# A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

## Celebrating Christmas

### Learning Outcomes
Pupils will demonstrate understanding of:
- how the Victorian poor celebrated Christmas
- how an author from another time presents experiences
- how an author uses language to inform and interest a reader
- how social and cultural traditions develop over time
- writing an information text

### Success Criteria
- to choose and combine images and words to communicate information
- to use figurative language, in particular simile, alliteration and onomatopoeia
- to compare and contrast Victorian and contemporary experiences of a Christmas meal

### Thinking Skills
- Information processing
  - find relevant information
  - compare and contrast
- Reasoning
  - infer and make deductions
- Enquiry
  - ask questions
  - draw conclusions

### Introducing
- **to review prior knowledge**
  - Wrap up a box in Christmas paper to look like an attractive gift.
  - Brainstorm all the ways that the tradition of Christmas is celebrated.
  - Do pupils know how it is celebrated in other countries?
  - Narrow the focus to discuss Christmas meals – what do people eat and drink at Christmas? Why is this different from other times of the year and other celebrations?
  - Explain that Christmas meals that we eat today originate with the Victorian royal family. Pupils will investigate two of Dickens’s descriptions of Christmas meals for two poor families.
  - Introduce Dickens as a Victorian writer and provide some background.
  - Extracts from two of his novels are used in this unit of work.

### Exploring
- **explore descriptive language**
  - Use the Family Meals at Christmas activity in the Understanding Setting sections of both A Christmas Carol and Great Expectations.
  - Text extracts are provided to study.
  - Locate and discuss examples of figurative language and how this enriches the reader’s experience.
  - Use inference and deduction – for example, how do pupils know that the Cratchits had sage and onion stuffing?

### Feedback and Review
Peer/group discussion:
- summarise knowledge

Peer/group discussion:
- what effect does figurative language have on the reader?
- what information have we deduced or inferred?
- what have we learnt about Dickens’ use of descriptive language?
**Responding**
- choose and combine images and words to create an information leaflet
- use figurative language

Make menu cards for the two family meals which Dickens describes. This should include the figurative language, for example, a pudding which looks like 'a speckled cannon ball'. Create images to enhance the appearance of an information text.

Rehearse the use of figurative language when writing about the food which we eat at Christmas today. Write a menu card, or descriptive paragraph, from contemporary personal experience of a Christmas meal.

**Self review:**
- what figurative language have I used?
- how have the images I have used enhanced the language?

**Peer review:**
- how effective is the figurative and descriptive language?
- how clear is the information for the reader?

**Class discussion:**
- what have we learnt about how the Victorians celebrated Christmas?
- how have these traditions been continued to the present day?
- how can language be chosen to communicate information?

**Evaluating**
- compare and contrast Victorian and contemporary experience of a Christmas meal
- through discussion, show understanding of the cultural and social development of Christmas traditions over time

Through shared discussion, establish what has been learnt about Victorian family Christmas meals for poor families and how this relates to contemporary experience.

Evaluate menu cards for effectiveness in using words (including figurative language) and images to communicate information.

**Class discussion:**
- what have we learnt about how the Victorians celebrated Christmas?
- how have these traditions been continued to the present day?
- how can language be chosen to communicate information?