# A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

## The Meaning of Christmas

### Learning Outcomes

Pupils will demonstrate understanding of:
- how an author uses narrative to explore an issue
- how language is used to create atmosphere and image
- how text can be brought alive and its meaning communicated

### Success Criteria

- to choose and use descriptive vocabulary to create a setting
- to write an effective fast poem
- to interpret language in image
- to write and perform a play script
- to show understanding of the theme and issues contained in a text
- to reflect on learning

### Thinking Skills

**Information processing**
- select and classify language

**Reasoning**
- infer and deduce meaning in text

**Creative thinking**
- generate and develop ideas

**Evaluating**
- judge the value of information

### Introducing

- through questioning and discussion, to introduce one of the themes of the novel

Use The Thinking Box from Hooks, Starters and Pause Points to introduce the novel. Provide some background to the book and familiarise pupils thoroughly with the story of *A Christmas Carol* using an age appropriate text. Explain that one of the themes of the story is greed and generosity. The book shows how one very selfish man eventually understands the meaning of Christmas and how he can help those less fortunate than himself.

### Exploring

- to explore how an author uses descriptive language to create images in the reader’s mind
- to understand how appearance is used to represent character
- to investigate the role of family in a Victorian Christmas

Explore how Dickens sets the scene of the novel using *Creating a Setting (Understanding Setting)*.

Next, investigate the character and role of the ghosts in *Painting with Words – 1 (Understanding Character)*. Continue to explore using poetry (*Painting with Words – 2*)

*Party Time (Understanding Plot)* will help pupils to understand how the Victorians celebrated Christmas and also how some of the traditions of our modern celebration of Christmas originated.

Reinforce this by exploring *Families at Christmas, (Understanding Character)* which is one of the scenes which Scrooge was shown in an attempt to persuade him that Christmas was a time for sharing. The Cratchit family, although very poor, enjoyed their time together as a family, demonstrating that relationships bring more happiness than wealth.

### Feedback and Review

**Verbal feedback (teacher):**
- model effective higher order questioning

**Peer discussion:**
- what have we learnt about figurative language?
- how have we used this knowledge in our own writing?

**Self evaluation:**
- how effectively have I communicated with my reader?
- what devices have I used?

**Class discussion:**
- how have modern traditions grown from Victorian Christmas traditions?

**Class evaluation:**
- how well were the characters’ ideas and values communicated in the play scripts and performances?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Responding</strong></th>
<th>Two response activities are suggested in <em>Whole Text Responses</em> - Storysack® and Film. These bring together all that pupils have learnt about the theme which has been explored.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>to show understanding of a complete text, using different techniques to make a text come alive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>to demonstrate a multimodal response to a text</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluating</strong></td>
<td><em>Share a View (Whole Text Responses)</em> encourages pupils to evaluate their learning through sharing their thinking in a book review (resource 1.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>to reflect on understanding of a narrative</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group discussion:**
- have we made the text come to life?
- what devices have we used?
- how could we improve what we have done?

**Class evaluation:**
- how have the films communicated the theme of the novel?
- How has film deepened our understanding of the issues of the novel?

**Self evaluation:**
- what have I learnt about Dickens’ narrative style?
- what has studying this novel helped me to understand?

**Class discussion:**
- how can I use this knowledge and understanding in my future reading and writing?
- how might my future choices be influenced by my study of *A Christmas Carol*?