Eduqas English Literature GCSE

A Christmas Carol
Glossary of Key Terms

A Christmas Carol Glossary - AQA English Literature GCSE

Language Techniques

Alliteration - Repetition of the same sound, usually letters in close succession.

Allusion - An indirect reference to a concept or theme without explicit mention.
*[Scrooge uses Biblical allusion as he believes the Ghost of Christmas Present is God or at least related to Him in some way, "**It has been done in your name, or at least in that of your family**"].*

Anaphora - A word which refers to a previously used word.

Antithesis - Rhetorical device where contrasting concepts are placed together in a text, typically a sentence, to highlight how opposite they are. [*When Fred is introduced having a "**cheerful voice**" straight after Scrooge's wickedness is described*].

Asyndetic Listing - A list broken up by commas rather than conjunctions like 'and'.

Auditory imagery - Language which appeals to the reader's hearing.

Biblical - Relating to the bible; religious connotations.

Catalyst - A dramatic tool which is used to speed up the plot.

Colloquialism - An informal phrase common at its time of utterance.

Connotation - Using text to create implied meaning without explicitly referring to said meaning.

Didactic - A moral message, meaning to give instructions.

Dramatic Irony - When the audience knows information which the character does not know.

Epitome - The perfect/ultimate embodiment of quality.

Foreboding - Apprehension that a bad event will occur.

Foreshadowing - An indication that an event will occur later in the narrative. [*Fan says that her father is much "**kinder**" than before which Scrooge's change*].

Hyperbole - Use of exaggerated statements.

Interjection - Sudden remark, used often as an interruption or aside in the text. *["Bah Humbug!"]*

Irony - Embedding a meaning by using language typically implying the opposite of what the writer is intending to express, often for a humorous effect.

Juxtaposition - Comparing two concepts, characters, or clauses, in close proximity in a passage for the effect of contrast.

Moral imperative - An instruction on what is right and wrong, the Ghosts provide this.

Olfactory imagery - Appeals to the reader's sense of smell.

Oxymoron - Two opposing terms are placed next to each other.

Pathetic Fallacy - A kind of personification in which human emotions are projected onto nature, especially weather, often to create a mood. [In the opening pages of the novella, Dickens notes *"no wind that blew was bitterer than [Scrooge], no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty."* By attributing emotions to this weather Dickens can contrast it with Scrooge to show how bitter, unflexible and uncharitable he is]

Personification - Attributing human qualities to nonhuman things, whether animate or inanimate [e.g. in Stave One, the church tower is described as having a *"gruff old bell [which is] always peeping slily down at Scrooge"*. This instance of personification indicates Scrooge's attitude towards religion; he may see it as cold or unfriendly as well as having a tendency to meddle or intrude on his private affairs]

Poetic Justice - This is normally accompanied with some sort of irony, or when characters get what they deserve. *[As a child Scrooge was "neglected" and then in the prolepsis, his gravestone is also "neglected"]*

Polysyndetic Listing - Listing using conjunctions such as 'and'.

Prolepsis - A flash forward. e.g the scenes that the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come shows Scrooge.

Semantic Field - A writer uses words which are linked by a theme or topic throughout a text or passage.

Satire - Criticizing people through the use of humour or irony. *[Scrooge says "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"].*

Sibilance - Repetition of 's' sounds.

Stave - In musical notation, a 'stave' is a set of five horizontal lines where music is written and each often represents a different musical pitch.

Syntactic - Relating to the arrangement of words within a sentence within a text.

Symbolism - Using one object or character to represent a wider concept running throughout the novel. [*Scrooge symbolises the attitudes of the upper class*].

Superlative - An adjective describing the highest degree of what it is. *[The Ghost of Christmas Past has clothing of the "**purest**" white.]*

Temporal deixis - Language which references or manipulates time.

Tricolon - Three parallel phrases/words are placed in succession within a text, without interruption.

Structural techniques

Altruistic attitude - Behaviour which is based on devotion to others.

Authorial Voice - An authoritative voice, which the Ghosts have.

Dichotomy - Contrast of two beings that are opposed or distinctly different.

Foil - A character which serves to contrast another, to emphasise certain characteristics of the other character. *[Fred is a foil to Scrooge]*

Idealisation - Imagining something better than it is in reality, it can be argued that the character of Bob Cratchit is idealised.

Intrusive Narrator - A narrator who sometimes interrupts the story to give commentary.

Metamorphosis - A transformation or change.

Narrative arc - The storyline of the novel.

Novella - A short novel roughly 20,000 - 40,000 words.

Omniscient narrator - A narrator who is all-knowing.

Context Vocabulary

Archetype - The traditional/ typical idea of a concept, Scrooge at the beginning is an archetypal villain.

Blue Laws - Laws prohibiting leisure on Sundays.

Bob - During the Victorian era the word 'bob' was often used as a slang word for 'shilling'.

Catharsis - Relief derived from releasing repressed emotions.

Capitalism - An economic system based on private ownership.

Counting house - Similar to an accountant's office.

Covetous - Synonymous with jealousy.

Debtors Prison - A prison someone goes to when they owe money, Dickens father spent some time there.

Deviant - Someone who breaks social norms and values.

Humbug - An expression of distaste.

Industrial Revolution - This was when the means of production of Britain switched from agriculture to industry.

Malthusian Economics - Thomas Malthus was an economist in Victorian times and believed that London was overpopulated and so poverty would be inevitable as food supplies and housing would not be enough to sustain the growing city population.

Misanthropic - A person who dislikes other people.

Moral - Awareness of the principles of right and wrong conduct.

Ostracised - Cut off from society.

Parliamentary Journalist - Someone who reports on governmental issues, Dickens was a parliamentary judge which may be why he was so socially aware.

Philanthropy - An act of helping those less well off than yourself, especially involving donations of money.

Phrenology - A Victorian science which studied bumps on the skull to predict mental traits, which has now been disproved and is regarded as pseudoscience (fake science)

Purgatory - This is a Medieval Christian belief which is a prison, a sort of limbo between hell and life, in which you are given another chance and supposed to be made ready for Heaven. Marley's Ghost lives in the "*incessant torture".*

Ragged Schools - Schools which provided basic education and provided for children who lived in poverty, Dickens was a contributor of these.

Sabbatarianism - A religious belief that it is a sin to work on Sunday as it is the Lord's day.

Socialism - An economic system based on shared ownership.

Transmorphism - A transformation from one thing to another.

Treadmill - This was a means of production in which was used to produce flour as the workers would walk the wheel.

Union workhouses - These were apart of the Gilbert Act which allowed parishes to join together to become responsible for the workhouses.

1834 Poor Law - A system of welfare which introduced workhouses.

1833 Factory Act on Child Labour - Children have to be 9 years old to work and had to have basic education.