

Worksheet 2. Understanding Scrooge (teachers version)

In the opening stave, Charles Dickens makes it clear using direct characterization that Ebenezer Scrooge is a cold, uncaring, unsympathetic and miserly person.

However, Scrooge’s responses to the experiences he undergoes during his ghostly visitations in the next three staves reveal much more about him. This is called indirect [characterization](#); the reader can infer information and insights not directly stated by the author.

Fill in the second column with a summary of what Scrooge sees and hears. In the third column, write how he responds; finally, in the section below record what the experience reveals about him (through indirect characterization.)

Stave 2

What Scrooge sees and hears	How Scrooge responds
<p>The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge on a painful journey back in time to lonely childhood and early adulthood, including a failed romance. Then he sees a cozy domestic scene of his one-time fiancée with her husband.</p>	<p>Sobbing at the sight of the lonely child suggests his own painful youth. We can see that he has long forgotten many things that were once important to him. The sight of people celebrating makes Scrooge want to talk with the clerk he treated so coldly, suggesting a capacity for regret. The memory of Belle makes it clear that Scrooge was not always mean and miserly; something must have happened to change him. “I cannot bear it!” he says, and he becomes deeply exhausted.</p>
<p>What is revealed about Scrooge through inferences based on indirect characterization? Beneath the cold exterior is a man who has been deeply wounded and who, unknown even to himself, aches for human warmth. The tour conducted by the Ghost of Christmas Past shows that Scrooge is not just a stereotypical miser, but the finer aspects of his character have long been submerged under a ruthless pursuit of money. Already Dickens has implied a potential for change.</p>	

Stave 3

What Scrooge sees and hears	How Scrooge responds
<p>The Ghost of Christmas Present first presents Scrooge with a vast array of food and then confronts him with a series of Christmas scenes. Most important are the visits to the Cratchits and to Scrooge's nephew, but he also sees assorted other people, in various degrees of need and celebration. Finally, the ghost presents two miserable children whom he identifies as Ignorance and Want.</p>	<p>For the most part, Scrooge is an observer, and one of the things he observes is both Cratchit and the nephew toasting him despite the objections of others. He reacts strongly to the sight of Tiny Tim ("Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live"). He also joins invisibly in the games at the nephew's home. He is appalled at the sight of Ignorance and Want, and he hears the ghost echo his own earlier words about prisons and workhouses.</p>
<p>What is revealed about Scrooge through inferences based on indirect characterization?</p> <p>Scrooge's response to Tiny Tim can be surprising, as it contrasts vividly with his earlier behavior and indicates a capacity for compassion. The tiny crippled child pulls at his heartstrings. His joining in the games at the nephew's house and his desire not to leave their festivities so soon demonstrate a long ignored desire to be part of communal celebration and play. We can only guess at his responses to comments he overhears about himself. His horror at the sight of Ignorance and Want suggests a changing attitude toward those mired in poverty and need.</p>	

Stave 4

What Scrooge sees and hears	How Scrooge responds
<p>Scrooge first sees businessmen talking about someone's death with no sign of sorrow or regret. The next scene shows people in a sordid shop selling items stolen from a deathbed. He sees a man and woman who are relieved at the death of a man to whom they are in debt. A scene at the Cratchit home indicates the death of Tiny Tim. Finally, Scrooge visits a cemetery and sees his own tombstone.</p>	<p>He keeps looking for himself in familiar surroundings, but to no avail. He is fearful of this ghost's purposes but also certain that he himself has changed—"I hope to live to be another man from what I was." He is strangely quiet at Tiny Tim's home. At the cemetery he pleads that he has been shown not "the shadows of things that Will be" but only "shadows of things that May be."</p>
<p>What is revealed about Scrooge through inferences based on indirect characterization?</p> <p>We infer that Scrooge has never thought much about what others think of him, nor about the fact that his death might be a cause of actual relief. He is much slower than the reader to understand that the dead man is Scrooge himself. His reaction to the dead body on the bed shows sensitivity. "If this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts?" The pleas and desperation at the cemetery indicate Scrooge's desire to live and to have the opportunity to become a better person. The dreams that have haunted him indicate that he has long since become sick of his own life.</p>	