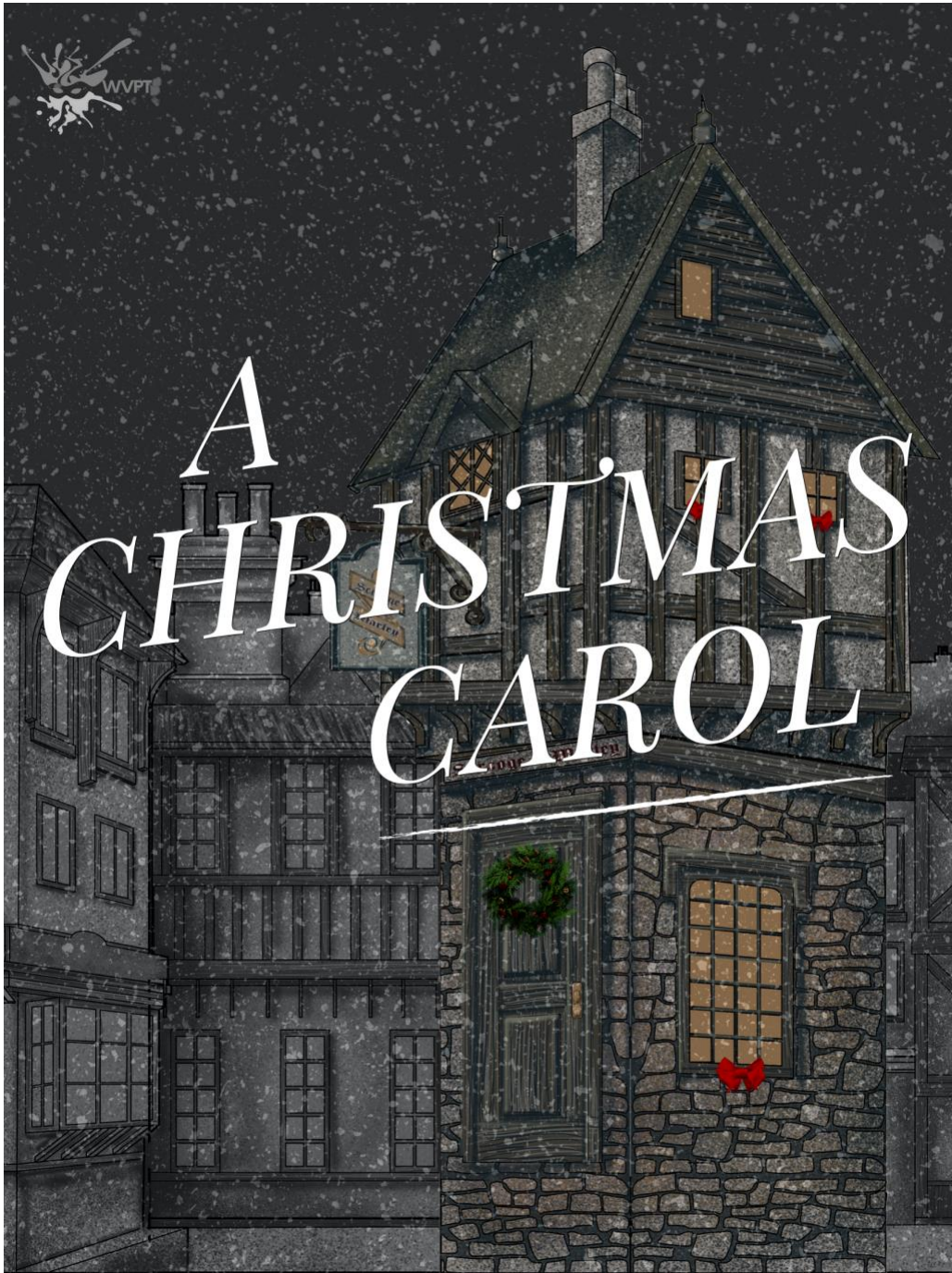




WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC THEATRE



Curriculum Pack | December – 2021

## A. THE PLOT

The story begins on Christmas Eve. Ebenezer Scrooge, a mean, unkind man, is working in his office with Bob Cratchit, his clerk. His nephew, Fred, visits and invites Ebenezer to celebrate Christmas day at his house. Scrooge hates Christmas because he thinks it is too expensive. When it is time to finish work, Scrooge is angry that he has to give Bob Cratchit a day off work on Christmas Day. After work Scrooge goes home to spend Christmas alone and unhappy.

That night the ghost of his dead business partner, Jacob Marley, visits him. He tells Scrooge he must change his way of life or face the consequences. Jacob Marley tells Scrooge three ghosts will visit him. Scrooge is scared but he goes to sleep.

Three ghosts do visit Scrooge: The Ghost of Christmas Past, The Ghost of Christmas Present, and The Ghost of Christmas Future.

These Ghosts help change Scrooge's life for the better. Watch the play to see what happens!

## B. CHARACTERS

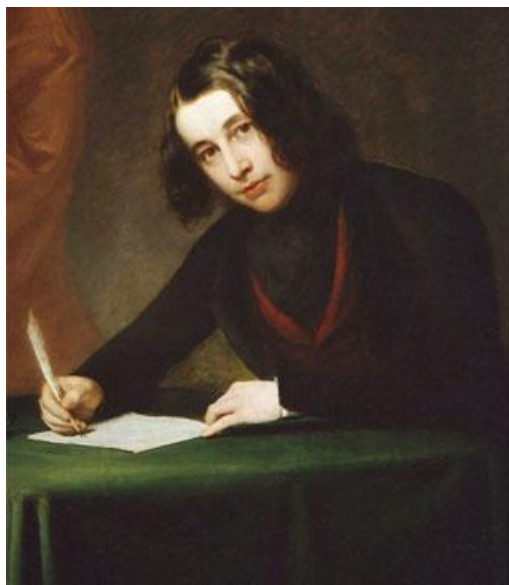
- Ebenezer Scrooge – He is about 60 years old. He is an unkind and ungenerous man. Scrooge neglects the poor and thinks only of his own well-being. His business is called Scrooge and Marley, but his business partner died seven years before.
- Bob Cratchit – He works for Scrooge in his office and is very poor. He is 32 years old and is married with five children. His youngest son, Tiny Tim, is very ill and is dying.
- Fred – He is Scrooge's nephew. He is 28 years old. He is a happy person and is always trying to cheer up Scrooge. He is married and quite rich.
- Jacob Marley - He was Scrooge's business partner and has been dead for seven years. Now he is a ghost that must travel around the world seeing things he didn't see in life.
- The Ghost of Christmas Past – The ghost seems young but has an old woman's face. This character represents memory.
- The Ghost of Christmas Present – The ghost is green and covered in leaves. He is jolly and quite large. This ghost represents celebration and charity.
- The Ghost of Christmas Future – The ghost doesn't speak and is very scary. It wears a dark cape with a hood, and it's impossible to see its face.
- Belle – She was Scrooge's girlfriend when he was a young apprentice. She loved him but she believed Scrooge loved money more than her and so left him.
- Mr. Frezziwig – He is about 50 years old and a very jolly man. He is very generous and loves to give parties. He was Scrooge's boss when he was an apprentice. He is married with three daughters.
- Martha Cratchit – She is Bob's wife. She is always happy though she is very poor. She does all the work in the Cratchit house and is often tired.
- Tiny Tim – He is the youngest son in the Cratchit family. He is seven years old but very small for his age. He tries to be happy but is often weak, because he is dying.

## C. THE AUTHOR

**CHARLES DICKENS** was born in Landport, Portsmouth on February 7, 1812. John Dickens, his father, was a clerk in a naval payroll office. Dickens' father was sent to prison in 1824 for debt (not paying his bills). Due to their increasing poverty, Charles left school at the age of 12 and joined a boot polish factory to support his family. There he came to know how the oppressed are used brutally by the factory owners for work purposes; they were ill-fed, shabbily clothed, and diseased. That's what inspired him to write "Oliver Twist." Later on, Dickens became a reporter. In 1832, he nearly became a professional actor. In December 1833, The Monthly Magazine, published his first work. Later Dickens was married to Catherine Holgarth and they had ten children together but separated in 1858. Dickens huge success continued with the "Pickwick Papers." Later on in 1850, he wrote "David Copperfield" which was largely autobiographical.

Dickens began work on A Christmas Carol in October of 1843 and was published during the holiday season of that year. It was the most successful book of the 1843 holiday season, and by Christmas it had sold six thousand copies. Eight stage adaptations were in production within two months of the book's publication. Charles Dickens fell ill and died on June 9, 1870 and was put to rest in "Poets Corner" at Westminster Abbey.

A Christmas Carol is as popular today as it was over 150 years ago. Charles Dickens, through the voice of Scrooge, continues to urge us to honor Christmas in our hearts and try to keep it throughout the year.



## A CHRISTMAS CAROL VOCABULARY

- **Apparition** – An unusual or unexpected sight; a ghostly figure
- **Agitate** – To move or cause to move back and forth; to disturb or excite emotionally
- **Benevolence** – Disposition to do good; an act of kindness; a generous gift
- **Bestow** – To give as a gift.
- **Carol** – A song associated with Christmas.
- **Charitable** – Relating to or characterized by voluntary giving.
- **Crown** – British coin equal to five shillings (no longer in use)
- **Destitute** – Poor enough to need help from others.
- **Gruel** – A thin porridge.
- **Ha'penny** – British unit of money equal to half a penny
- **Humbug** – Nonsense
- **Humility** – A disposition to be humble; a lack of false pride.
- **Livid** – Furiously angry.
- **Mistletoe** – A type of plant with green leaves and white berries; according to Christmas tradition, if you meet someone under the mistletoe, you are obligated to kiss them.
- **Ominous** – Threatening or foreshadowing evil or tragic developments.
- **Penance** – Voluntary self-punishment in order to atone for something.
- **Shilling** – British unit of money circa 1840-1912; British pennies or “pence.”
- **Transformation** – A complete or major change in someone's or something's appearance, form, etc.
- **Waistcoat** – A man's sleeveless garment worn underneath a coat.
- **Workhouse** – A place where poor people or those guilty of minor crimes (usually owing money) were sent and forced to work as their punishment.

# THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Learning theatre etiquette will enable you to avoid embarrassment. It is important to remember that the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them. Be respectful of the actors and your fellow audience members by being attentive and observing these guidelines. Going to a show is a special experience, one that you will remember for a lifetime. Everyone in the audience has been looking forward to seeing the performance just as much as you have, so it's very important to remember the rules of theatre etiquette. That way, everyone can have a good time.

Live theatre is really happening – right now – and it is an art form that depends on both actors and audience. When you walk into a theater, you can feel that something is about to happen. It is exciting just to be in the room. The stage holds the secret of what is about to come to life, as you find your seats for a performance that is being presented just for you! Sometimes it is so thrilling you want to get goofy, laugh and shout. But remember that when the play begins, everyone in the audience has a responsibility. You are part of the play. You are connected with the other people in the audience and the actors on stage. They can SEE you, HEAR you, and FEEL you, just as you can see, hear and feel them. If you are talking about what you did yesterday or opening a candy wrapper, you will miss something. And, it will miss you. Your laughter, your responses, your attention, your imagination, and most especially your energy, are part of the experience. In short, the play can be better because of YOU!

## Rules to Follow

1. Arrive on time.
2. Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
3. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices. Also, no picture taking during the performance. All of this can be very distracting to the actors and those around you, as well.
4. Pay attention to announcements that are made prior to many shows about the rules of the theater you are attending and the location of the fire exits.
5. Don't speak during the performance; whispering is still speaking, so only in an emergency.
6. Remember that the Overture (introductory music) is part of the performance, so be quiet when it begins.
7. Remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, wait for an appropriate break in the show. It is rude to get up in the middle of a quiet moment – rude to the actors and your fellow audience members.
8. No food or drink in the theater please. Wait until intermission to search through your purse or bag – you may be making more noise than you think.
9. Applause is a sound actors love to hear! Appropriate times to clap are between acts or sets. You should applaud at the end of a solo or when the performance has concluded. Please feel free to have honest reactions to what is happening onstage. You can laugh, applaud, and enjoy the performance.

## THEATRE TERMS

- Actor – A person who performs in the play on stage

- Apron – The portion of the stage that is outside the proscenium arch (the arch between the stage and auditorium)
- Choreographer – Creates the show's dances, teaching routines to the actors.
- Director – The person charged with the overall interpretation of a work, who conducts rehearsals, blocks the action (tells actors where & when to move), and assists the actors in developing their character.
- Front of House – The part of the theater where the audience is seated.
- House – Used to describe the audience or as a short way of saying “front of the house.”
- House Manager – Person who ensures that the audience members are seated in their appropriate places by the time the play is to start: ensures that the play starts on time by communicating with the stage manager.
- Pit – An area at the front of the house, usually sunken, where the musicians and conductor work during the show
- Props (Properties) – All the items used in a play or musical to help tell the story – not scenery or costumes.
- Scenery – Everything on the stage (except props) used to represent the place  
where, and sometimes when, the action is occurring.
- Stage Manager – The person who manages the stage and backstage during rehearsals and performances, responsible for running the entire show from curtain opening to final curtain call.

## ACTIVITIES



## TRUE OR FALSE

(Please write the word true or false on the line.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Ebenezer Scrooge is a generous man.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Every year Scrooge spends Christmas day with his nephew Fred.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Ebenezer gives nothing to charity.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Jacob Marley has been dead for seven years.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The Ghost of Christmas Past is silent.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Scrooge and Belle got a divorce.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Bob Cratchit has a son called Tiny Tim.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ The Ghost of Christmas Future shows Scrooge his own grave.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ On Christmas morning, Scrooge buys a chicken for the Cratchit family.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Scrooge promises to change his way of life and become a better person.

## STORY ORDER

- \_\_\_ 1. Scrooge sees his own grave.
- \_\_\_ 2. A charity worker asks Scrooge to give money to the poor.
- \_\_\_ 3. The Ghost of Christmas Past arrives.
- \_\_\_ 4. Scrooge buys a turkey for the Cratchit family.
- \_\_\_ 5. The Ghost of Christmas Present meets Scrooge.
- \_\_\_ 6. Scrooge sees himself at school.
- \_\_\_ 7. Jacob Marley warns Scrooge to change his way of life.
- \_\_\_ 8. Scrooge sees his girlfriend leave him.
- \_\_\_ 9. Fred invites his uncle to his house for Christmas.
- \_\_\_ 10. Scrooge wakes up on Christmas morning and is very happy.

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CHRISTMAS?

(Circle the correct letter.)

1. A Christmas Carol is
  - a. A song sung at Christmas
  - b. A mean man
  - c. A ghost
2. What is usually found under the Christmas tree?
  - a. Christmas cards
  - b. Presents
  - c. Shoes
3. Rudolph the Reindeer is famous for his shiny red
  - a. Eyes
  - b. Ears
  - c. Nose
4. Father Christmas traditionally arrives through the
  - a. Door
  - b. Windows
  - c. Chimney
5. If someone holds mistletoe above your head, you must
  - a. Clap your hands
  - b. Kiss them
  - c. Turn around three times
6. Complete this phrase: \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas and a \_\_\_\_\_ Happy New Year
  - a. Merry, happy
  - b. Nice, pleasant
  - c. Good, better
7. What would you find on the top of a Christmas tree?
  - a. A star
  - b. A fairy
  - c. An angel
8. What is traditionally eaten for Christmas dinner?
  - a. Chicken
  - b. Turkey
  - c. Roast beef
9. What is Father Christmas also known as?
  - a. Santa Claus
  - b. Papa Claus
  - c. Mister Claus
10. When is Christmas Day?
  - a. Dec. 24
  - b. Dec. 25
  - c. Dec. 26

## MULTIPLE CHOICE

(Circle the correct answer.)

1. Which of the spirits does not speak to Scrooge?

- a. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come
  - b. The Ghost of Christmas Past
  - c. The Ghost of Christmas Present
  - d. All of the spirits speak to Scrooge
2. What is Jacob Marley forced to drag about as a result of his sinful life?
- a. A huge safe full of lead
  - b. An ox cart piled with gold
  - c. Heavy chains forged from ledgers and lockboxes
  - d. A cross made of gold
3. Why does Scrooge like darkness?
- a. It helps him sleep
  - b. It helps him to forget his past
  - c. It hides the ghosts from his eyes
  - d. It is cheap
4. Who is in the grave shown to Scrooge by The Christmas Yet to Come?
- a. Ebenezer
  - b. Jacob Marley
  - c. Bob Cratchit
  - d. Tiny Tim
5. In what year was A Christmas Carol written?
- a. 1830
  - b. 1837
  - c. 1843
  - d. 1846
6. Why does Belle end her engagement to Scrooge?
- a. Because she falls in love with Fred
  - b. Because Scrooge is too poor for her
  - c. Because Scrooge is consumed by greed
  - d. Because Scrooge works all of the time
7. To whom does Scrooge send the Christmas turkey?
- a. Fred
  - b. Belle
  - c. The Cratchits
  - d. Jacob Marley

8. Which character utters the famous words, "God bless us, everyone?"
  - a. Tiny Tim
  - b. Bob Cratchit
  - c. Scrooge
  - d. The Ghost of Christmas Present

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Answer on your own paper or discuss orally)

1. What happened to Scrooge's first employer, Mr. Fezziwig? What mistake did Mr. Fezziwig make that Scrooge was determined to avoid?
2. What did the Ghost of Christmas past show to Scrooge?
3. What did Scrooge learn from the Ghost of Christmas Present?
4. What did the Ghost of Christmas Yet to come show to Scrooge?
5. If you do something that you later realize was wrong, and by doing that thing you benefitted from it either by making money, getting something you wanted, or in some other way, how do you make it right?
6. Write your own lyrics to a new Christmas carol. Think about images of Christmas and what the holiday means to you.
7. What is your definition of family? Who do you consider to be in your family?
8. If you do not celebrate Christmas, describe the holiday you celebrate.
9. Why do you think this story stands the test of time? Why do you think this story is important to tell?
10. Rewrite Scrooge's story. Choose a different path for Scrooge.
11. Orally or on paper, compare and contrast the play with movie or the book.

## ABOUT THE SHOW:

1. How did the actors create their character? (walk, talk, etc.)
2. Identify how the costumes informed you about the character. (rich, poor, etc.)
3. Identify a few props that are used by only one character and those that are used to support the plot or story.

4. How did the costumes, set design, music, and other elements enhance the story?
5. Did your opinion of Scrooge change at any point in the story, why?
6. Is it ever too late for someone to change his or her ways? Why or why not?

## PROJECTS

1. Separate the class into different groups and have each group act out a scene from the story.
2. Have each student make a puppet of a figure in the story.
3. Hold a toy drive for the class to help less fortunate children or the class can make toys as a joint activity and donate them to a charity for less fortunate children.
4. Ask each child to describe, in an essay or in a talk to the class, what they are going to do this holiday to help someone else, either in their family or outside their family.
5. Have students write an essay detailing highlights of the story.

## COLORING PAGE

*"God bless us, every one!" – Tiny Tim*



## ANSWERS AND RESOURCES

### **Answers** to True/False

1 - F. 2 - F. 3 - T. 4 - T. 5 - F. 6 - F. 7 - F. 8 - F. 9 - F. 10 - T

### **Answers** to Story Order: 9, 2, 7, 3, 6, 8, 5, 1, 10, 4

### **Answers** to What Do You Know about Christmas:

1 - a, 2 - b, 3 - c, 4 - c, 5 - b, 6 - a, 7 - a or c, 8 - b, 9 - a, 10 - b

### **Answers** to Multiple Choice:

1 - a, 2 - c, 3 - d, 4 - a, 5 - c, 6 - c, 7 - c, 8 - a

## RESOURCES:

[www.ipaproductions.com](http://www.ipaproductions.com)

<http://www.highlandslittletheatre.org/faq/theatre-etiquette/>

[http://www.fwcivic.org/FWcivic\\_Theatre\\_Etiquette.pdf](http://www.fwcivic.org/FWcivic_Theatre_Etiquette.pdf)

<http://www.musical-theater-kids.com/theater-etiquette.html>

<http://www.teachwithmovies.org/guides/christmas-carol.html#HelpfulBackground>

[http://www.guthrietheater.org/sites/default/files/studyguide\\_AChristmasCarol.pdf](http://www.guthrietheater.org/sites/default/files/studyguide_AChristmasCarol.pdf)

<http://www.teachwithmovies.org/guides/christmas-carol.html>

[https://www.playersguildtheatre.com/media/1/6/ACC\\_StudyGuide2014.pdf](https://www.playersguildtheatre.com/media/1/6/ACC_StudyGuide2014.pdf)

<https://www.vocabulary.com/lists/23049>

<https://www.google.com/search?q=free+clip+art+A+Christmas+Carol>

<http://www.gradesaver.com/a-christmas-carol/study-guide/character-list>

**Thank you so much for attending West Virginia Public  
Theatre's performance of *A Christmas Carol!***