

Discussion Questions for *A Christmas Carol*

1. Why does Dickens spend so much time describing the fireplace in Scrooge's rooms? Why does he populate the tiles with scenes from the Old Testament, Arabian Nights, and the Apostles?
2. Is Dickens's use of ghosts to help Scrooge reform effective? Are each of the ghosts well-developed? Which ghost did you like best; which least?
3. Why wasn't Marley saved, while Scrooge was saved?
4. Why does the Ghost of Christmas Past say that Fezziwig's party did not merit the kind of gratitude exhibited by the people who attended the party? What was Scrooge's reaction to the Ghost's comment?
5. Which event in his past life seems to affect Scrooge the most?
6. Why does Scrooge say that the Ghost of Christmas Present is responsible for closing shops on Sunday? What is the Ghost's reply to Scrooge; is the reply effective?
7. Why does the Ghost of Christmas Present answer Scrooge by saying: "If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population," when Scrooge asks if Tiny Tim will live?
8. Scrooge was initially aghast at the expense the Cratchit family undergoes in preparing for Christmas, but later changes his mind. What causes Scrooge to change his mind about the family?
9. Many film and stage versions of the story omit the passages about the miners, the lighthouse and ship. Why do you think Dickens included them in the story? Do they add anything to the story?
10. Why does the Ghost of Christmas Present tell Scrooge to fear the child named Ignorance most?
11. Is the story effective in portraying the lot of the poor in Victorian London? Is Scrooge's reformation believable? Does Dickens do a good job of expressing his outrage over the conditions in the jails and workhouses?
12. What makes this story so timeless?