

Worksheet 3. Deducing Themes (teachers version)

In literature themes express an author’s view about life, reality, or human nature. It is an idea that an author wants to convey through the story. Stave 5 of *A Christmas Carol* shows that Charles Dickens had very clear views about how people should and should not live.

Read the quotations provided below in column one. Examine their context in the story and enter that into column two. Then use column three to write what you think Dickens was saying to his reading audience.

Quotation	Context	Theme(s)
“I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!”	Scrooge has just awakened from emotion-laden dreams, including the prospect of death. He is and future are equally relieved to find himself alive and safe in bed, a person very changed from the one presented in the first stave.	Life is a seamless whole in which past, present, and future are equally important. Even people who seem impossibly cold and selfish can change for the better. Sometimes it takes a shocking experience to bring about change.
“Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs.”	The context is similar to the one for the first quote. Scrooge is not only relieved, but happy and almost giddy with joy. Throughout the story, everything about him has been cold and dark, but that is going to change.	People find happiness not through money and possessions, but through having a positive and generous attitude.
“He looked so irresistibly pleasant in a word that three or four good-humoured fellows said, “Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!”	Having purchased a turkey for the Cratchit family, Scrooge is out on the street among other people.	People are attracted by and respond well to a cheerful countenance. Even someone who has been alienated and bitter can, with a change of heart, find a way back into community.
“He had never dreamed that any walk—that anything—could give him so much happiness.”	After going to a Christmas church service, Scrooge walks around the city, watching people and interacting with them.	When people are generous and open-hearted, they find happiness everywhere. All people, regardless of age or social class, merit respect and consideration.
“... but he let them laugh, and little heeded them ...”	Scrooge knows that some people find the change in him amusing and laugh at him, but their mockery does not disturb him.	People do not always understand or applaud positive changes. We do not have to be troubled by mockery, but rather

		can just go on with our own happy lives.
“And so, as Tiny observed God bless Us, Every One!”	The story’s concluding line extends a blessing from Charles Dickens to all readers, indeed to the whole world. Tiny Tim is a saintly presence in the story.	In life the best way to live is to live is to radiate good will to everyone.