



# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

WRITTEN BY CHARLES DICKENS  
ADAPTED BY MICAH-SHANE BREWER

**STUDY GUIDE**  
BY MIKE SALLEE, JR.



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## DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome back to the Rep and our brand new production of A Christmas Carol! We've been preparing many months for this, and we're honored that you've chosen to spend time with us this holiday season.



I love this time of year! It's filled with excitement and anticipation as we gather to celebrate the season. There's a special feeling in the air, and my inner child lights up when I see the decorations, hear the music, visit with family and friends, and experience the joy that this season brings. However, it always seems that there's too much to do and not enough time for everything. With the hustle and bustle of the busy time, I find myself wanting to slow down to savor each and every moment.

Holiday traditions connect us in the present moment to significant and special memories of our past, and A Christmas Carol has been part of my holiday tradition for as long as I can remember. Every year, I revisit this story, and every year it grows nearer and dearer to my heart.

Charles Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol in the winter of 1843, when he was struggling financially, and it became an instant success. It was very much a reflection of that particular moment in time and the issues of that day. Dickens originally intended to write a pamphlet entitled "An Appeal to the People of England on behalf of the Poor Man's Child." He had just read the government report on the harsh child labor conditions in the United Kingdom. It led him to create a story with a contemptible central character.

It's ironic that A Christmas Carol became his most beloved story, as it was written very early in his career. He would go on to write many more works, but the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge would become one of the most popular stories ever told. Since 1843, the short novel has never gone out of print.

A Christmas Carol is far more than just a classic holiday story; it is a poignant and transformative reflection of our shared human experience and an enduring reminder of the power of empathy and connection. It asks all of us to examine our past decisions, our present opportunities, and our potential future.

How can we also become more compassionate people? How are we making a difference in the lives of those around us? Let's face it: the world can look pretty dark and grim these days, and we have a job to do by bringing as much light and peace to those around us as we can.

This story humbles me, and my hope is that this performance not only entertains you, but inspires you to embrace the true spirit of the season.

God Bless Us, Everyone!

## MICAH-SHANE BREWER, DIRECTOR

# 02

# CREATING 'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'



**CHARLES DICKENS**, in full Charles John Huffam Dickens, (born February 7, 1812, Portsmouth, Hampshire, England—died June 9, 1870, Gad's Hill, near Chatham, Kent), English novelist, generally considered the greatest of the Victorian era. His many volumes include such works as *A Christmas Carol*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, and *Our Mutual Friend*.

Unlike many other authors of his time, Dickens gained universal popularity from the masses. His works appealed to all classes, not just the wealthy elite.

Dickens commentary on child labor laws, the abuse of power and the neglect toward the working class from the employer made audiences eager to read his words. Charles Dickens wrote **A CHRISTMAS CAROL** as a response to the dire issue of child labor in **1843** England.

Originally, he planned to address this problem in a pamphlet titled "An Appeal to the People of England on behalf of the Poor Man's Child." However, within a week, he decided to convey his arguments through a story with a deeply sympathetic main character, which resonated more with audiences.

When we first meet Ebenezer Scrooge, he is a rich and powerful leader with no regard or care for those who work underneath him and no desire to do for those who cannot do for themselves. Quickly, we see clearly Dickens' stance on this form of leadership. Then we see what can happen when one leads solely with power, greed, and anger. If you look past the impact you have on others, you may be haunted in your past, present, and future. Dickens' silver lining that it is never too late to make a **CHANGE**.



Marley's Ghost.

# TIME PERIOD OF 'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'

**A *Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens is set in 19th-century Victorian England and provides a vivid depiction of the era. Here are some key aspects to highlight about this time period:**

**FASHION** The Victorian era, which broadly spanned from the early 19th century to the early 20th century, saw distinctive fashion trends. During the time of *A Christmas Carol* (published in 1843), men wore top hats, tailcoats, and cravats, while women wore full, long dresses with corsets and bonnets. This was a period of elaborate and formal clothing.

**GOVERNMENT & POLITICS** The story is set during a time when England was a constitutional monarchy, and Queen Victoria was on the throne. The government was marked by political reforms, including the expansion of voting rights and the development of the British Empire.

**CIVILIZATION** The Victorian era was marked by significant advances in industry and technology, leading to the rise of the Industrial Revolution. This era saw the rapid urbanization of cities, the expansion of railways, and the development of new technologies that transformed daily life.

**CITIZENS** Society was divided into various classes, with the upper class, middle class, and working class each having distinct roles and social expectations. The story highlights the stark differences in living conditions and opportunities for these different groups.

**CHILD LABOR** Child labor was prevalent during this time, and many poor children had to work in harsh conditions in factories. The plight of impoverished children is a central theme in *A Christmas Carol*, as seen through the character of Tiny Tim.

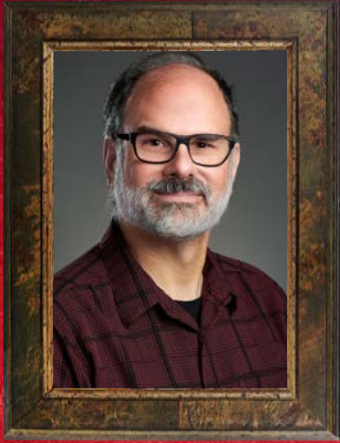
**SOCIAL STATUS** The story sheds light on the stark social and economic inequalities of the era. Ebenezer Scrooge, the main character, is a symbol of extreme greed and indifference to the suffering of the poor, while Bob Cratchit and his family represent the struggling working class.

**SOCIAL REFORM** *A Christmas Carol* is often seen as a social critique, reflecting Dickens' concerns about the conditions of the poor and the need for social reform. The story promotes the idea of compassion and generosity, urging individuals and society to address the issues of poverty and inequality.



# CREATING THE WORLD

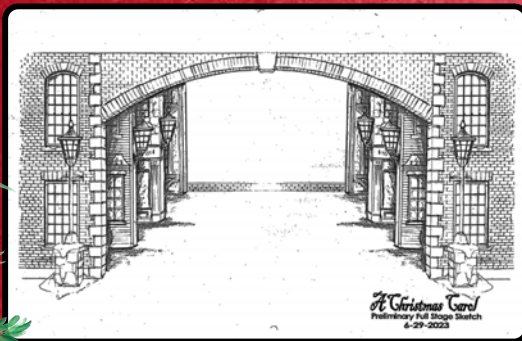
## NOTES FROM THE SCENIC DESIGNER



*A Christmas Carol* is one of those shows that a Scenic Designer will design many times in their career. This is true for me as well. So, when thinking about designing A CHRISTMAS CAROL, I needed to step back and look at it with fresh eyes.

We were tasked with creating a **FULL SCALE, RICHLY DETAILED, SUMPTUOUS DESIGN.** Also, four actors are **FLYING!**

So, what you will see when the curtain goes up is a complete London Street scene. A large front portal framing the stage and detailed buildings flanking each side of the stage. The backdrop will be a project street scene created by our Projection Designer DJ Pike. The “base set” will stay throughout the entire production with rolling and flying scenic pieces creating individual scenes. To achieve the many scenic locations, there are four slip-stage (two stage right and two stage left). One slip-stage that is stage right will be Scrooge’s Bedroom and one slip-stage stage left is Scrooge and Marley’s Counting House. The other two slip-stage will be used for the other locations. The flying pieces are just what is needed to set a scene and are not a fully realized set for each scene.



**WHAT TO LOOK FOR:** All of the dimensional decorations are created with latex caulk. See if you can find them.

I hope you are swept away to the world of *A Christmas Carol*.

## GARY C. HOFF, SCENIC DESIGN

# 05

## ACTIVITY PROMPT

# SCROOGE & EVOLUTION TIMELINE

In *A Christmas Carol*, one of the most important parts of the story is the transformation of the main character, Ebenezer Scrooge. Scrooge goes from being a grumpy and greedy old man to a warm and generous one. In this activity, we're going to create a visual timeline that captures Scrooge's amazing change, including the important events and quotes that show how he becomes a better person.



## MATERIALS

- Paper or poster board
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons
- Scissors and glue (if creating a collage)
- Images or illustrations related to the story (optional)
- Access to the text of *A Christmas Carol*



## INSTRUCTIONS

- Understanding Scrooge's Transformation:** Begin by discussing with the students the character of Ebenezer Scrooge. Talk about his personality at the beginning of the story (grumpy, greedy, and selfish) and how he changes by the end (kind, generous, and joyful).
- Selecting Key Events:** Identify the important events in Scrooge's transformation. These could include encounters with the ghosts, moments with Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim, and his change of heart on Christmas morning.
- Quotes that Reflect Change:** Find quotes from the text that capture Scrooge's changing attitude and feelings. These quotes should show how he goes from a miserly old man to a more generous one.
- Creating the Timeline:**
  - Draw a line or use a timeline template on your paper.
  - On the left side, mark the beginning of the story with Scrooge's name and describe his character at that point.
  - As you move to the right along the timeline, add key events and quotes at the appropriate places. You can illustrate these events if you'd like.
  - Include a space for Scrooge's character at the end of the story, showing his transformation.
- Decorate and Explain:** Use markers, colored pencils, or images to make your timeline visually appealing. Color and decorate it to reflect the story's holiday spirit.
- Share and Discuss:** After completing the timeline, have each student share their work and explain why they chose certain events and quotes to represent Scrooge's transformation.

**WRAP-UP** This activity helps you understand how a character can change throughout a story and the importance of key events and quotes in showing that change. It also allows you to be creative and visually represent the transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*.

# CAST

**MATTHEW CARLTON**  
as Ebenezer Scrooge

**ERIC D. PASTO-CROSBY**  
as Bob Cratchit

**BRIAN CHARLES ROONEY**  
as Christmas Present

**GALEN FOTT**  
as Mr. Fezziwig

**BRIAN WEBB RUSSELL**  
as Jacob Marley

**CHRISTINE TOOLE**  
as Sarah

**IVORY BODNAR**  
as Belle

**EVAN FENNE**  
as Young Ebenezer

**SHELBY TALBERT**  
as Martha Cratchit

**CAROLINE HENRY**  
as Alice Cratchit

**ALEX HILLAKER**  
as Henry Cratchit, Boy Scrooge

**DAVID MATTHEW CLARK**  
as Tiny Tim & Kid Scrooge

**JENNIFER WHITCOMB-OLIVA**  
as Elizabeth Cratchit

**KRIS SIDBERRY**  
as Christmas Past

**BEN FRIESEN**  
as Dick Wilkins & Christmas Future

**DENICE HICKS**  
as Mrs. Fezziwig

**MAX FLEISCHHACKER**  
as Nephew Fred

**ETHAN JONES**  
as Mr. Blakeley

**DEB MEEKS**  
as Mrs. Kimball

**DAVID LONG III**  
as Peter Cratchit

**ELLE WESLEY**  
as Belinda Cratchit

**ABBY HOOPER**  
as Alice Cratchit

**EMILY HOOPER**  
as Tiny Tim & Kid Scrooge





# THEMES OF 'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'



Themes are crucial in *A Christmas Carol* as they provide a moral framework that guides the narrative, conveys important life lessons, engages readers in thought-provoking reflection, offers universal relevance, and serves as a vehicle for social critique and advocacy. These themes evoke emotions, inspire discussion, and provide unity to the story, making Charles Dickens' novella a timeless and impactful work that continues to resonate with audiences by addressing fundamental aspects of the human condition and the need for personal and societal change. Below, you'll find some of the central themes of the show.

**REDEMPTION** The central theme of the story is Ebenezer Scrooge's personal transformation from a miserly, selfish, and unfeeling individual into a generous, compassionate, and loving one. His journey toward redemption is the heart of the narrative.

**GENEROSITY** The story emphasizes the importance of compassion and generosity, particularly during the holiday season. It encourages readers to consider the welfare of others and to share their blessings with those in need.

**SOCIAL INJUSTICE** Dickens uses the character of Scrooge and his callous attitude toward the poor to shed light on the social injustices and economic inequalities of Victorian society. The novella serves as a critique of the treatment of the working class and the dire conditions in which many lived.

**RELATIONSHIPS** The importance of family and friendship is evident through the character of Bob Cratchit and his love for his family, as well as Scrooge's changing relationship with his nephew Fred. The story underscores the value of human connections.

**MEMORY & REFLECTION** The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge on a journey through his own past, highlighting the role of memory and reflection in shaping one's character and actions.

**IMPACT OF ISOLATION** Scrooge's isolation and detachment from society are portrayed as destructive forces. The story suggests that meaningful connections and relationships are essential for a fulfilling and joyful life.

# DRESSING THE ACTORS

## NOTES FROM THE COSTUME DESIGNER



I am the Costume Designer for the Rep's latest incarnation of *A Christmas Carol*. I'm excited to have the opportunity to design the costumes for this particular production because even though it's a story that I've long known, I've never had the opportunity to help tell it. This story is **TRIUMPHANT**; in it you find love, loss, loneliness, fear, hope, and redemption. I am excited to clothe those emotions and help share the magic of Christmas with an incredible creative team

To begin costume designing any production, you must have a **DIRECTION**: a vision of where, when, and why this story is being told...and by whom. This was given to us by our Scriptwriter & Director Micah-Shane Brewer. Our version of *A Christmas Carol* will be set during the **REGENCY & VICTORIAN** eras in England told by an ensemble of players with the goal of uplifting our audience. To capture this time, I began by researching the Regency & Victorian eras in England. However, that was merely a jumping off point. I also researched the original illustrations that Dicken's included in his novella, as well as a host of other images that have long been tied to the story. I enjoy having a historical reference point that I can use to create my own version of the characters. Because theatre is a living breathing art, and not a reenactment, we have the freedom to use modern textiles, patterns, and colors to help create a sense of connection or disconnection, wealth or poverty, emotional warmth or cold loneliness.



MELISSA DURMON, COSTUME DESIGN

# CREATING SCROOGE'S ROBE



## 1. Color Psychology and Scrooge's Representation

- Choose blue tones for Scrooge's character.
- Dark blue symbolizes depth, stability, power, and trustworthiness.

## 2. Scrooge's Transformation

- Show that Scrooge evolves from a lack of integrity to finding it.
- Use blue to connect the audience to his humanity and redemption.

## 3. Color Symbolism for Life Stages

- Use various colors to depict Scrooge's different life stages.
- Warm earth tones for the Cratchit family.
- Reflect his disconnection from his family and future.

## 4. Character Progression

- Represent his young businessman stage with navy tones.
- Show the decline in love and compassion as he gains power.

## 5. Senior Years and Bitterness

- Portray his senior years with primarily black layers, hinting at mourning.
- Transition to bedclothes and predominantly navy to symbolize his loneliness.

## 6. Costume Symbolism

- Use damask fabric to reflect his financial status.
- Choose a robe style inspired by historical dressing gowns.

## 7. Audience Connection

- Hope that the chosen costume helps the audience connect with Scrooge emotionally and symbolically.

## 8. Transformation at the End

- As the play ends, Scrooge changes into day clothes.
- Leaves behind the black cape and reveals a blue frock coat, symbolizing his rejuvenated spirit and joy in generosity.



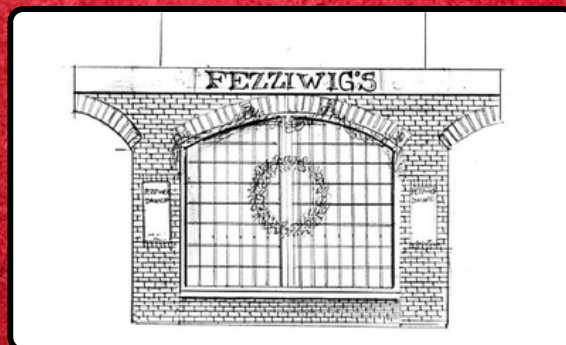
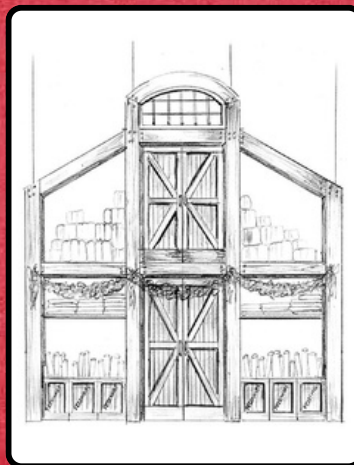
# WRITING PROMPT

## AN EVENING WITH THE FEZZIWIGS

In "A Christmas Carol," the Fezziwigs are memorable characters who embody the joy and spirit of Christmas. They contrast with Ebenezer Scrooge's later miserly ways. Imagine that you are hosting a Fezziwig-inspired Christmas party. Write a detailed description of this festive celebration, including the following:

1. The content of the party invitation, which includes the date, time, location, and any special activities or traditions you'd like to include.
2. The decorations and how you would make the setting look joyful and vibrant, similar to the Fezziwigs.
3. A party plan that outlines the food, music, and activities to ensure everyone has a great time, just like the Fezziwigs' parties.
4. A reflection on the importance of celebrating and spreading joy during the holidays, in alignment with the themes of "A Christmas Carol."

Consider the impact of the Fezziwigs in the story and how their approach to celebrating Christmas differs from Scrooge's. Describe how your Fezziwig-inspired party embodies the spirit of the holiday season.



# HISTORY OF A CHRISTMAS CAROL

**1843** Charles Dickens original book *A Christmas Carol* was published

**1844** the first staged reading of *A Christmas Carol*

**1901** the first film adaptation, a silent film *Scrooge; Marley's Ghost* created by Walter R Booth

**1944** the first televised version of *A Christmas Carol*

**1951**

Arguably the most popular film adaptation originally title '*Scrooge*' and later renamed *A Christmas Carol* starring Alastair Sim as Scrooge

The first musical version of *A Christmas Carol* was adapted, written and directed by Tim Dietlein. It just celebrated it's 50th Anniversary running in the Glendale Centre Theatre

**1964**

**1962**

The first animated version titled *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol* was incorporated into the ever popular *Mr. Magoo* series with Mr Magoo playing the role of Scrooge

**2022**

The most recent film adaptation of *Scrooge: A Christmas Carol* an animated musical, premiered on Netflix

**2023**

