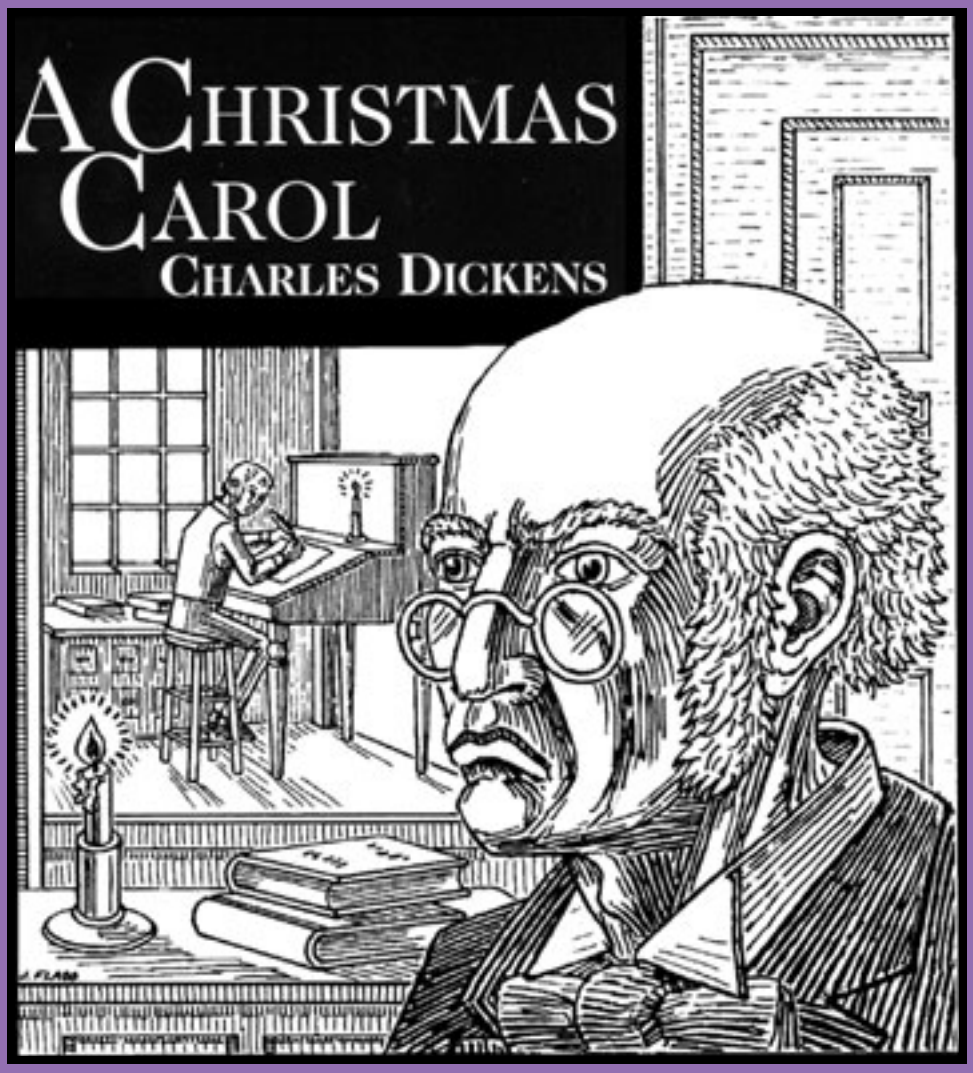
Novel·Ties



A Study Guide

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of instructional material to use in conjunction with the novel *A Christmas Carol*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

NOVEL-TIES are either for whole class instruction using a single title or for group instruction where each group uses a different novel appropriate to its reading level. Depending upon the amount of time allotted to it in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in two to four weeks.

The first step in using NOVEL-TIES is to distribute to each student a copy of the novel and a folder containing all of the duplicated worksheets. Begin instruction by selecting several pre-reading activities in order to set the stage for the reading ahead. Vocabulary exercises for each chapter always precede the reading so that new words will be reinforced in the context of the book. Use the questions on the chapter worksheets for class discussion or as written exercises.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Preview the novel by reading the title and author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think this novel is about? When and where does it take place? Are you familiar with any other books written by the same author or film adaptations of the author's work?
2. An allegory is a story in which the characters and the action represent an idea or generalization about life. What stories have you read or seen in a film that might fit the definition of an allegory? As you read *A Christmas Carol*, determine why it is considered an allegory.
3. **Social Studies Connection:** *A Christmas Carol* is set in Victorian England. Find out when Queen Victoria ruled, and do some research on social and working conditions in the Victorian era. Report your findings to the class, and lead a discussion concerning the changes in social and working conditions since Dickens's time.
4. *A Christmas Carol* was originally published in 1843. Why do you think a story that was written over one hundred and fifty years ago is still popular today?
5. Have you seen a film version of *A Christmas Carol*? What do you recall of that film? Do you think everything you saw in the movie will appear in the book version of the story? Do you think every event in the story was included in the movie? What differences, if any, between the movie and the original story do you anticipate?
6. How many of the following phrases from *A Christmas Carol* do you recognize? In a small group, discuss your interpretation of the phrases. Then as you read the story, compare your interpretations to the way in which the phrases are used in the story.
   - as dead as a door-nail
   - Bah! Humbug!
   - Business! Mankind was my business.
   - Another idol has displaced me . . . a golden one.
   - God bless us every one!
   - I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.
7. What does *humbug* mean? Make a list of all things you consider to be humbug. Compare your list with those of your classmates.
8. **Art Connection:** The first edition of *A Christmas Carol* was illustrated by John Leech. Copies of Leech's illustrations are available in many libraries. Locate copies of his illustrations, and comment on their style and effectiveness.
9. Read the preface to the story. Why might Dickens have included such a preface?
10. Before you begin your silent reading of *A Christmas Carol*, read aloud the first section of the book to your reading group or the entire class. Read from the beginning of the first section to the words "Once upon a time." What devices has Dickens used to engage the reader? As you continue to read, become aware of the rhythm of Dickens's language, and words and phrases that may seem unfamiliar. How would you compare the literary style of Dickens to that of a contemporary author?

Marley's Ghost (cont.)

7. What caused the ghost's hair and tassels to move even though the room was locked?

8. Why did Scrooge refrain from saying "Humbug!" after the ghost left?

Questions for Discussion:

1. How did Dickens point up the social inequalities and problems of the poor in Victorian England in the opening section of the book?

2. How did Dickens help the reader visualize and feel the presence of the ghost? Have you ever been affected by a supernatural phenomenon?

3. Why do you think Dickens provided minute realistic detail in scenes that had a supernatural element?

Literary Devices:

I. *Hook*—In literature, a hook is a compelling beginning of a book that entices the reader to continue on in the story. Reread the first sentence of *A Christmas Carol*. How does this hook draw you into the story?

_____

_____

II. *Point of View*—The person who tells a story determines the point of view. There are three possible points of view in a work of fiction:

- *First-person narrator*: character who tells the story as she or he experienced it
- *Third-person limited narrator*: narrator who knows what one character is doing and thinking
- *Third-person omniscient narrator*: narrator who knows what all the characters are doing and thinking

Which point of view did Dickens use? _____

How did Dickens convey his point of view to the reader?

_____

_____

_____