

TSSMTM
Creating VCE Success

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
“A Christmas Carol”

Text guide by: Peter Cram

Copyright © TSSM 2010

TSSM

ACN 099 422 670

ABN 54 099 422 670

A: Level 14, 474 Flinders Street Melbourne VIC 3000

T: 1300 134 518

F: 03 97084354

W: tssm.com.au

E: info@tssm.com.au

Contents

BACKGROUND NOTES	4
HISTORICAL ISSUES [CONTEXT].....	5
GENRE.....	6
TITLE.....	6
AUDIENCE.....	6
PURPOSE	6
STRUCTURE.....	7
CHRONOLOGY	7
Continuity	7
STYLE.....	8
Orientation [Point Of View ,Voice].....	8
Characteristics.....	8
Expression.....	8
Tone	9
SETTING [THE WORLD OF THE NOVEL]	10
COMPLICATION	11
Rising Action	11
Climax.....	11
Falling Action	12
Resolution [Denouement]	12
PLOT SUMMARY	13
Stave 1	13
Stave 2.....	14
Stave 3.....	15
Stave 4.....	15
Stave 5.....	16
CHARACTER PROFILES	17
Aspects of characterization	17
Protagonists and Antagonists.....	17
Author’s attitude	17
Character as symbol or representation.....	18
Major Characters.....	19
Minor Characters	26
Character trait thesaurus	27
Character emotional states.....	29
Character relationships.....	29
THEMES AND ISSUES	30
Poverty	30
The condition of children.....	30
Family	31
Common goodwill	31
IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS	32
READINGS.....	36
Dominant Reading	36
Resistant Reading	36
Alternative Reading	36
SAMPLE ESSAY TOPICS.....	37
FINAL EXAMINATION TIPS.....	38
FURTHER REFERENCES.....	39

BACKGROUND NOTES

Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870) is regarded as having written some of the greatest works in the English language. He is particularly noted for his colourful characters; some have even become iconic, such as the character of Scrooge in this novel.

Many of his novels were concerned with social reform. They were first serialized in magazines, which was a popular format at the time for publishing novels. However, Dickens often wrote episodes as they were being serialized, rather than completing a novel. This gave his stories a certain rhythm as he would include cliffhangers in each episode to keep the reading audience looking forward to the next installment. The popularity of his novels and short stories is such that they have never been out of print.

Dickens has been noted for his mastery of prose style and unique characterization by many writers, however, others accuse him of sentimentality and implausibility.

His writing style is flamboyant, with a comic touch, and includes both fantasy and realism. He can also be satirical, especially when describing social pretensions.

While Dickens is noted for his depictions of the hardships of the working class as well as his intricate plots, and his sense of humour, he is perhaps most famed for his characters. He had an innate ability to capture the quirks of human behaviour and create vivid life-like characters which readers are able to understand. He uses idealized characters in sentimental scenes in juxtaposition with caricatures emphasizing the social truths that he reveals.

HISTORICAL ISSUES [CONTEXT]

The Industrial Revolution began in Britain and involved enormous changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and transport which, in turn, exercised a permanent effect on society, economically, socially and culturally. Originating in Britain, industrialization manifested itself in many other countries in the world. Thus, it became the precursor to modern industrial capitalist economies with their emphasis on economic growth.

It was in the boom decades of the 1830's and 1840's that the full impact of the industrial revolution became apparent and it was then that Dickens addressed his concerns about the condition of children through his writing.

The novel is loosely influenced by Dicken's own childhood experiences when he had to leave school and work in a blacking factory after his father had been put in jail for not paying his debts.

Dickens was touched by the condition of poor children in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. In 1843, he toured the Cornish tin mines and saw children working in appalling conditions. He later visited the Field Lane Ragged School, set up to educate London's poorly fed and illiterate street children, which further impressed upon him the dire conditions in which many children existed.

In February 1843, a parliamentary report was released describing the effects of the Industrial Revolution upon poor children. Dickens planned to publish a political pamphlet to be called 'An Appeal to the People of England, on behalf of the Poor Man's Child', however, he changed his mind and postponed circulating the pamphlet for several months. Eventually, upon reconsideration of himself as a novelist rather than a pamphleteer, the pamphlet was transformed into the novel.