

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 3

“But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones called ‘nuts’ to Scrooge” (p. 3).

Writing Prompt

In the key paragraph and in several before it, Scrooge’s character is described. He is described as “tight-fisted” and “cold.” The above paragraph suggests that he enjoys being this way. Any salutation or kind remark is returned with a “bah, humbug!” **In two paragraphs, make an argument stating the ways Scrooge manages to alienate people – to force them to keep their distance. Use concrete examples from the text and pay particular attention to interactions between Scrooge and his nephew.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 7

“I wish to be left alone,” said Scrooge. “Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don’t make merry myself at Christmas, and I can’t afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned: they cost enough: and those who are badly off must go there” (p. 7).

Writing Prompt

Scrooge’s interaction with his nephew, the gentlemen who ask for charity, and his clerk tell us a lot about him as a person. What is important to Ebenezer Scrooge? What are some of his concerns, values, and possible biases? **In three paragraphs, describe Scrooge’s core values at the beginning of the novel and compare them to your own. Make an argument as to whose approach is best. How are these values learned and developed over time?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 17

“‘But you were always a good man of business, Jacob,’ faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

‘Business!’ cried the ghost, wringing its hands again. ‘Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a mere drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business’” (p. 17).

Writing Prompt

In the key paragraph, Marley’s ghost explains that Scrooge fails to see the whole picture. **In an argumentative paper, explain why we should all contribute to our local, national, and global communities through charities.**

Using the website Charity Navigator, identify five charities that you would be interested in supporting. **Write three paragraphs about the ones you identified. How do the charities you select show that change is possible? Does each one have vision plan and effort? Make an argument for which one seems to do this most affectively.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 25

"The spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand odours floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long forgotten!" (p. 25).

Writing Prompt

In today's reading, Scrooge is reminded of his happiest days, now long forgotten. **In a one-page essay, write about a happy memory of your own. Make an argument about what makes an event meaningful: why is it such a happy memory?**

- Use lots of sensory details.
- What would the room look like?
- What would your guests say?
- What are the details that make you cherish this particular memory?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 33

“He felt the spirit’s glance and stopped.
‘What’s the matter?’ asked the ghost.
‘Nothing particular,’ said Scrooge.
‘Something, I think?’ the ghost insisted.
‘No,’ said Scrooge, ‘No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now! That’s all’” (p. 33).

Writing Prompt

The Ghost of Christmas Past allows Scrooge to be reminded how well his previous boss treated him. This is in stark contrast with how Scrooge treated his own employee the previous day. Clearly, he realizes he was wrong and would like to have the opportunity to make things right.

Recall a time in your life when someone else’s words or actions influenced you to make a positive change in your life. **Make an argument stating how your life would have turned out differently without this interaction. Was it an easy change for you to make, or did you have to work at it? How do you feel about that person and the situation now? How will this person’s action affect your treatment of others in the future?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 36

“‘Spirit!’ said Scrooge, ‘show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you torture me?’

‘One shadow more!’ exclaimed the Ghost” (p. 36).

Writing Prompt

In one page, write an argumentative essay about the features of each ghost. Why do these features add significance to the larger story? How do the ghosts appear? Are the ghosts scary? Are they approachable? What clues does Dickens give us through each description?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 41

“Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple deep green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free: free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanor, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust” (p. 41).

Writing Prompt

Look at past argument paragraphs you have made about Scrooge. **Pick one and revise it based on this section’s timeline. State whether your assessment of Scrooge has changed.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 52

“There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker’s. But they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit’s torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last” (p. 52).

Writing Prompt

At the dinner table, Mrs. Cratchit is against toasting to Scrooge, but Mr. Cratchit has a different stance. **In three paragraphs, make an argument stating which stance you think is correct and why.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 56

“I was going to say,” said Scrooge’s nephew, “that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can’t help thinking better of it – I defy him – if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying Uncle Scrooge, how are you? If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, *that’s* something; and I think I shook him, yesterday” (p. 56-7).

Writing Prompt

At both the Cratchits’ and his nephew’s, Scrooge hears himself talked about unpleasantly. Fred and Bob have similar thoughts about Scrooge – they both believe he is one to be pitied and blessed on Christmas Day, despite his faults. Fred’s goal is to change his Uncle’s attitude by showering him with Christmas cheer; Bob’s is to bless his employer as he would bless any human being on Christmas Day.

In an argumentative 1 page paper, write a story explaining what you believe the Ghost of Christmas Present would show you if it appeared at your house this Christmas Eve.

- Where would you visit?
 - Include at least three destinations.
- Who or what would you see?
- Would you hear yourself kindly spoken about?
- What would people say about you and your attitude during the holiday season?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 60

“Much they saw, and far they went, and many homes they visited, but always with a happy end. The spirit stood beside sick beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by struggling men, and they were patient in their greater hope; by poverty, and it was rich. In almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery’s every refuge, where vain man in his little brief authority had not made fast the door, and barred the spirit out, he left his blessing, and taught Scrooge his precepts” (p. 60).

Writing Prompt

Write a page **arguing whether or not you agree that Ignorance is worse than Want? After writing your own stance, write an additional paragraph stating what an opposing argument would include.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 68

“If he wanted to keep ‘em after he was dead, a wicked old screw,’ pursued the woman, ‘why wasn’t he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he’d have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself” (p. 68).

Writing Prompt

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come shows Scrooge several conversations about a man who has recently passed away. None of the people speaking of the dead seem to be sorry he is gone, and he appears to have died alone and friendless. **In two paragraphs, argue that the people who Scrooge is watching don’t really know him. They only know what they’ve heard of him.**

Write an imaginary dialogue between two or more people (who are not family) talking about you when you aren’t around.

- You may choose to have your friends, classmates, teachers, or acquaintances as your characters.
- Be honest: what would they truly say about you behind your back?
- Would they be complimentary or not?
- Be sure to use quotation marks appropriately.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
A Christmas Carol, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 73

“To whom will our debt be transferred?”
‘I don’t know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money; and even though we were not, it would be bad fortune, indeed to find so merciless a creditor in his successor. We may sleep tonight with light hearts, Caroline!’” (p. 73)

Writing Prompt

In one page, **make an argument:** if you died today, what would people say about your character?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 77

“Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, *Ebenezer Scrooge*” (p. 77).

Writing Prompt

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come shows Scrooge the worst-case scenario. Imagine what *your* Ghost of Yet to Come might show you. After explaining your worst-case scenario, **create an argument showing what you could do, beginning today, to prevent such an end.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

A Christmas Carol, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 85

“Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him” (p. 85).

Writing Prompt

In the end, Scrooge makes an effort to change his life. He takes several steps to become a better uncle, boss, man, and member of his community.

Yesterday, you wrote about your worst-case scenario. **Today, produce clear and coherent writing with an argument stating what you can do to make your Christmases yet to come better.**

Remember: Change Requires Effort. Describe the changes you are going to make, and the effort you will put into attaining your goals. State whether or not you would like do-overs in life. What would you change with a second chance?