

STUDY GUIDE

MIDDLE SCHOOL



A Christmas Carol

Performance Project

This study guide has been developed specifically to align to Florida State Standards for the grade(s) listed above. Please modify accordingly for other grade levels if necessary.

Performance Summary

The Author

This musical adaptation is based on the novel *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Huffman Dickens. Dickens was born in 1812 in Portsmouth, England. At the age of ten he moved with his family to London, where he spent most of his life. He was best known for his tales of Victorian life including *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*. Dickens gave public readings, which were actually dramatic impersonations, and he was an enthusiastic actor on the amateur stage. He died in 1870 and was buried in the Poet's Corner of West Minster Abbey.

The History

Charles Dickens created the perfect example of an "English Christmas" in his story *A Christmas Carol*. It reflects a time of good will, good works and a time when everyone you have ever loved returns from wherever they may be to celebrate a family festival full of fun and food. At an "English Christmas" party people tired from dancing sat by the fireplace and told ghost stories that always had an ending that left everyone with a warm secure feeling about life and "the simple joys" that make it special. Since 1843, *A Christmas Carol* has been making everyone happy. Tiny Tim echoes the words, "God bless us everyone!" in this holiday gift to the entire human race.

The Story

The story begins at the counting house of Scrooge and Marley on Christmas Eve. Scrooge and his employee, Bob Crachit, are working when Scrooge's nephew Fred stops by to invite his uncle to Christmas dinner. Scrooge declines, believing Christmas to be a "humbug." After reluctantly giving Bob the next day off, Scrooge heads home for another evening alone. That evening, Scrooge is visited by the spirit of his dead business partner, Jacob Marley, who relates the terror of his afterlife. He informs Scrooge that three ghosts will visit him through the night. The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come take Scrooge on a journey during which he is forced to confront all aspects of his life. The morning after this incredible journey, Scrooge awakens with a fresh and positive outlook on the world.

Theatre Etiquette

(Before the Show)

It is often helpful to remind students of appropriate audience etiquette by explaining and discussing **why** these rules of behavior are important.

Audience members should:

- listen carefully to the ushers, your teachers – this gets everyone to their seats quickly and ensures a pleasant experience
- walk single-file and hold hand-rails as you use steps – this also keeps everyone safe
- listen carefully to the performers – they are working hard to entertain and inform you with lots of clues about the story
- refrain from talking – this allows everyone to enjoy the performance without being distracted
- laugh if something is funny, but not too loudly – you don't want to miss any dialogue
- pay attention to the lighting, scenery, costumes, and music – all of these elements help provide more details to tell the story in an interesting way
- applaud at the end – this shows the performers that you respect and appreciate their work

Teacher Instructions (After the Show) – *Choose from the activities listed on the following pages to extend student learning.*

Language Arts Connection

(LAFS.6/7/8.L.3.5) (TH.68.C.1.Pa.b)

Fill in the boxes for one of the characters.

Vision: How does the character see the world?

How do others view the character?

Know/Think: What does the character know?

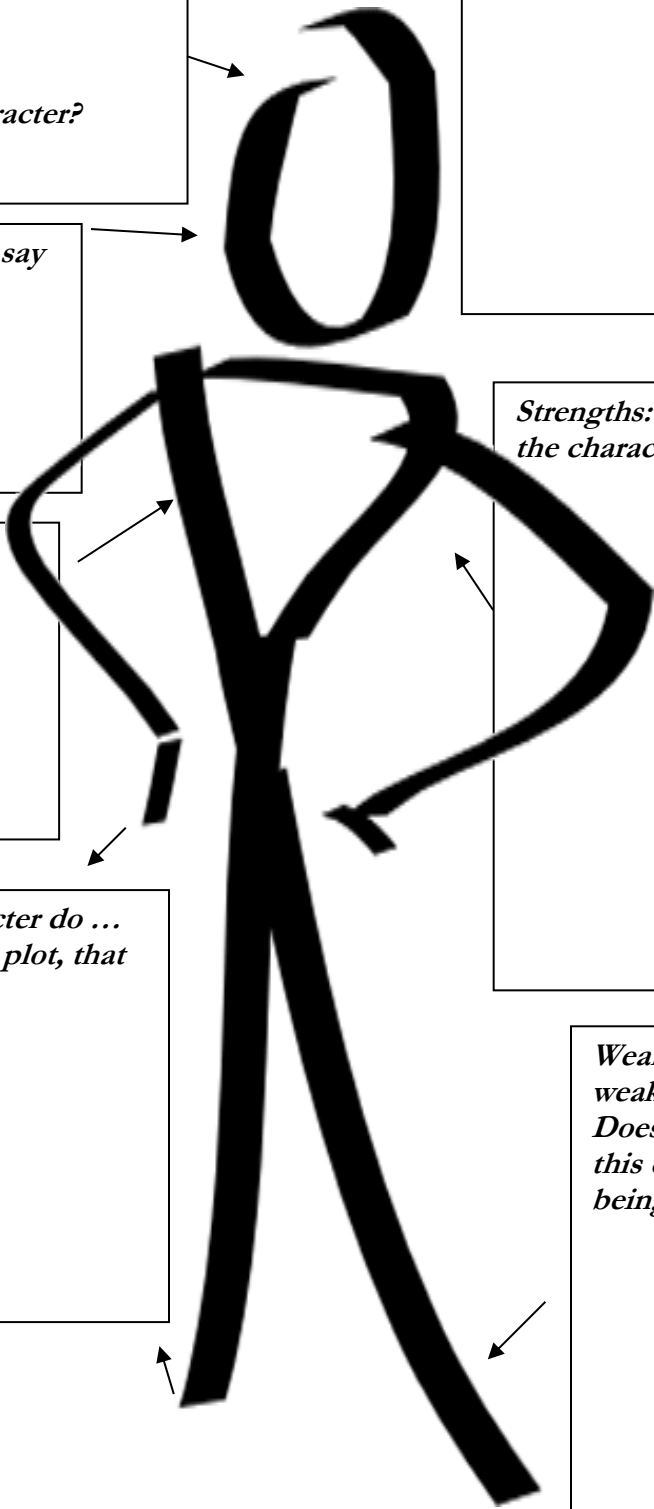
Say: What does the character say – tone of voice?

Strengths: What are the strengths of the character?

Feel: How does the character feel about him/herself?

Actions: What does the character do ... that makes a difference in the plot, that represents who he/she is ...

Weaknesses: What are the weaknesses of the character? Does the 'Achilles Heel' keep this character from growing – being successful?



Name: _____

Write a Review

(LAFS.6/7/8.L.3.5) (LAFS.68.RH.2.5) (TH.68.C.1.3) (TH.68.C.1.5) (TH.68.C.2.4) (TH.68.S.1.3)

Name: _____

In the space below identify your favorite part of the performance and explain what was most effective. You should also include recommendations for areas to improve. In addition to the performers and their work, consider the production elements (lighting, scenery, props, music, ...)

Vocabulary

- **Apparition:** a supernatural appearance of a person or thing; a ghost.
- **Apprentice:** one learning a trade under a skilled master; most young workers were apprenticed to learn a trade.
- **Aspiration:** a hope or ambition of achieving something.
- **Bedlam:** an institution for the care of mentally ill people. **benevolence:** the quality of being well meaning; kindness.
- **Brazier:** large flat pan for holding coals, used as a heater.
- **Carol:** a song or ballad of joy celebrating the birth of Christ. **celestial:** part of the heavens.
- **Charity:** generous actions or donations given to those in need; goodwill or kindly feelings towards those in need.
- **Counting house:** an office where business firms handle accounting. **emphatically:** in a forceful way.
- **Fettered:** restrain with chains or manacles, typically around the ankles.
- **Forbearance:** holding back from enforcing a right paltry insultingly small.
- **Ignorance:** unawareness, uneducated or unformed.
- **Incessant:** continuing without pause or interruption.
- **Malady:** an illness.
- **Mercy:** an act of kindness or compassion towards someone who has committed an offense.
- **Miser:** a stingy person, one who hoards money.
- **Mortal:** liable or subject to death.
- **Penance:** self-punishment inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong.
- **Quarrel:** a fight or argument.
- **Reconcile:** restore friendly relations between.
- **Scrooge:** a colloquial or vulgar word meaning to crowd.
- **Shillings/crown/sixpence:** English monetary coins.

Standards Alignment: The activities in this study guide are aligned with the standards listed below. When teachers incorporate the arts, they increase student engagement, offer multiple points for students to access the curriculum, and provide alternative means for students to demonstrate what they know.

Florida Theater Standards	
Grades 6-8	
Critical Thinking and Reflection	
TH.68.C.1.Pa.b	Contribute to selection of characteristics in the creation of a character.
TH.68.C.1.3	Determine the purpose(s), elements, meaning, and value of a theatrical work based on personal, cultural, or historical standards.
TH.68.C.1.5	Describe how a theatrical activity can entertain or instruct an audience.
TH.68.C.2.4	Defend personal responses to a theatre production.
Skills, Techniques, and Processes	
TH.68.S.1.3	Describe criteria for the evaluation of dramatic texts, performances, direction, and production elements.
Organizational Structure	
TH.68.O.2.In.b	Suggest alternate story endings for a specified theatrical production.

Language Arts Florida Standards	
Grades 6-8	
Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects	
LAFS.68.RH.2.5	Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

Language Arts Florida Standards	
Grade 6	
Language	
LAFS.6.L.3.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
Writing	
LAFS.6.W.1.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Language Arts Florida Standards	
Grade 7	
Language	
LAFS.7.L.3.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
Writing	
LAFS.7.W.1.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Language Arts Florida Standards

Grade 8

Language

LAFS.8.L.3.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
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Writing

LAFS.8.W.1.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
LAFS.8.W.1.AP.3c	When appropriate, use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
LAFS.8.W.1.AP.3f	Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.