Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read the following extract from Stave 1 and then answer the question that follows. In this extract two men are asking Scrooge to give money to the poor. The "establishments" Scrooge mentions refer to prisons and workhouses.

"a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?"

"Nothing!" Scrooge replied.

"You wish to be anonymous?"

"I wish to be left alone," said Scrooge. "Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned: they cost enough: and those who are badly off must go there."

"Many can't go there; and many would rather die."

"If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides -- excuse me -- I don't know that."

"But you might know it," observed the gentleman.

"It's not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens address the idea of charity?

Write about:

- how Dickens address the idea of charity in this extract
- how Dickens address the idea of charity in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Turn over for the next question.
Charles Dickens: A Christmas Carol

Read the following extract from Stave 1 and then answer the question that follows. In this extract Scrooge has just encountered Marley’s Ghost.

No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which wrapper he had not observed before; he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

"How now!" said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever.
"What do you want with me?"
"Much!"—Marley’s voice, no doubt about it.
"Who are you?"

"Ask me who I was."
"Who were you then?" said Scrooge, raising his voice. "You're particular, for a shade." He was going to say "to a shade," but substituted this, as more appropriate.
"In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley."

"Can you—can you sit down?" asked Scrooge, looking doubtfully at him.
"I can."
"Do it, then."

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the character of Scrooge?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents the character of Scrooge in this extract
- how Dickens presents the character of Scrooge in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]
Charles Dickens: A Christmas Carol

Read the following extract from Stave 1 and then answer the question that follows. This extract describes the street outside Scrooge's office on Christmas Eve.

The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at Scrooge out of a Gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowing sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens establish mood/tone?

Write about:

- how Dickens establishes mood/tone in this extract
- how Dickens establishes mood/tone in the novel as a whole.
Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read the following extract from Stave 3 and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract the Ghost of Christmas Present has taken Scrooge to see the Cratchit family.

Then Bob proposed: 'A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us.' Which all the family re-echoed.

'God bless us every one.' said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

'Spirit,' said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, 'tell me if Tiny Tim will live.'

'I see a vacant seat,' replied the Ghost, 'in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.'

'No, no,' said Scrooge. 'Oh, no, kind Spirit. say he will be spared.'

'If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race,' returned the Ghost, 'will find him here. What then. If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.'

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens portray the notion of family?

Write about:

- how Dickens portrays the notion of family in this extract
- how Dickens portrays the notion of family in the novel as a whole.
Charles Dickens: A Christmas Carol

Read the following extract from Stave 4 and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is showing Scrooge what will happen if he doesn’t change his ways.

A churchyard. Here, then, the wretched man whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation’s death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place.

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape. ‘Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point,’ said Scrooge, ‘answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only.’

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood. ‘Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead,’ said Scrooge. ‘But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me.’

The Spirit was immovable as ever. Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, Ebenezer Scrooge.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens’ use of time affect the plot?

Write about:

- how Dickens’ use time affects the plot in this extract
- how Dickens’ use time affects the plot in the novel as a whole.
Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read the following extract from Stave 5 and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract Scrooge is making amends with the man who was collecting for charity at the start of the novel.

It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

‘My dear sir,’ said Scrooge, quickening his pace, and taking the old gentleman by both his hands. ‘How do you do. I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, sir.’

‘Mr Scrooge.’

‘Yes,’ said Scrooge. ‘That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness -- here Scrooge whispered in his ear.

‘Lord bless me,’ cried the gentleman, as if his breath were taken away. ‘My dear Mr Scrooge, are you serious.’

‘If you please,’ said Scrooge. ‘Not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour.’

‘My dear sir,’ said the other, shaking hands with him. ‘I don’t know what to say to such munificence.’

‘Don’t say anything please,’ retorted Scrooge. ‘Come and see me. Will you come and see me.’

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08 Starting with this extract, how does Dickens highlight the change in Scrooge’s character?

Write about:

- how Dickens highlights the change in Scrooge’s character in this extract
- how Dickens highlights the change in Scrooge’s character in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]
Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read the following extract from Chapter 1 and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract Scrooge is being introduced to the reader.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, nor wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn’t know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often ‘came down’ handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, ‘My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?’ No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o’clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blindmen’s dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, ‘No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!’

But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call ‘nuts’ to Scrooge.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present Scrooge as an outsider to society?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents Scrooge in this extract
- how Dickens presents Scrooge as an outsider to society in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]
Read this extract from Chapter 3 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge and The Ghost of Christmas Present are watching the Cratchit family on Christmas Day.

There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being waterproof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

By this time it was getting dark, and snowing pretty heavily; and as Scrooge and the Spirit went along the streets, the brightness of the roaring fires in kitchens, parlours, and all sorts of rooms, was wonderful. Here, the flickering of the blaze showed preparations for a cosy dinner, with hot plates baking through and through before the fire, and deep red curtains, ready to be drawn to shut out cold and darkness. There all the children of the house were running out into the snow to meet their married sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, and be the first to greet them. Here, again, were shadows on the window-blind of guests assembling; and there a group of handsome girls, all hooded and fur-booted, and all chattering at once, tripped lightly off to some near neighbour's house; where, woe upon the single man who saw them enter — artful witches, well they knew it — in a glow!

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the importance of family in *A Christmas Carol*?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents the Cratchits in this extract
- how Dickens presents the importance of family in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]
AQA 'A Christmas Carol' 4

Read this extract from Stave 3.

In this extract Scrooge is shown his first love, Belle, and her family.

And now Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside; and when he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him father, and been a spring-time in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

"Belle," said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile, "I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon."

"Who was it?"

"Guess!"

"How can I? Tut, don't I know?" she added in the same breath, laughing as he laughed. "Mr. Scrooge."

"Mr. Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe."

"Spirit!" said Scrooge in a broken voice, "remove me from this place."

"I told you these were shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost. "That they are what they are, do not blame me!"

"Remove me!" Scrooge exclaimed, "I cannot bear it!"

He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

"Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!"

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present Scrooge's distress?

Write about:
• how Dickens presents Scrooge in this extract
• how Dickens presents Scrooge's distress in the novel as a whole.

30 marks
40 minutes
AQA 'A Christmas Carol' 5

Read this extract from Stave 1.

In this extract Scrooge is visited by his nephew, Fred

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge’s, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

“Christmas a humbug, uncle!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “You don’t mean that, I am sure?”

“I do,” said Scrooge. “Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You’re poor enough.”

“Come, then,” returned the nephew gaily, “What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You’re rich enough.”

Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, “Bah!” again; and followed it up with “Humbug.”

“Don’t be cross, uncle!” said the nephew.

“What else can I be,” returned the uncle, “when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What’s Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in ’em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will,” said Scrooge indignantly, “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. He should!”

“Uncle!” pleaded the nephew.

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

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present Scrooge as a cold character?

Write about:
• how Dickens presents Scrooge in this extract
• how Dickens presents Scrooge’s coldness in the novel as a whole.

30 marks
40 minutes
Read this extract from Stave 2.

In this extract Scrooge is visited by his nephew, Fred. He was not alone but sat by the side of a fair young girl in 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 evenhanded 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.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present Scrooge as materialistic?

Write about:
- how Dickens presents Scrooge in this extract
- how Dickens presents Scrooge’s materialism in the novel as a whole.

30 marks
40 minutes