



## QUESTIONS FOR CRITICAL THINKING

Grade Levels: 3-5, with adjustment K-2

**A Christmas Carol** has several important themes that relate to the world outside the story, both in Charles Dickens' time, and in the modern day. Thinking about **A Christmas Carol** in a contemporary context can help illuminate important questions we should be asking ourselves.

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### OBJECTIVES

- Students will thoroughly understand the themes of **A Christmas Carol** through rich discussion of the central issues it brings to light: poverty, education, generosity, morals, and self-improvement

### PROCEDURE

Create a friendly and focused discussion setting and introduce to the students several of the following questions:

1. What events from your childhood, good and bad, are most memorable to you? Do you think they shaped you into who you are today? How might different life events shape someone else? Did Charles Dickens' childhood influence who he became? What about his writing? Where can you see elements of Dickens' life in **A Christmas Carol**?
2. Where did your values come from? What people, events, or ideas most influenced the development of your values? Why? Do you think everyone has access to those same resources? How might level of education, financial means, and exposure to pop culture influence a person's values?
3. What is poverty? How do you think poverty happens? Can you think of any recent events in our country that caused a large increase of people in poverty? Why might that have been?
4. Does a person's access to education depend on money? Why or why not? Where in Houston or elsewhere in the country is this most clear? If there is a problem, how do you think it can be fixed?
5. Do you think there is still conflict today between the rich and the poor like there was in Charles Dickens' time? Has it made any progress? If so, how? If the conflict still exists, where is it clearest? Consider countries, industries, etc.
6. Is Charles Dickens the only author to write for change? Can you think of any others? If so, what did they try to change and what changes did they hope to make? Was their writing effective in causing change? Why or why not?

7. Why do you think Charles Dickens chose to write about Christmas? How do you think people would celebrate Christmas today if **A Christmas Carol** had not been written? Why do you think the story is so popular, even today?
8. **A Christmas Carol** is a story with a moral. What is a moral? Why are moral stories written? Have you read any other stories that also have morals? How do these stories explain the moral? What do all the main characters in moral stories have in common?
9. Do you think fear is an important part of **A Christmas Carol** and Scrooge's change? Would Scrooge have changed if he hadn't been scared by the ghosts and his future? Can you think of any other ways that Scrooge could have been made to think about his life? Would a different method be as effective as using ghosts and fear?
10. How would we view Scrooge in modern day? As a bad person, or just a good business man? How does this reflect how our values as a community have or have not shifted since the time of **A Christmas Carol**?