

GCSE (9-1)

Specimen questions (for use alongside Sample Assessment material Component 1)

ENGLISH LITERATURE

J352

For first teaching in 2015

J352/01 Exploring modern and literary heritage texts

A Christmas Carol Set 2 and 3

Version 1

This resource has been created to support you with an update that we have made to our qualification for assessment from June 2020 onwards. We have introduced *A Christmas Carol* as an additional text because it is an accessible option and offers choice to meet a diverse range of learners' needs and interests.

This resource should be read alongside the [Component 1 Sample Assessment Material](#).

Set 1 Specimen questions are available on the [OCR website](#).

SET 2**Section B****19th century prose**

Answer one question from this section.

A *Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

Choose **ONE** question.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

EITHER

- 1** How does Dickens present Scrooge as lonely in this extract and elsewhere in the novel? **[40]**

In this extract the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge to the village where he grew up.

"The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were over-run with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat.

They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.

OR

- 2** '*A Christmas Carol* is a story about poverty.' How far do you agree with this view?

Explore at least two moments from the novel to support your ideas. **[40]**

Mark scheme for Question 1

Please bear in mind that other content may be equally valid and should be credited.

AO1:

- Exploration of the young Scrooge's isolation 'A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.'
- Exploration of the extent to which the young Scrooge's loneliness is emphasised by the desolate setting 'a chilly bareness in the place.'
- Links to Scrooge's loneliness in the wider text: Fan's death, his broken engagement with Belle, his future lonely death 'plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for'.

AO2:

- Exploration of Scrooge's distress when presented with the memory of his younger self 'And he sobbed..and wept to see his poor forgotten self.'
- Consideration of the setting as representative of Scrooge's loneliness 'a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks.'
- Consideration of Scrooge's loneliness linked to lack of family and the eventual end to his loneliness being a part of two families with the Cratchits and Fred. Consideration also of Scrooge's recognition of his loneliness as means to his transformation.

AO3:

- Understanding of the importance of family life in Victorian England.
- Understanding of the novel as an allegory for how to live life surrounded by loved ones.
- Understanding of the growth of capitalism in Victorian England leading to avaricious and miserly attitudes as embodied by Scrooge.

AO4:

- With the exception of summer 2021, quality of written communication will carry a total of 4 marks for this question.

Mark scheme for Question 2

Please bear in mind that other content may be equally valid and should be credited.

AO1:

- Consideration that poverty is everywhere in the novel e.g. the charity collector explains 'Many thousands are in want of common necessities.' The Cratchit family as an example of people living in poverty e.g. Mrs Cratchit is 'brave in ribbons' as a means of trying to make herself look respectable and the Christmas goose must be 'eked out.'
- Consideration that poverty may also be explored through poverty of spirit rather than wealth. Fred's attitude to Christmas and Scrooge's reaction; the Cratchit family's resilience and warmth.
- Exploration of the extent to which the novel is about more than poverty e.g. the Cratchits may be poor but they are rich in love and gratitude 'nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family.' Consideration also of the novel's links with social responsibility, family, redemption, Christmas spirit etc.

AO2:

- Exploration of the juxtaposition of the festive Christmas atmosphere with the dark and disturbing imagery used to describe the backdrop of poverty. Similarly, the contrast in language used to portray family and poverty.
- Consideration of Dickens' use of exaggeration to emphasise the Cratchits making the most of their situation e.g. the Cratchits think their goose is "the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course."
- Consideration of the novel's circular structure e.g. repetition of the charity collector, to show the change in Scrooge, including his view towards the poor, family values etc.

AO3:

- Understanding of the novel as social criticism on the plight of the poor.
- Understanding that Christianity was prevalent in 19th Century Britain and the Christian principles of love, repentance and forgiveness are at the centre of the novel.

AO4:

- With the exception of summer 2021, quality of written communication will carry a total of 4 marks for this question.

SET 3**Section B****19th century prose**

Answer one question from this section.

***A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens**

Choose **ONE** question.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

EITHER

- 1** How does Dickens present suffering and loss in this extract and elsewhere in the novel? **[40]**

In this extract the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come shows Scrooge that Tiny Tim has died.

Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday, he said.

"Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?" said his wife.

"Yes, my dear," returned Bob. "I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child!" cried Bob. "My little child!"

He broke down all at once. He couldn't help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were.

He left the room, and went up-stairs into the room above, which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas. There was a chair set close beside the child, and there were signs of some one having been there, lately. Poor Bob sat down in it, and when he had thought a little and composed himself, he kissed the little face. He was reconciled to what had happened, and went down again quite happy.

OR

- 2** 'The descriptions of the ghosts in *A Christmas Carol* represent the different roles they play in Scrooge's transformation.' How far do you agree with this view?

Explore at least two moments from the novel to support your ideas. **[40]**

Mark scheme for Question 1

Please bear in mind that other content may be equally valid and should be credited.

AO1:

- Consideration of Bob attempting to remain positive for the rest of his family and the strain on him 'Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family.' Consideration also of him being overcome with grief 'He broke down all at once. He couldn't help it.'
- Consideration of Bob's bravery as he comes to terms with his loss 'He was reconciled to what had happened.'
- Exploration of suffering and loss elsewhere in the novel: Scrooge's loneliness and loss in early part of his life, Ignorance and Want are 'pinched' and 'twisted' opposite to what they should be as children.

AO2:

- Consideration of the language used by Bob when grieving for Tiny Tim "“My little, little child!” cried Bob. “My little child!”” Repetition and adjectives emphasising the innocence of Tim and therefore the tragedy. Use of the pronoun 'My' highlighting the huge loss to Bob.
- Consideration of the juxtaposition of the cheerful setting 'hung with Christmas' and Bob's grief 'Poor Bob' as a means of creating sympathy.
- Exploration of Dickens' use of descriptive language in order to portray the harsh realities of the poor "the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery".

AO3:

- Understanding of the novel as social criticism on the plight of the poor.
- Understanding of the novel as commentary on the importance of Christian values such as generosity and charity.

AO4:

- With the exception of summer 2021, quality of written communication will carry a total of 4 marks for this question.

Mark scheme for Question 2

Please bear in mind that other content may be equally valid and should be credited.

AO1:

- Consideration of the Ghost of Christmas Present as compassionate and generous 'its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air.'; associated with abundance and generosity and the link to Scrooge's realisation of the importance of generosity and charity.
- Consideration of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come as sinister and symbolic of death 'shrouded in a deep black garment' and the associated link with the frightening future shown to Scrooge. Consideration also of the ghost's 'kind hand trembled' in response to Scrooge's distress suggesting the ghost's purpose is to help Scrooge.
- Exploration of the ghosts as fleeting 'my time is nearly gone' but the transformation they bring about in Scrooge is long lasting.

AO2:

- Consideration of power associated with all three ghosts and the link to Scrooge's eventual transformation. The Ghost of Christmas Past shows 'no visible resistance' to Scrooge's attempted struggle, Scrooge 'obeyed' the Ghost of Christmas Present and 'feared the silent shape' of the third ghost.
- Consideration of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come as not speaking and therefore a reflection that Scrooge's future is unknown and only he has the ability to change it.
- Consideration of the bells as a unifying symbol of the ghosts and their collective role in Scrooge's transformation.

AO3:

- Understanding that telling ghost stories around the fireside was a popular form of entertainment in the Victorian era.
- Understanding of the novel as a commentary on social responsibility, highlighted by the ghosts.

AO4:

- With the exception of summer 2021, quality of written communication will carry a total of 4 marks for this question.

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