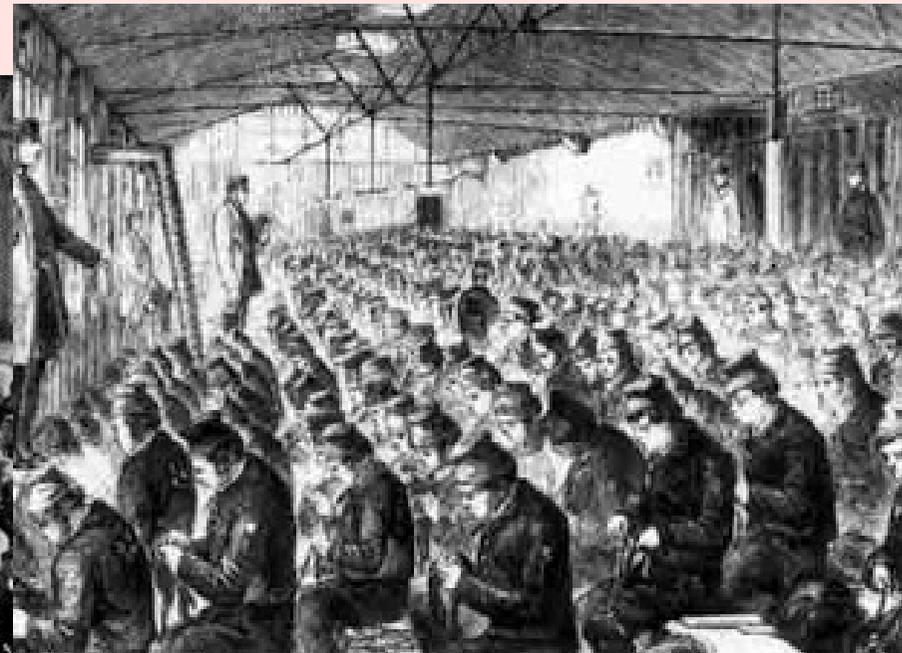
Scrooge

Poor

Learning Objectives:

To **analyse** the language of *A Christmas Carol* to explain how Dickens presents Scrooge at opening.

To make **comparisons** with *Macbeth* and link them both to their **contexts**.



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"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman, taking up a pen, "it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and Destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir."

"Are there no prisons?" asked Scrooge.

"Plenty of prisons," said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

"And the Union workhouses?" demanded Scrooge. "Are they still in operation?"

"They are. Still," returned the gentleman, "I wish I could say they were not."

"The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?" said Scrooge.

"Both very busy, sir."

"Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course," said Scrooge. "I'm very glad to hear it."

"If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. "

The new stage...

Stage 6: Make an **interesting comparison** to *Macbeth/Christmas Carol* and explain the similarities or differences found.



Explore the ways that character flaws of the heroes are presented in Macbeth and A Christmas Carol.

In the openings of both stories the main characters are opposites in terms of respect from others. Macbeth is seen as battle proven winner, while Scrooge is portrayed as a cold hearted and self-centred person. This is demonstrated when he meets the charity workers and refuses to give anything to the poor:

'I don't make myself merry at Christmas so I can't afford to make idle people merry'

This response from Scrooge demonstrates a negative and mean spirited attitude with his use of the adjective 'idle'. This creates an image of him as a judgmental character who makes sweeping generalisations about others, especially the poor. On the other hand, it also creates the feeling that he jumps to conclusions and does not think things through. He is in some ways similar to Macbeth with his gullibility but in other ways there is a difference with his indecisiveness. Dickens presented Scrooge in this way to create an exaggerated negative persona at the start of the novella. Moreover, he used this exaggerated character to draw attention to the fate that many people suffered who were much like his father, who suffered in debtors prison.

Peer Assessment

Read your partner's work and label where they have met each stage.

Give them an appropriate target if any part is missing.