A.C.T. PRESENTS
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
RESOURCE AND ACTIVITY GUIDE
INTRODUCTIONS
American Conservatory Theater’s Education & Community Programs Department is delighted to welcome you all into the festive, spooky, and magical world of *A Christmas Carol*. Presenting this play is a part of A.C.T.’s history and one of our favorite holiday traditions, and the production is slightly different every time. Whether this is your first Carol or you’re a regular Carol-er, we encourage you to watch the show with fresh eyes.

Director Peter Kuo shared that “*A Christmas Carol* is a fantasy story book that we can reimagine in any way that best tells the story now and today, including a multitude of experiences, perspectives and backgrounds that make it feel the most relevant for today’s San Francisco audience.”

Onstage you’ll see young student performers and veteran professional actors, working together to bring the intergenerational story to life. There are local artists, technicians and creators onstage and behind-the-scenes, and many generations of A.C.T. artists have contributed to the fabric that weaves this tradition together.

This guide is a way to introduce you to the past & present of A.C.T.’s *A Christmas Carol*, and it just might give us some ideas for the future, as well. This guide was created in October 2022 by A.C.T. Associate Director of Education Natalie Greene, sourcing resources from *Words On Plays* (edited by Elizabeth Broderson, 2005/2012) and *A Christmas Carol on Air Activity Book* (edited by Allie Moss, 2020). Please reach out to education@act-sf.org if you have any questions or support needs.
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to enhance the experience of the play. We think there’s something in here everyone: coloring pages for little ones, worksheets & activities for elementary and middle school students, as well as readings, history and discussion questions for high school students and curious minds of all ages.

RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

The book is divided into five sections:

1. **Introductions** - including a show synopsis and basic information about our production.

2. **The Book and The Play** - all about Charles Dickens, including excerpts from the book and the play.

3. **Seeing the Show** - what to expect at the theater, plus questions and ideas to talk & think about both before & after your experience.

4. **Games and Activities** - worksheets and activities including a wordsearch, a crossword puzzle, coloring pages, and more!

5. **Resources and Links** - behind the scenes videos, and other resources for curious minds of all ages.

This interactive, multimedia guide can be adapted to your students’ interests and needs. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the resources available, and use the Table of Contents below to search for things we suggest for specific age groups.

You’ll also find sample lesson plans: one each for elementary, middle and high school students, and a list of things we think it would be fun to try with your family at home.

Please reach out to education@act-sf.org if you have any questions or support needs.
Table of Contents

You know what’s best for your students and young ones. Please review the materials to determine:
- What is developmentally appropriate for different ages and grade levels
- What will be most inclusive for the participants, spaces and resources you’re working with
- What will be most interesting and engaging for them and for you

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FOR ALL AGES:
Start with the two short previews:

• A Spooktacular Show! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9l69sIfhCKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9l69sIfhCKQ)
• A Christmas Carol is returning to A.C.T.! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvomZIJ1AN8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvomZIJ1AN8)

• Both before and after you see the show, Past, Present, Future, and You can initiate a powerful discussion.

• TO DISCUSS AFTER THE SHOW lists many different questions to provoke conversation about A Christmas Carol.

• Choose-your-own-adventure as you mix & match resources to create something appropriate for your students or your family. The school-focused lesson plans below are designed to use before the show, however, most of the activities & suggestions will work afterwards, as well.

FOR FAMILIES:

• Print for the little ones: Coloring Pages, Spot the Difference, or Winter Holidays Around the World.

• Consider and discuss Past, Present, Future, and You. Imagine a future tradition and consider trying it this year!

• After the show, have a “See, Think, Wonder” conversation with your kids:
  • SEE: What did you see in the show? What were some of your favorite things you saw?
  • THINK: What did the show make you think about? What did it remind you of? What, specifically, did you see that made you think that?
  • WONDER: What did the show make you wonder? What are you curious about now that you’ve seen it? How did the show ignite your imagination?

• Together: Check out the Video Links & Behind-the-Scenes or the Resources for Teachers & Parents. Use your family’s responses to “See, Think, Wonder” as a way to shop for resources in this guide! For example, dig into costume design, charity & community, storytelling & writing, and more.
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:**

- Read the **synopsis** out loud. Select a picture or an image from the guide to project while you are reading, or look at a few images together afterwards.
- Watch the **two short previews**, then use a “See, Think, Wonder” model for a short discussion: What did you see? What did you think? What do you wonder?
- Discuss **Past, Present, Future, and You**. After the discussion, pick one idea each to represent Past, Present, and Future. Show the students this short video from Singapore Repertory Theatre about TABLEAU: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfNmlY1-t5k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfNmlY1-t5k). Have students work together in small groups to make group tableaux for Past, Present and Future. (For more info on tableau or freeze-frame: [https://dramaresource.com/freeze-frames](https://dramaresource.com/freeze-frames)).
- Print and distribute **activity handouts**. For younger elementary: Coloring Pages, At the Counting House, and Spot the Difference. For upper elementary: Word Search, Funny Fill-In, and Winter Holidays Around the World.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

- Read the **synopsis**. *OR* “Show of hands, who is familiar with the story of A Christmas Carol?” Followed by group discussion to remember the basics of the story, then compare/contrast with the **synopsis**.
- Watch the **short previews**.
- Have students read the **Charles Dickens biography**, or read portions of it to them. Project the **illustration of Dickens with his characters**, without showing the bottom caption that indicates what the picture is. Ask students what they think this image represents, and why. Then, as students study the image (zoom in, if you can!), ask what they can gather about the characters Dickens created, the time he lived in, and more.
- Act out **a scene from the play**! Cast the characters, have students read aloud in a practice round, then stand up to perform and act out the scene. Consider repeating with different groups of students, so that everyone has a chance to try it out.
- Discuss **Past, Present, Future, and You**, in partners, small groups or as a whole class.
  - Activity Option: try the TABLEAU activity listed in the Elementary Lesson Plan above.
- Print and distribute **activity handouts** of your choice. We suggest Word Search, Winter Holidays Around the World and Crossword Puzzle (some answers students can fill out before the show, and other answers they’ll figure out after the show).
HIGH SCHOOL:

• “Show of hands, who is familiar with the story of *A Christmas Carol*?” Followed by group discussion to remember the basics of the story, then compare/contrast with the *synopsis*.

• Watch one or both of the *short previews*.
  • Discuss *Past, Present, Future, and You* for more personal inquiry.

• Reading Options with discussion prompts or homework questions (select one or more):
  • Read *Charles Dickens* biography, project the *illustration* of Dickens with *his characters*, discuss what students see, think and wonder about Dickens and this image.

• Read *The Man Who Invented Christmas* and *Some Noteworthy Versions of A Christmas Carol* and discuss: have you seen or heard of any of these versions of *A Christmas Carol*? Or any others? What do you remember about them? If you were to create a new version, what would you do, and why? (e.g. anime, opera, video game, ballet, hip hop dance, etc.)

• Read *An Excerpt from A Christmas Carol*, the novella by Charles Dickens (not the play). Ask students to imagine they were a theater director, and discuss how they would turn these words into a scene. Remind them they can “hire designers” for costumes, lights, set, dance, music, props and more. (For advanced technical theater students: How would you do this on a budget? What would you emphasize and spend money on? What would you re-imagine, trim, or cut back on?) Then, read the *Book to Stage Adaptation* to see how we’re doing it.

• Activity options (select one or more):
  • Act out a *scene from the play!* Cast the characters, have students read aloud in a practice round, then stand up to perform and act out the scene.

  • Worksheets: *Crossword Puzzle, Winter Holidays Around the World* or *Past, Present, Future, and You*.

  • Watch *How A Christmas Carol Perfectly Demonstrates Five-Act Structure; Lessons From a Screenplay*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5P-U099IE0k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5P-U099IE0k). Discuss the video, brainstorm story ideas (ghost stories! holiday stories! etc), then write a short synopsis for a new play using a five-act structure.
Top: Ken Ruta as Ghost of Jacob Marley
Middle: James Carpenter as Ebenezer Scrooge
Bottom: Catherine Castellanos as Ghost of Christmas Present
PRESENTS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

This production is generously sponsored by

Associate Producers:
Anonymous; John L. Garfinkle

Benefactors:
Clay Foundation - West

Corporate Production Sponsor
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman

We gratefully acknowledge our season supporters.

Season Presenters
Barbara Bass Bakar; Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson; Kathleen Donohue and David Sze; Priscilla and Keith Geeslin; Michael P. N. A. Hormel, in loving memory of James C. Hormel; Kenneth and Gisele Miller; Barbara Ravizza and John S. Osterweis; Toni Rembe and Arthur Rock; Robina Riccitiello; Mary and Steven Swig

Company Sponsors
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FEATURING

TASI ALABASTRO*
VIVIAN AMIRAULT†
JASPER BERMUDEZ†
JAMES CARPENTER*
CATHERINE CASTELLANOS*
JOHN CHUKWUDELUNZU*
JAMES COLIGNIO†
SAMARA EDELSTEIN*
EVANGELINE EDWARDS*
STEVEN FLORES*
ANTHOニー FUSCO*
CINDY GOLDFIELD†
BRIAN HERDON*

DAN HIATT*
MONIQUE HIGHTOWER-GASKIN†
ANYA JAYARAMAN†
JEREMY KAHN†
AYLA KLASER†
ADAM KUVENIEMANN†
AMANDA LE NGUYEN†
ZIA LIBICKI†
SHARON LOCKWOOD†
PAIGE MAYES†
MELINA J.C. MENIKTAS†
JAMES WDL MERCER II†
GIA MOON†

CHARLES DICKENS
CAREY PERLOFF AND PAUL WALSH
KARL LUNDEBERG
VAL CANIPAROLI
PETER J. KUO
CAREY PERLOFF
DANIEL FEVER
JOHN ARNONE
BEAVER BAUER
NANCY SCHERTLER
JAKE RODRIGUEZ
NANCY DICKSON
CHRISTINE ADEIRA
MICHAEL PALLER
KATIE CRADDOCK AND CASTING COLLECTIVE (DORI L. JACOB, CSA)
SAMANTHA GRENNE
KIRA VINE
ALLY ENANORIA
KELSEY TREMOWAN

A Christmas Carol will be performed with one 15-minute intermission.

Recording notice: The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production, or distributing recordings on any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited.

* Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.
† Member of A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory
CAST

In alphabetical order

TASI ALABASTRO* Candle Couple, Sled Parent, Giles
VIVIAN AMIRAULT* Little Fan, Plum, Skater
JASPER BERMUDEZ* Peter Cratchit, Boy Scrooge
JAMES CARPENTER* Ebenezer Scrooge
CATHERINE CASTELLANOS* Ghost of Christmas Present
JOHN CHUKWUDEULUNZU* Thomas, Fancy Couple
JAMES COLIGNIO* Tiny Tim
SAMARA EDELSTEIN* Fig, Child of Alan and Ruth, Beggar Child
EVANGELINE EDWARDS* Candle Couple, Beggar Parent Felicity
STEVEN FLORES* Opening Miner, Jim, Future Puppet, Gang Member
ANTHONY FUSCO* Ebenezer Scrooge
CINDY GOLDFIELD* Charitable, Fruit & Roots Seller, Caroler, Ruth
BRIAN HERNDON* Mr. Fezziwig, Business Man
DAN HIATT* Ghost of Jacob Marley, Business Man
MONIQUE HIGHTOWER-GASKIN* Onion, Anna, Protester
ANYA JAYARAMAN* Sarah, Stick Child
JEREMY KAHN* Topper, Future Puppet, Clerk, Burt
AYLA KLASSEN* Martha Cratchit
ADAM KUVENIEMANN* Young Scrooge, Future Puppet, Clerk, Caroler
AMANDA LE NGUYEN* Beth, Wife, Fancy Coupke, Caroler, Dorothy
ZIA LIBICKI† Rachel, Plum, Skater
SHARON LOCKWOOD* Mrs. Dibler, Mrs. Fezziwig
PALOMA MUHSIN* Sally, Precious
PAIGE MAYES* Shopping Parent, Miner Couple, Fruit & Roots Seller, Ermengard, Gang Member
MELINA J.C. MENIKTAS† Ignorance, Child of Alan and Ruth
JAMES WDL MERCER II* Fred, Dick Wilkins, Future Puppet
GIA MOON* Pulley Child
EMILY NEWSOME* Belle, Mary, Pregnant Wife
SARITA OCÓN* Anne Cratchit
AMBER ROSE PRICE† Chestnut Seller
XOCHITL SANTILLAN* Edward, Out of Town Chicken Seller
SAMANVIIKA SENTHIL KUMAR* Onion, Want, Shopping Child
LAILA SHAHSAVARI† Nell, Fig
ANNA MARIE SHARPE* Annabelle, Mrs. Filcher
HOWARD SWAIN* Charitable, Business Man, Sea Captain, Alan
JOMAR TAGATAC* Bob Cratchit
B NOEL THOMAS* Ghost of Christmas Past
MADELINE VON TRESKOW* Belinda, Davey, Apple Child
ROWEN WEERAMANTRY* Boy Dick, Turkey Child, Protester
HENRY WU* Sled Child, Small Child Fighter

* Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.
† Member of A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory
Natalie Greene
Editor

Content excerpted from Words on Plays and A Christmas Carol on Air Activity Book, with new resources, materials and lesson plans.

A Christmas Carol WORDS ON PLAYS (2005/2012) prepared by

Elizabeth Brodersen
Publications Editor

Jessica Werner
Contributing Editor

Margot Melcon
Publications & Literary Assistant

A Christmas Carol on Air ACTIVITY BOOK CREATIVE TEAM (2020) prepared by

Allie Moss
Editor-in-Chief

Laura Clatterbuck
Layout and Artwork

Kimberly Rhee, Daniel Feyer, Cindy Goldfield
Contributors
Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* is the story of a rich, greedy old man named Ebenezer Scrooge. We meet Scrooge on Christmas Eve. He is at his counting house, where he works as a moneylender, along with his employee Bob Cratchit. Scrooge’s nephew Fred arrives to invite his uncle for Christmas dinner, but Scrooge tells him to go away. When it is finally time to leave for the night, Bob Cratchit hurries home to spend Christmas with his family. Scrooge goes to his own lonely, gloomy house—and when he gets there, he thinks he sees his doorknocker transform into a face! It looks like the face of Jacob Marley, who used to be Scrooge’s business partner, but who died seven years earlier. Scrooge dismisses the idea as nonsense, but then, the ghost of Jacob Marley appears in Scrooge’s bedroom! He tells Scrooge that they were both very selfish, and that Scrooge has a chance to redeem himself while he’s alive. Marley informs Scrooge that he will be visited by three spirits.

The first spirit to visit is the Ghost of Christmas Past. They show Scrooge memories from when he was younger. The spirit reminds him of happier Christmases, and also helps him think about things he might have done differently in his life if he could do it over again. Then, Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present. They take Scrooge to his nephew’s house, where Scrooge sees his family having fun without him. And then, they take him to Bob Cratchit’s house, where Scrooge sees his employee struggling to provide for his family, including his sick young son, Tiny Tim. Finally, Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come. This spirit shows Scrooge that if he does not change his ways, he will be remembered as a bad person, and that if he doesn’t help Tiny Tim, the boy will die.

When Scrooge wakes up on Christmas morning, he is a changed person. He begins the day by giving money to people in need. Then, he apologizes to his nephew, and asks to join his family’s Christmas party. Finally, he gives a big Christmas dinner to the Cratchit family, and promises to help Tiny Tim get better. Scrooge continues to be kind and generous towards other people for the rest of his life.
THE BOOK AND THE PLAY
Charles Dickens (1817–70) was born into a comfortable home, knew real poverty, and finally rose to become the wealthiest writer in the world. His family background was checkered: one grandfather had been a domestic servant, another was an embezzler. His father was a navy clerk, a man of tremendous vitality, but also a spendthrift who in 1824 was imprisoned for his debts. His many failings and essential charm became the basis for one of Dickens’s great characters, David Copperfield’s Mr. Micawber.

The family’s descent into poverty—difficult to avoid with ten children to feed—forced young Charles to abandon school in 1824 and go to work in a London blacking warehouse. Disgraced and hating the drudgery of his work, he was further embittered when, after his father’s fortunes recovered, his mother wanted him to continue in manual labor. At 15, however, he became a clerk in a solicitor’s office, and soon thereafter a court stenographer and newspaper reporter. Then began his long, intimate love affair with London, the setting of almost all of his writings. As the historian Walter Bagehot later said, Dickens “describes London like a special correspondent for posterity.”

Although attracted to the theater (he considered becoming an actor), Dickens finally began to earn an income with his journalism. In 1833, at just 21, his stories and essays (later published in Sketches by Boz [1836]) found a welcoming audience. The key to his fortune came soon after when Dickens was asked to provide a comic narrative to accompany a series of engravings. The resulting Pickwick Papers was an immediate success.

Dickens became in a sense the first “comic book artist,” and the serialization of his work in the popular press—often illustrated by Cruikshank or “Phiz” (Hablot Brown)—earned him an immense and demanding public. Major works began to roll from his pen: Oliver Twist, with its lush, sinister portrait of London’s underworld and its population of poverty-stricken children, was serialized and published in book form in 1838. It was followed by Nicholas Nickleby (1839), The Old Curiosity Shop (1841), Barnaby Rudge (1841), Martin Chuzzlewit (1843), A Christmas Carol (1843), and his other enormously popular holiday tales. During a visit to the United States in 1842, his remarks on copyright protection and in support of the abolition movement were met with hostility, and he replied with his own sharp criticism of American vulgarity in American Notes (1842).

Beginning with the publication of Dombey and Son in 1848, Dickens’s writing became increasingly refined, yet there was no break in his popularity. His works were available everywhere, in periodicals as well as onstage; at one time 20 London theaters were simultaneously presenting adaptations of Dickens stories. The gushingly sentimental “Death of Little Nell” was an especial favorite.

Although Dombey had revealed a more penetrating criticism of the new industrial society, David Copperfield (1849), Dickens’s own favorite novel, returned to a world
of boyhood adventure and contained extensive autobiographical material. The 1850s, however, brought the “dark trilogy” of *Bleak House* (1853), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Little Dorrit* (1857). With these works Dickens’s characterizations became more subdued and his view of social injustice more pervasive.

Although shaken by the separation from his wife, Catherine Hogarth, in 1858 (caused by his affair with the young actress Ellen Ternan) and exhausted by long speaking tours, Dickens was far from finished as a writer. In 1859 came *A Tale of Two Cities*, which was a huge success, followed the next year by *Great Expectations*. The latter book—now considered his masterpiece—revealed, in the character Pip, Dickens’s uncanny ability to enter the mind of a child. His last works were *Our Mutual Friend* (1864), a stark criticism of money values, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, based on the case of John Jasper, an opium-addicted cathedral organist who murdered his nephew. Dickens literally died mid sentence, and *Drood* was never finished, the author having truly worked himself to death.
ONSTAGE NOW

THE MAN WHO INVENTED CHRISTMAS

DICKENS'S EFFECT ON THE HOLIDAY SEASON

BY MICHAEL PALLER

Imagine a Christmas without carols or cards. No festive dinner or presents under the tree on Christmas morning. No tree. This was Christmas in most places before *A Christmas Carol* was published in 1843.

By the time Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*, Christmas had fallen into a bad way. In Elizabethan days, Christmas was a raucous affair, reminiscent of the pagan winter solstice rituals from which it emerged. When the dour Puritans seized power in 1642, they attacked Christmas as a pagan assault on Christ. They banned it and also outlawed another roguish activity, the theater, tearing down most of the existing playhouses. Christmas and the theater disappeared in England, and neither returned until the Stuart kings restored them in 1660.

Christmas was grim in England’s cities during the 1800s. Factories were open on December 25, and there was no day off for employees like Martha Cratchit. Still, while Christmas wasn’t much celebrated in large cities, some old customs were observed in rural villages, with games, carols, and dances. Garlands of evergreens and sprigs of mistletoe were hung in manor houses, and the gentry retained the tradition of opening their homes to their less well-off neighbors and distributing food and drink to the poor. As a child, Dickens heard of these customs from his father, whose parents were servants at a country estate in northwest England.

Back in America in 1820, Washington Irving—one of Dickens’s favorite authors—published *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gentleman*, a collection of tales and essays. In addition to “Rip Van Winkle,” the book contained three chapters devoted to Christmas at a British country estate called Bracebridge Hall. The place was fictional, but the accounts of Christmas celebrations were based on what Irving had seen and heard during years in Europe—sumptuous dinners, a blazing yule log, dances, games, songs. Dickens, then, had several sources of inspiration for a Christmas that neither he nor thousands of others had ever really experienced. This kind of Christmas matched his own temperament and needs, which were forged in a childhood of want and uncertainty.

When Dickens was 12, his father was declared bankrupt. He and the entire family except for Charles were imprisoned for debt. The boy, alone in the world, was removed from school and put to work. It was the formative experience of his life. It’s not surprising, then, that in a series of pieces beginning in 1835 with an essay called “Christmas Festivities,” Dickens depicted a holiday centered on families, with children who were loved and surrounded by good cheer. While Dickens produced five short books and numerous articles on Christmas themes, *A Christmas Carol* has always been the most popular, and the most successful in setting out what he came to call his “Carol philosophy,” concerned with the welfare of all.

Dickens’s image of Christmas as a time prompting generosity struck a chord with his readers. English poet Thomas Hood wrote in his review of *A Christmas Carol*, “If Christmas with its ancient
and hospitable customs, its social and charitable observances, were in danger of decay, this is the book that would give them a new lease.” It did.

By the end of 1844, at least 12 unauthorized theatrical adaptations had appeared in London. At the same time, other Christmas traditions emerged to help create Christmas as we know it. In 1822, New York writer Clement Clarke Moore wrote “A Visit from St. Nicholas” (aka “‘Twas the Night before Christmas”), with its vision of Santa Claus delivering gifts via a reindeer-drawn sleigh. In 1841, Prince Albert, the German consort of Queen Victoria, brought a Christmas tree to Windsor Castle. A tradition from his homeland, it was decorated with glass ornaments, candles, fruit, and gingerbread. By the end of the decade, it had become ubiquitous.

It’s a sad irony that the profit-driven atmosphere of the early 19th century, which led Dickens to write *Carol*, has infected the holiday in our own time. Still, *Carol* is an antidote to what a contemporary critic referred to as “this money-seeking age and money-getting country.” Dickens’s vision of Christmas isn’t about money; it doesn’t divide rich from poor. It encompasses all, child and adult, the loved and the orphaned—summed up in a sentence that retains its revolutionary plea: “God bless us, every one!”
SOME NOTEWORTHY VERSIONS OF **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**


1844 *A Christmas Carol, or, Past, Present, and Future.* As performed at the Theatre Royal Adelphi, London. Dramatic adaptation by Edward Stirling. First stage adaptation.

1901 *Scrooge, or, Marley’s Ghost.* Silent Film. First film adaptation.

1913 *Scrooge.* Film adaptation starring Seymour Hicks.

1921 *A Christmas Carol.* Suite for piano in two parts by Alex Rowley.

1930 *A Christmas Carol.* Marionette play.


1951 *Scrooge.* Feature film starring Alastair Sim.


1975 *The Passions of Carol.* Pornographic film.


1979 *Skinflint: A Country Christmas Carol.* Transports Dickens’s Victorian London setting to present-day Tennessee. Features country singers Hoyt Axton as Scrooge and Barbara Mandrell as Belle.

1981 *A Christmas Carol.* Televised version of a.c.t.’s stage production filmed by abc Video Enterprises and broadcast on Arts Cable TV, with William Paterson (Scrooge) Mark Murphey (Bob Cratchit), Raye Birk (Jacob Marley), Tyson Thomas (Tiny Tim), and Lawrence Hecht (Narrator/Ghost of Christmas Present).


1983 *Mickey’s Christmas Carol.* The classic Disney animated characters play the roles in this animated retelling of the Charles Dickens masterpiece.

1988 *Scrooged.* A feature film in which a cynically selfish television executive (Bill Murray) gets haunted by three spirits bearing lessons on Christmas Eve.

1992 *The Muppet Christmas Carol.*


2000 *A Diva’s Christmas Carol.* Made-for-television movie featuring a very nasty pop singer (Vanessa Williams) who gets a reality check from three Christmas spirits.

2009 Disney’s animated *A Christmas Carol.* Starring Jim Carrey.
AN EXCERPT FROM A CHRISTMAS CAROL

FROM THE NOVELLA BY CHARLES DICKENS: FEZZIWIG PARTY EXCERPT

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (an artful dog, mind! The sort of man who knew his business better than you or I could have told it him!) struck up “Sir Roger de Coverley.” Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who would dance, and had no notion of walking.

But if they had been twice as many—ah, four times—old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to her, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that’s not high praise, tell me higher, and I’ll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig’s calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn’t have predicted, at any given time, what would have become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curtsey, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig “cut”—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.
“A small matter,” said the Ghost, “to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.”
“Small!” echoed Scrooge.

The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig: and when he had done so, said,

“Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?”

“It isn’t that,” said Scrooge, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self. “It isn’t that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count ’em up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.”

The complete text online: http://www.stormfax.com/1dickens.htm
BOOK TO STAGE ADAPTATION

Read how the Fezziwig Party Excerpt from the Novella (above) translates to a script for the stage (below). Our version of *A Christmas Carol* was adapted by Carey Perloff and Paul Walsh.

**FEZZIWIG:** Music, Giles, play us a tune while we get ready for our guests!

**GILES:** Right you are, Mr. F.! *(Giles the fiddler, who has climbed atop the perch opposite Past and Scrooge, begins to play.)*

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** And who will hang the mistletoe?

**DICK:** Give that to me, Mrs. F! *(Dick takes the mistletoe—climbs up and “hangs” it by handing it to Christmas Past)*

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Mind the mistletoe tonight, my girls!

**FELICITY:** It’s Belle who always gets caught—.

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** I was just like you, my dear! Every boy wanted to kiss me, but I chose darling Fezz!* *(Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig kiss. Guests begin to enter.)*

**YOUNG SCROOGE:** Cheers to the Fezziwigs! Masters of the feast!

**ALL:** Cheers to the Fezziwigs! Masters of the feast!

**SCROOGE:** Cheers to the Fezziwigs! Masters of the feast! *(A couple enters with three children: two little girls and a boy)*

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Look! It’s Alan—and Ruth—and the little ones! Come in, my dears! A Merry Christmas to you all! *(Another couple enters with a boy, Alfred)*

**FEZZIWIG:** And Dorothy and Burt!

**ALFRED/ ANNA:** And me, Alfred [Anna]!

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** You’re just in time for the first dance! *(calling up to Giles the Fiddler) Ready, Giles?*

**GILES:** I’m always ready, M’am!

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Ready, Fezz?

**FEZZIWIG:** Ready, Millie!

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Then off we go!!

*(Dance # 1 commences. Everyone joins in a great communal dance that transforms into Belle and Young Scrooge dancing a beautiful duet. The dance recedes and continues upstage as Young Scrooge and Belle approach the mistletoe. Dick Wilkins watches.)*

**BELLE:** Oh, Ebenezer—the mistletoe. You’ve brought me here on purpose.

**YOUNG SCROOGE:** No I haven’t. Have I?
BELLE: Have you?

YOUNG SCROOGE: If you want me to.

BELLE: I’ve waited all year for this!

YOUNG SCROOGE: (he takes her in his arms) I never knew!

BELLE: Open your eyes, Ebeneezer! Wherever you look, whenever you look for me, I will be waiting–

YOUNG SCROOGE: My beautiful Belle! (Young Scrooge kisses Belle.) —You are a gift beyond compare.

MRS. FEZZIWIG: Belle, mind the mistletoe. (Belle runs off.)

YOUNG SCROOGE: (To Dick, who is watching) Dick, she kissed me! Congratulate me!

DICK: (Hiding his personal disappointment, but happy for his friend) I do, my friend—of course I do! (Dance # 2: The dance surges forward, finishing in a big finale. The guests applaud and disperse)

SCROOGE: What a marvelous party! How generous Fezziwig is, and how we love him!

[GHOST OF CHRISTMAS] PAST: A small matter to make these silly fools so full of gratitude.

SCROOGE: Small!

[GHOST OF CHRISTMAS] PAST: Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds on this Christmas celebration—three or four, perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?

SCROOGE: It isn’t that. It isn’t that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy, to make our service light or burdensome, a pleasure or a toil. The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.

[GHOST OF CHRISTMAS] PAST: And how quickly you let it go!

SCROOGE: I grew up.
SEEING THE SHOW
PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE, AND YOU
Consider and discuss some of the themes of A Christmas Carol:

- In the play, Scrooge gets a visit from the Ghost of Christmas Past. **What are some of your favorite memories of past holidays?**
- Scrooge is also visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present. Think about the present holidays—**What are some of your current traditions?**
- Finally, Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. **What are some pieces of advice you would give to your future self?**
- In the play, Scrooge learns that it is important to give back to his community. 
  - What is one way that you support or give back to your local community now?
  - How might you support or give back to your community in the future?
  - In what ways does your community support you?
  - How do you benefit from being a part of your community?

PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT

- Double check A.C.T.’s COVID-19 updates:  
- If you are feeling unwell, please stay home. If you or a member of your party is experiencing symptoms similar to those of COVID-19 or have had known exposure to someone with COVID-19, please stay home.
- For more information about ACCESSIBILITY at A.C.T.:  
  [https://www.act-sf.org/your-visit/accessibility/](https://www.act-sf.org/your-visit/accessibility/)
  - For more information about the Sensory-Friendly Performance, and an Access Guide for visiting the theater:  
- Read the ACT “Rules of Play” to learn more about how we hope you arrive, engage and enjoy the show!  
  [https://www.act-sf.org/your-visit/a-c-t-s-house-rules-of-play/](https://www.act-sf.org/your-visit/a-c-t-s-house-rules-of-play/)
- If your students would benefit from additional information about theater etiquette, consider discussing some of the points made by Blake Theater here:  
  [https://www.blaketheater.com/theater-etiquette/](https://www.blaketheater.com/theater-etiquette/)
HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR EXPERIENCE

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE THEATER

• Front of House Staff including security personnel, ushers, and house managers are trained to assist guests and ensure that safety measures are followed. If you feel uncomfortable or perceive a risk at any time, please speak with one of these team members.
• Hand sanitizer stations are available throughout the theater.

DURING THE SHOW

• Please stay in your seat unless using the restroom.

STUDENT MATINEE PERFORMANCES

If you are seeing A Christmas Carol in a special Student Matinee performance:

• Masks are recommended for all students, staff, and guests, and masks are available upon request. Masks should fit well, meaning they cover your nose and mouth comfortably without need of frequent adjustment. We request that you and your students wear your mask for the full performance.
• No food and beverages will be served or allowed.
• There will be a talkback after the show. Your students will have the opportunity to ask the performers questions! Please consider staying in the theater for the additional 20-minute engagement opportunity. Invite your students to consider their curiosities in advance, and encourage them to participate in the Q&A.
AFTER THE SHOW

Revisit parts of this guide that you didn’t use before, including readings, videos & links, as well as activities and discussion prompts.

Consider which of the following prompts are most appropriate for the group you’re working with:

ALL AGES
• Revisit the Past, Present and Future You questions.
• Who is your favorite character in the play? Why?
• Think back to your experience seeing the show. What did you see? What did you think? What do you wonder?
• Do you and your family celebrate Christmas? How? Or do you celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or another winter holiday or festival? How is your celebration different from the Christmas celebrations portrayed in A Christmas Carol? How is it the same?

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL
• What is Scrooge like as a person at the beginning of A Christmas Carol? How does he change by the end of the play? What does the actor who plays him do to show Scrooge’s transformation?
• How are the Ghosts of Christmases Past, Present, and Future different? What lessons does Scrooge learn from each spirit? Is there one particular moment or event that causes Scrooge’s change of heart? What is it?
• Charles Dickens says in A Christmas Carol that “the children are all angels.” What do you think he meant by that? Do you agree? Why do you think there are so many children in this production?

MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL
• Write a short version of this story from another character’s perspective. Pretend, for example, that you are Belle, Mrs. Dilber, Mrs. Cratchit, or Scrooge’s nephew, Fred. How would you explain Scrooge’s change of heart?
• Pretend it is one year later, after the story ends. What do you think will be different about Scrooge and his life the next Christmas? What about Bob Cratchit? Mrs. Cratchit? Tiny Tim?
• How do the set, costume, and lighting design show Scrooge’s transformation? What is the mood of each scene, and how does the design help to establish that mood? How do music and sound affect your understanding of the story? How do dance and choreography help tell the story? What other elements or effects influence the mood and storytelling of each scene, and how? Describe a specific moment when design elements elevated the story or changed the mood, why do you choose that moment? What was remarkable about it?
• What theatrical devices are used in this production to show Scrooge going backward or forward in time? How can we tell that other characters can’t see him or the ghosts?
GAMES AND ACTIVITIES
Words from *A Christmas Carol* are hiding in the word search below! Can you find them? Look closely—words may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.

Bah Humbug  Fezziwig  Marley  Scrooge
Belle  Figs  Mistletoe  Spirit
Bob Cratchit  Fred  Nightshirt  Tiny Tim
Candle  Gravestone  Onions  Turkey
Counting House  Holiday  Punch  Sage
Dickens  Little Fan 
Scrooge likes to count his money. Can you help him?
Add up the value of the coins in each row.
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

There are 6 differences between these two pictures! Can you find them all?

Answers:
1. added wreath on doorway
2. added garland on balcony
3. gloves change red to green
4. candle missing from one caroler
5. red bow missing from top hat
6. button missing from pink coat from one caroler

From one caroler: 2. added garland on balcony 2. gloves change red to green 4. candle missing
On Christmas Eve, Scrooge ate his usual ___________ ___________ in his usual
_____________ _______________. After eating, he read _______________
(NAME OF BOOK OR NEWSPAPER), and then decided to go home. On his way, he passed __________ of _______________
(TYPE OF BUILDING) _______________. The people he saw moved __________ away from him; not one
stopped to say “____________, Mr. Scrooge!” Even the dogs in the street barked __________
as he passed. “_____________!” Scrooge muttered, as he ____________ home.

As Scrooge walked, he noticed that the weather became _______________. In fact, it was so
_____________ it was hard to ______________. Scrooge struggled to ______________
all the way home. Nobody besides Scrooge had lived in his house for __________ years.

The rooms inside were _______________ and the yard surrounding it was ______________.

When he finally arrived, he observed the _______________. Scrooge had seen that
___________ every day for the past __________ years, and never noticed anything
_________ about it. But today, as he looked towards it ______________, it transformed
______________ into the face of _______________.

“_____________!” said Scrooge, as he blinked __________ times and looked
away _______________. When he looked back, ______________’s face was gone, and
______________ was back to normal.

“_____________!” said Scrooge, ________________ refusing to believe what he just
saw. And ______________, Scrooge went inside the ______________ house to ____________
before going to bed.
People all over the world celebrate different holidays in the winter months, like Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas, Diwali, Las Posadas, and Teng Chieh. Choose a holiday that your family doesn’t celebrate, and find out more about it online. Use the space below to write or draw one thing you learned about the holiday you chose.
ACT OUT A SCENE FROM THE PLAY

First, choose people to play each of the 8 characters: the parents Anne Cratchit and Bob Cratchit, and the kids Martha, Peter, Belinda, Ned, Sally, and Tiny Tim. Then, read the scene out loud and focus on the language. Finally, get up and act out what is happening, bringing the scene to life!

ANNE CRATCHIT: Whatever has happened to your precious father, then? And your brother, Tiny Tim? I can’t for the life of me think what’s keeping them.

NED: Old Mister Scrooge is what, I’ll bet. (He imitates Scrooge) Bah Humbug!

ANNE CRATCHIT: Now, Ned.—Christmas.

PETER: What time is it, Mother? Where’s our Martha?

ANNE CRATCHIT: Your sister wasn’t nearly so late last Christmas.

We hear a tiny knock at the door before it opens, revealing Martha Cratchit.

MARTHA: Merry Christmas, everyone!

KIDS: Merry Christmas, Martha!

MARTHA: You all look so joyous! Belinda and Sally, look at the ribbons I’ve brought from the factory!

BELINDA & SALLY: Thank you, Martha!

MARTHA: Ned, you washed!

NED: I even used soap!

BELINDA: Wait until you see our goose, Martha!

SALLY: Sage and onions!

PETER: Don’t forget my potatoes.

MARTHA: Peter, you look so elegant in Papa’s collar!

NED & SALLY: (clowning around) Very elegant!

ANNE CRATCHIT: How late you are, my dear, and how tired you look!

MARTHA: Oh mother, we’d so much work to finish up and everything to clear away before I could leave. But I’m here, Mama. Ready to celebrate Christmas.

ANNE CRATCHIT: And celebrate we will. Come warm yourself by the fire.

In the distance, we hear Bob and Tim singing a carol on the way home.

NED: Wait! Father’s coming. And Tiny Tim.

SALLY: Hide, Martha, hide.

MARTHA: Hide?

SALLY: Like last year.
NED: And the year before!

MARTHA: Oh, where shall I hide?

SALLY: Under the table.

BELINDA: No, behind the chair!

NED: Next to the fireplace.

Martha hides.

PETER: Shhh! They’re coming!

The door swings open as Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim enter, still singing.

BOB CRATCHIT: Hello, hello! Merry Christmas everyone!

ANNE CRATCHIT: Merry Christmas, Where on earth have you two been so late?

BOB CRATCHIT: We stopped to feed the ducks on the frozen pond, didn’t we, Tim?

TINY TIM: And then hurried home to see our Martha.

BOB CRATCHIT: Why, where is Martha?

ANNE CRATCHIT: Not coming.

TINY TIM: Not coming?

BOB CRATCHIT: Not coming to her family? But it’s Christmas! It’s Christmas Eve!

BELINDA: Too far!

NED: Too busy!

PETER: Too cold!

BOB CRATCHIT: (Enjoying this yearly game) But if we all join hands and close our eyes and wish very, very hard, I’ll bet we can make her appear.

TINY TIM: Let’s do it! I want to see Martha!

ANNE CRATCHIT: All right, then. Children, come together.

BELINDA: Everyone, close your eyes!

TINY TIM: They’re closed, they’re closed!

BOB CRATCHIT: Now then, Tiny Tim, make your wish.

TINY TIM: I wish our Martha were here right now.

Martha appears from her hiding place.

MARTHA: Merry Christmas, Tiny Tim! Merry Christmas, everyone!

End of scene.
This crossword puzzle was created by Dan Feyer, the music director for A.C.T.’s A Christmas Carol since 2015, and an eight-time American Crossword Puzzle Tournament champion.

ACROSS
1. “God bless us, _____!” (2 wds.)
7. Bedtime wear for 2-Down
8. Bird eaten at Christmas Eve dinner by 21-Across’s family
9. Schoolmate and coworker of 2-Down (2 wds.)
10. First name of A Christmas Carol’s author
11. Ignorance and __________
12. Third ghost to appear: Ghost of Christmas ______
14. Fourth ghost to appear: Ghost of Christmas ______
16. Jewelry given to 2-Down by his sister Little Fan
17. 2-Down’s nephew
20. Celebratory gathering like the one hosted by 17-Across or 3-Down
21. Clerk of 2-Down and father of six children (2 wds.)
25. Second ghost to appear: Ghost of Christmas ______
26. Last name of A Christmas Carol’s author
27. First ghost to appear: former business partner of 2-Down (first name)
28. Large bird bought by 2-Down for 21-Across’s family
29. Mrs. _____, housekeeper for 2-Down
30. Another word for “ghost”
31. First ghost to appear: former business partner of 2-Down (last name)

DOWN
2. Main character of A Christmas Carol (2 wds.)
3. Employer of 2-Down as a young man
4. City where A Christmas Carol takes place
5. Clanking metal links worn by the ghost of 31-Across
6. “Are there no _____? Are there no workhouses?”
13. “Bah, _____!”
15. Tinkling sound heard by 2-Down in his house
18. Christmas or New Year’s, for example
19. Burial site visited by 2-Down
22. Lost love of 2-Down
23. Youngest child of 21-Across (2 wds.)
24. Another word for “ghost”
In the play, Scrooge gets a visit from the Ghost of Christmas Past. What are some of your favorite memories of past holidays?

Scrooge is also visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present. Think about the present holidays—what are some of your current traditions?

Finally, Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. What are some pieces of advice you would give to your future self?
In *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge learns an important lesson about generosity. Why does being kind and giving to others become important to Scrooge? Why is it important to you?

What is one way that you support or give back to your local community now? How might you support or give back to your community in the future?

In what ways does your community support you? How do you benefit from being a part of your community?
Follow along with Scrooge's journey! Color in the following scenes.

"Is that your boy outside, Cratchit?"
“It would be ungrateful not to drink to his health. So I say, to Uncle Scrooge!”
“God bless us, every one!”
RESOURCES AND LINKS
VIDEO LINKS AND BEHIND-THE-SCENES

SHORT PREVIEWS

*A Christmas Carol* is back! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvomZIJ1AN8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvomZIJ1AN8) (59 sec.)

Short, spooky and thought-prokoving: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9l69sIfhCKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9l69sIfhCKQ) (32 sec.)

BEHIND-THE-SCENES

Young actors who have performed in *A Christmas Carol* talking about what it’s like to be in the production, life lessons, advice and holiday traditions: [https://youtu.be/AYbCxM-J4JY](https://youtu.be/AYbCxM-J4JY) (2 min. 51 sec.)

Watch the actors in a Dance Rehearsal: [https://youtu.be/9RtB_hc8DNQ](https://youtu.be/9RtB_hc8DNQ) (1 min. 4 sec.)


COSTUME DESIGN

The Party Outfits of *A Christmas Carol*:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNR10jnkJ5g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNR10jnkJ5g) (2 min. 12 sec.)

How Colors tell the Story of *A Christmas Carol*:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VGxONni8I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VGxONni8I) (2 min. 22 sec.)

The Ghosts of *A Christmas Carol*:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMTNWl2-CTA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMTNWl2-CTA) (2 min. 8 sec.)

A DEEPER DIVE

How *A Christmas Carol* Perfectly Demonstrates Five-Act Structure; Lessons From a Screenplay: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5P-U999E0k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5P-U999E0k)

The Charles Dickens Museum: [http://www.dickensmuseum.com](http://www.dickensmuseum.com) (many resources!)

The Complete Works of Charles Dickens: [http://www.dickens-literature.com](http://www.dickens-literature.com) (the works!)

JUST FOR FUN

Bah Humbug!! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6G1FEQoDy5M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6G1FEQoDy5M) (33 sec.)
While A Christmas Carol is family-friendly entertainment, it touches on some complex topics that teachers/parents may wish to discuss further with their students/children.

**TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT: CHARITY, EMPATHY, AND HELPING OTHERS**

*Sesame Street*: Mark Ruffalo and Murray the Muppet explain empathy: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_1Rt1R4xBM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_1Rt1R4xBM) (2 min. 28 sec.)

*Sesame Street*: Helping Others: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ytwpzz3NCcl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ytwpzz3NCcl) (2 min. 48 sec.)

14 Expert Approved Ways to Teach Kids about Charity (article, ~1600 words)

**TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT: DEATH AND DYING**


**TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT: NIGHTMARES**


**TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT: DISABILITY**


**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**


Easy Holiday Ornaments Kids Can Make: [https://www.bhg.com/christmas/ornaments/easy-ornaments-kids-can-make](https://www.bhg.com/christmas/ornaments/easy-ornaments-kids-can-make) (instructions for crafting)
ON AND BY CHARLES DICKENS


**ON A CHRISTMAS CAROL**


Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol*. The complete text online. [http://www.stormfax.com/1dickens.htm](http://www.stormfax.com/1dickens.htm).


**ON CHRISTMAS**

The History Channel. The History of Christmas. [https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas](https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas)


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