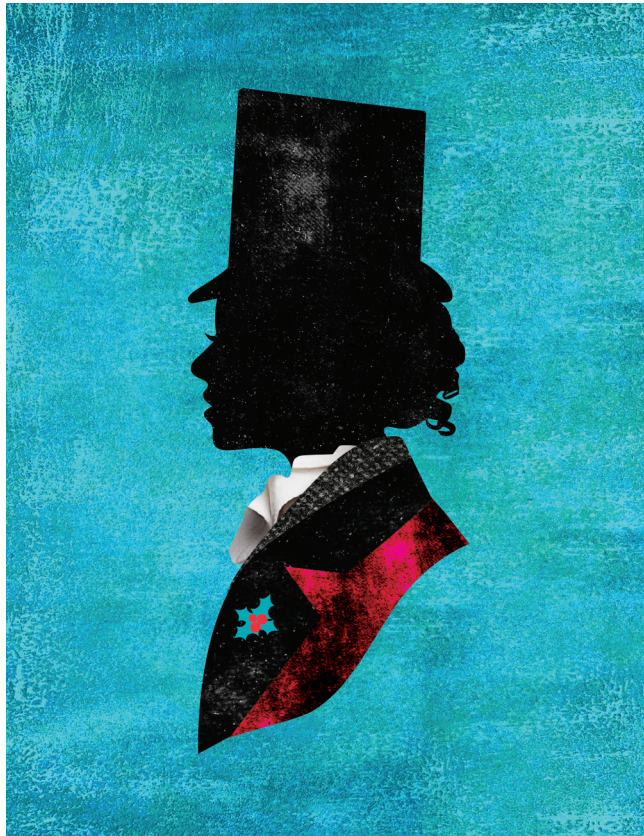




ALABAMA  
SHAKESPEARE  
FESTIVAL

# Charles Dickens' **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

## STUDY GUIDE



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Plot** ..... pg 3  
**About Charles Dickens** ..... pg 4  
**Classroom Resources** ..... pg 5

**SchoolFest student matinees and the accompanying materials fulfill the following standard objectives:**

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.RL.11-12.1-3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS *cont.*

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.RL.11-12.7 Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry); evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist).

## NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

TH.Re7.1 Perceive and analyze artistic work.

TH.Re8.1 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

TH.Re9.1 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

TH.Cn10.1 Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

TH.Cn11.1 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

*A Christmas Carol* is one of the most beloved Christmas tales. The miser, Scrooge, is saved from his hard-heartedness by the ghost of his late business partner, Jacob Marley. Jacob chastises Scrooge for his penny-pinching ways and sends three spirits to teach him a lesson about caring for his fellow man. Dickens' ideas could not be clearer—our fellow humans should be the most important things in our lives.

The Spirit of Christmas Past reveals to Scrooge his childhood and youth. Scrooge's dreams and chance for love are all ruined by his love of money.

The Spirit of Christmas Present shows Scrooge how the people he knows are celebrating the holiday. Scrooge's nephew, Fred, is throwing a special and lively family party which Scrooge declined to attend. Scrooge's clerk, Bob Cratchit, is having a dinner filled with warmth and good wishes, despite the poverty and illness haunting his family.

A much chastened Scrooge meets the Spirit of Christmas Future ready to learn. He sees his own fate—an un mourned death—should he not change his ways.

When Christmas morning dawns, Scrooge realizes it is not too late. He joyously arrives at Fred's door humbly seeking to join the family gathering. With a reformed heart, Scrooge gives Bob Cratchit a raise and helps save his son, Tiny Tim.



The Spirit of Christmas Present  
(James Bowen, *A Christmas Carol*, ASF 2017)



Scrooge and Marley's ghost  
(Rodney Clark and Brik Berkes, *A Christmas Carol*, ASF 2017)

# ABOUT CHARLES DICKENS

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Charles Dickens was 19th century England's most prolific and popular novelist. Born in 1812 near London, he wrote about his impoverished childhood and experience as a child laborer in his autobiographical novel, *David Copperfield*.

A young Dickens considered becoming an actor, but his writing career intervened. He began as a court reporter and journalist under the pen name "Boz" until his first novel, *Pickwick Papers*, brought him instant success.

His novels were serialized in London periodicals with each episode eagerly awaited by thousands of readers. In addition to entertaining his readers, he realized that his writings could draw attention to social issues.

Later in life, Dickens toured widely, reading from his works, including *A Christmas Carol*. He died in 1870, but his works continue to be popular and are often adapted for television, film, and stage.



Charles Dickens in 1843, when he wrote  
*A Christmas Carol*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This play focuses on Christmas, a holiday celebrated by some peoples and traditions. What is a holiday that is important to you? Why is it important? How do you celebrate?
2. *A Christmas Carol* is set in London, sometime in the middle of the 19th century. What was happening in the world at that time? What do you think your life would have been like if you lived then?
3. In what ways do you think that today's "Christmas spirit" may be different from the Christmas spirit of Dickens' time? How has the tone of Christmas changed?

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Pick a character from the play. Imagine that it is the end of Christmas day. Write a journal or diary entry from that character's perspective. What happened to them during the day? How do they feel about it?
2. Write a short narrative about growing up in your family. What events in your childhood affected you the most? Why?
3. Help organize a Christmas drive in your class or school. Many organizations offer lists of gift ideas or needs for local families.
4. Scrooge first sees Marley in the door knocker of his home. Look around your neighborhood for a door knocker that might inspire Charles Dickens today.