



A CHRISTMAS CAROL: FAMILY: MODEL ANSWER

Adapted from Nimco's essay.

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL: FAMILY: QUESTION

Read this extract from A Christmas Carol and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge is being shown the vision of the future where the Cratchit family have lost Tiny Tim.

She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter—he had need of it, poor fellow—came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid, each child a little cheek, against his face, as if they said, “Don’t mind it, father. Don’t be grieved!”

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.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the theme of family in A Christmas Carol?

Write about:

- how Dickens present the theme of family in this extract
- how Dickens presents the theme of family in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]





A CHRISTMAS CAROL: FAMILY: ANSWER OUTLINE

ESSAY OUTLINE

Introduction

Hook	"Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business."
Building sentences	Dickens believed that transforming and softening the hearts of individuals would reform capitalism without any need of a revolution.
Thesis statement	A Christmas Carol strongly articulates this theme throughout the novella by constantly reminding Scrooge that to better himself he has to overcome his 'fear' of the 'world' and learn to embrace not only his immediate family but everyone around him.

Body paragraph 1

Topic sentence	The Cratchits provide a counterpoint to Scrooge and illustrate the novel's predominant theme that family and generosity are more valuable than great riches.
Supporting sentences	Scrooge has the one thing they don't, money, but the Cratchits have everything else that leads to happiness and contentment: family, love, kindness and generosity; even their father who struggles to provide for his family is "very cheerful". While Scrooge sits alone amid his piles of money in his dark, gloomy house, hoping the poor will die and rid the world of excess population, poor sick Tiny Tim, the youngest Cratchit, who is doomed to die if his family doesn't find more money, blesses everyone. Likewise,





	Bob Cratchit, the clerk Scrooge underpaid and overworked, remains cheerful because he has what matters most in life: a loving family and a good heart. Bob yelps “my little child” emphasising Bob and Tiny Tim’s helplessness and, perhaps in an attempt to evoke and sense of guilt from the capitalists and readers; the adjective “little”, especially, connotes Tim being feeble, weak and not deserving of death so young.
Concluding sentence(s)	Additionally, through the celebration and positivity of the Cratchets, Dickens proposes that connecting individuals to one another is what ultimately corrects the social injustice created by capitalism.

Body paragraph 2

Topic sentence	However, in the second stave, Dickens illustrates the immense pain that family relationships can create.
Supporting sentences	<p>For example, although in stave one, Dickens describes Scrooge as a “squeezing, wrenching, covetous, old sinner”, which naturally gives paints him in a negative in the eyes of the reader, in stave two Dickens portrays a completely contrasting image of him; when The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge and the reader on a journey to Scrooge’s childhood and early adult years, we learn about his traumatic and tragic experiences, such as the dysfunctional relationship he has with his father, the death of his sister and his fiancée calling off the wedding, because he had ‘replaced her with a golden idol’. Therefore, Dickens structures the novella in such a way that he allows the readers to dislike Scrooge’s character from the onset, but then illustrates to us clearly his traumatic past so we begin to feel sympathy for him and can understand that it is his experiences as a child and as a young man which had caused him to become so cold and to seek comfort in money, instead. Consequently, we can infer that Dickens deliberately structures the novella this way to teach the readers of all classes a lesson; he wants the readers to understand that it is not just the capitalists who need to change their ‘tight-fisted’ ways but that we all need to understand each other, even those who may treat us badly, as something may have occurred in their lives which has caused them to ‘fear the world too much’ and become detached from humanity. In Scrooge’s case, this detachment from humanity had stemmed from the unpleasant past he had experienced. He had become accustomed to failed human relationships, from the fragile relationship with his angry father, being sent away to boarding</p>





	school and the death of his little sister Fan. As a result of these upsetting events, Scrooge attempts to fill the void of heartbreak, disappointment and loss by turning towards money, which he sees it as something that will always be there for him unlike the people in his life;
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Concluding sentence(s)	Dickens suggests that Scrooge is afraid to form friendships or show affection towards people because he does not want to lose them and he does not want to be let down by them, however Dickens also suggests, through the Cratchets, that we cannot lose faith in humanity because it is only through human connection that we can right the wrongs of social inequity.
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Body paragraph 3 (OPTIONAL)

Topic sentence	
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Supporting sentences	
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Concluding sentence(s)	
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Conclusion

Restated thesis	In conclusion, we could look at "A Christmas Carol" not as expressing the idea that capitalism is bad, or that Dickens is calling for a socialist revolution (which some of his other works may be doing), as much as saying that capitalism needs to be improved and employers have the responsibility to do that. Instead, it seems as though he is offering a beacon of what a capitalist can actually achieve: he does this firstly through Fezziwig, Scrooge's old employer; while he is just as successful a businessman as Scrooge, he is also a complete contrast. For one thing, he is far more benevolent and treats his employees graciously.
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Summary of controlling concept	Through his words and actions, perhaps we may argue that Dickens is offering us the quintessential 'good capitalist'. For example, Dickens writes, "He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:" So, perhaps, Dickens is offering a kind of ultimatum to capitalists: one can be hard, cruel, unloved and disrespect their
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	employees, like Marley and Scrooge, or one can be "rich, fat and jovial" like Fezziwig.
Author's purpose	Scrooge eventually learns this lesson that Marley's ghost introduced to him in the first stave; he raised Bob's salary, 'was better than his word ... became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world.' However, the key to Scrooge's redemption is, perhaps, his realisation that humanity is one big family, because 'to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father.
Final thought (what idea/message can we learn?)	Therefore, perhaps, this is the lesson of the story, that capitalists can fulfil their purpose if they learn to see the less wealthy not as a 'surplus population', but as family that they need to reconnect to, because only then will they open their hand and gain true happiness, and correct social wrongs, just as Scrooge does.

MAKE SURE YOUR ESSAY CONTAINS ALL OF THESE QUALITIES

Tick these off when you have added them to your essay

- Methods - author's techniques
- Context
- Effects of the author's methods on the audience/reader
- Link to another part of the text - talk about the meaning of the connection
- Symbolism
- Themes
- Author's purpose





A CHRISTMAS CAROL: FAMILY 100% MODEL ANSWER

“Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business.” Dickens believed that transforming and softening the hearts of individuals would reform capitalism without any need of a revolution. A Christmas Carol strongly articulates this theme throughout the novella by constantly reminding Scrooge that to better himself he has to overcome his ‘fear’ of the ‘world’ and learn to embrace not only his immediate family but everyone around him.

The Cratchits provide a counterpoint to Scrooge and illustrate the novel's predominant theme that family and generosity are more valuable than great riches. Scrooge has the one thing they don't, money, but the Cratchits have everything else that leads to happiness and contentment: family, love, kindness and generosity; even their father who struggles to provide for his family is “very cheerful”. In contrast to Scrooge who sits alone amid his piles of money in his dark, gloomy house, hoping the poor will die and rid the world of excess population, poor sick Tiny Tim, the youngest Cratchit, who is doomed to die if his family doesn't find more money, blesses everyone. Likewise, Bob Cratchit, the clerk Scrooge underpaid and overworked, remains cheerful because he has what matters most in life: a loving family and a good heart. Bob yelps “my little child” emphasising Bob and Tiny Tim’s helplessness and, perhaps in an attempt to evoke a sense of guilt from the capitalists and readers; the adjective “little”, especially, connotes Tim being feeble, weak and not deserving of death so young. Consequently, through the celebration and positivity of the Cratchets, Dickens proposes that connecting individuals to one another is what ultimately corrects the social injustice created by capitalism.

However, in the second stave, Dickens illustrates the immense pain that family relationships can create. For example, although in stave one, Dickens describes Scrooge as a “squeezing, wrenching, covetous, old sinner”, which naturally gives paints him in a negative in the eyes of the reader, in stave two Dickens portrays a completely contrasting image of him; when The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge and the reader on a journey to Scrooge’s childhood and early adult years, we learn about his traumatic and tragic experiences, such as the dysfunctional relationship he has with his father, the death of his sister and his fiancée calling off the wedding, because he had ‘replaced her with a golden idol’. Therefore, Dickens structures the novella in such a way that he allows the readers to dislike Scrooge's character from the onset, but then illustrates to us clearly his traumatic past so we begin to feel sympathy for him and can understand that it is his experiences as a child and as a young man which had caused him to become so cold and to seek comfort in money, instead. Consequently, we can infer that Dickens deliberately structures the novella this way to teach the readers of all classes a lesson; he wants the readers to understand that it is not just the capitalists who need to change their ‘tight-fisted’ ways but that we all need to understand each other, even those who may treat us badly, as something may have occurred in their lives which has caused them to ‘fear the world too much’ and become detached from humanity. In Scrooge’s case, this detachment from humanity had stemmed from the unpleasant past he had experienced. He had become accustomed to failed human relationships, from the fragile relationship with his angry father, being sent away to boarding school and the death of his little sister Fan. As a result of these upsetting events, Scrooge attempts to fill the void of heartbreak, disappointment and loss by turning towards money, which he sees it as something that will always be there for him unlike the people in his life; Dickens suggests that Scrooge is afraid to form friendships or show affection towards people because he does not want to lose them and he does not want to be let down by them, however Dickens also suggests, through the Cratchets, that we cannot lose faith in humanity because it is only through human connection that we can right the wrongs of social inequity.





In conclusion, we could look at “A Christmas Carol” not as expressing the idea that capitalism is bad, or that Dickens is calling for a socialist revolution (which some of his other works may be doing), as much as saying that capitalism needs to be improved and employers have the responsibility to do that. Instead, it seems as though he is offering a beacon of what a capitalist can actually achieve: he does this firstly through Fezziwig, Scrooge’s old employer; while he is just as successful a businessman as Scrooge, he is also a complete contrast. For one thing, he is far more benevolent and treats his employees graciously. Through his words and actions, perhaps we may argue that Dickens is offering us the quintessential ‘good capitalist’. For example, Dickens writes, “He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:” So, perhaps, Dickens is offering a kind of ultimatum to capitalists: one can be hard, cruel, unloved and disrespect their employees, like Marley and Scrooge, or one can be “rich, fat and jovial” like Fezziwig. Scrooge eventually learns this lesson that Marley’s ghost introduced to him in the first stave; he raised Bob’s salary, ‘was better than his word ... became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world.’ However, the key to Scrooge’s redemption is, perhaps, his realisation that humanity is one big family, because ‘to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father. Therefore, perhaps, this is the lesson of the story, that capitalists can fulfil their purpose if they learn to see the less wealthy not as a ‘surplus population’, but as family that they need to reconnect to, because only then will they open their hand and gain true happiness, and correct social wrongs, just as Scrooge does.

