



# A CHRISTMAS CAROL: IGNORANCE AND WANT: MODEL ANSWER

Adapted from Rihana's essay.

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## A CHRISTMAS CAROL: IGNORANCE AND WANT: QUESTION

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

In this extract, Scrooge is being visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present and sees two children.

“It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it,” was the Spirit’s sorrowful reply. “Look here.”

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

“Oh, Man! look here. Look, look, down here!” exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

“Spirit! are they yours?” Scrooge could say no more.

“They are Man’s,” said the Spirit, looking down upon them. “And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!” cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. “Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And bide the end!”

“Have they no refuge or resource?” cried Scrooge.

“Are there no prisons?” said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. “Are there no workhouses?”

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

**Write about:**

- how Dickens present children in this extract
- how Dickens presents children in the novel as a whole.

**[30 marks]**





## A CHRISTMAS CAROL: IGNORANCE AND WANT: ANSWER OUTLINE

### ESSAY OUTLINE

#### *Introduction*

Hook	"This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want [...] but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written ``Doom".
Building sentences	A recurring theme in the work of Dickens is the tremendous gap between the rich and poor. Dickens was particularly concerned with the health, treatment and well-being of children, always among the most vulnerable; he portrayed the gritty world of the working class and lower class of London at a time when most novelists—most of them educated and from the upper class—had no sense of what poverty or its victims were like. In this era, then, a particular kind of ignorance and a particular kind of want were in their infancy, and they would only grow to become more pernicious if not dealt with early on.
Thesis statement	Therefore, Ignorance and Want are children who cling to the Ghost of Christmas Present because they are relatively small problems in the present; however, they are problems that will grow more significant the longer they are ignored.

#### *Body paragraph 1*

Topic sentence	When Scrooge is visited by two men asking for money for charity in stave one, he scoffs at the idea; he suggests that he already takes care of the poor by paying taxes that fund prisons and workhouses, and then he sends the men off without giving them anything.
Supporting sentences	Then, In Stave Three, Scrooge encounters two children called Ignorance and Want, hiding beneath the skirt of the Ghost of Christmas Present, and whom are symbolic of the poor in Victorian society. In contrast to Scrooge sending off the charity workers without a penny in stave one, the





	children's appearance in stave three shocks Scrooge because 'Where graceful youth should have filled their features out[...] stale and shrivelled hands, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them'. Additionally, the children are described in two long asyndetic lists of negative adjectives, "wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable... Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish" to emphasise the extent of the effects of poverty on the young. Here the ghost is not really addressing Scrooge, but "man" collectively – all of Dickens' readers. Then he tells the readers to "beware them both". With the revelation of these ragged, pitiful children, the Spirit is cautioning not only Scrooge, but all of mankind; he proclaims that they (ignorance and want) represent man's worst enemies -that many suffer and live through every day, but most especially the Ignorance in which man chooses to live his life .The Spirit cautions that, unless man wakes from his self imposed Ignorance, he will create his own downfall, his own "Doom." However, when he warns "but most of all beware the boy", who represents "ignorance", he is also offering a solution.
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Concluding sentence(s)	Dickens believed strongly in the power of education and literacy and was instrumental in forcing the government to pass the education act in 1880 that guaranteed at least a basic education for all children, so they could have more opportunities later on in life.
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*Body paragraph 2*

Topic sentence	Additionally, as Scrooge attends many events from his past, he begins to become more reflective.
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Supporting sentences	By the time he has finished viewing what is going on around him in the present and how he influences people's lives, he is starting to regret his negligence in doing his duty to help the poor. Scrooge's reaction to the two children is a complete contrast to his reaction to the poor in the first chapter. He is no longer thinking of himself, but, instead, the thought of the children going to a workhouse is now repellent to him. When Scrooge asks about the children, the ghost throws his words back at him with vehemence: "Are there no prisons?" The Ghost reminds Scrooge of his unfeeling words after warning him of the consequences to all members of Scrooge's society if the children, and the life conditions that they came from, continued to be unaddressed.
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Concluding sentence(s)	Scrooge is a different person now than when he said those words; he cares about these children because the ghostly intervention makes him see that
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	the loneliness and neglect he has brought upon himself is even worse than the general fear of the world that he developed from the neglect suffered during his childhood.
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*Body paragraph 3 (OPTIONAL)*

Topic sentence	
Supporting sentences	
Concluding sentence(s)	

*Conclusion*

Restated thesis	In conclusion, although Scrooge learns that Ignorance and Want are relatively small problems in the present, he also realises they are problems that will grow more significant the longer they are ignored and that we are all have the responsibility to solve these problems.
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Summary of controlling concept	Therefore, 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 Dickens 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.
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Author's purpose	Scrooge eventually learns the lesson about responsibility to 'mankind' that Marely'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
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	<p>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, through the story's children, is, perhaps, his realisation that humanity is one big family, because 'to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father.</p>
<p>Final thought (what idea/message can we learn?)</p>	<p>Therefore, perhaps, this is the lesson of the story, that capitalists can fulfil their purpose if they learn to see the less wealthy, especially society's poor children, 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.</p>

**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





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## A CHRISTMAS CAROL: IGNORANCE AND WANT 100% MODEL ANSWER

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“This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want [...] but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written ‘‘ Doom”. A recurring theme in the work of Dickens is the tremendous gap between the rich and poor. Dickens was particularly concerned with the health, treatment and well-being of children, always among the most vulnerable; he portrayed the gritty world of the working class and lower class of London at a time when most novelists—most of them educated and from the upper class—had no sense of what poverty or its victims were like. In this era, then, a particular kind of ignorance and a particular kind of want were in their infancy, and they would only grow to become more pernicious if not dealt with early on. Therefore, Ignorance and Want are children who cling to the Ghost of Christmas Present because they are relatively small problems in the present; however, they are problems that will grow more significant the longer they are ignored.

When Scrooge is visited by two men asking for money for charity in stave one, he scoffs at the idea; he suggests that he already takes care of the poor by paying taxes that fund prisons and workhouses, and then he sends the men off without giving them anything. Then, In Stave Three, Scrooge encounters two children called Ignorance and Want, hiding beneath the skirt of the Ghost of Christmas Present, and whom are symbolic of the poor in Victorian society. In contrast to Scrooge sending off the charity workers without a penny in stave one, the children’s appearance in stave three shocks Scrooge because ‘Where graceful youth should have filled their features out[...] stale and shrivelled hands, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them’. Additionally, the children are described in two long asyndetic lists of negative adjectives, “wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable... Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish” to emphasise the extent of the effects of poverty on the young. Here the ghost is not really addressing Scrooge, but “man” collectively – all of Dickens’ readers. Then he tells the readers to “beware them both”. With the revelation of these ragged, pitiful children, the Spirit is cautioning not only Scrooge, but all of mankind; he proclaims that they (ignorance and want) represent man’s worst enemies -that many suffer and live through every day, but most especially the Ignorance in which man chooses to live his life .The Spirit cautions that, unless man wakes from his self imposed Ignorance, he will create his own downfall, his own “Doom.” However, when he warns “but most of all beware the boy”, who represents “ignorance”, he is also offering a solution. Dickens believed strongly in the power of education and literacy and was instrumental in forcing the government to pass the education act in 1880 that guaranteed at least a basic education for all children, so they could have more opportunities later on in life.

Additionally, as Scrooge attends many events from his past, he begins to become more reflective. By the time he has finished viewing what is going on around him in the present and how he influences people’s lives, he is starting to regret his negligence in doing his duty to help the poor. Scrooge’s reaction to the two children is a complete contrast to his reaction to the poor in the first chapter. He is no longer thinking of himself, but, instead, the thought of the children going to a workhouse is now repellent to him. When Scrooge asks about the children, the ghost throws his words back at him with vehemence: “Are there no prisons?” The Ghost reminds Scrooge of his unfeeling words after warning him of the consequences to all members of Scrooge’s society if the children, and the life conditions that they came from, continued to be unaddressed. Scrooge is a different person now than when he said those words; he cares about these children because the ghostly intervention makes him see that the loneliness and neglect he has brought upon himself is even worse than the general fear of the world that he developed from the neglect suffered during his childhood.

In conclusion, although Scrooge learns that Ignorance and Want are relatively small problems in the present, he also realises that they are problems that will grow more significant the longer they are ignored and that we are all have the responsibility to solve these problems. Therefore, 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 Dickens 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 the lesson about responsibility to 'mankind' 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, through the story's children, 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, especially society's poor children, 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.

