

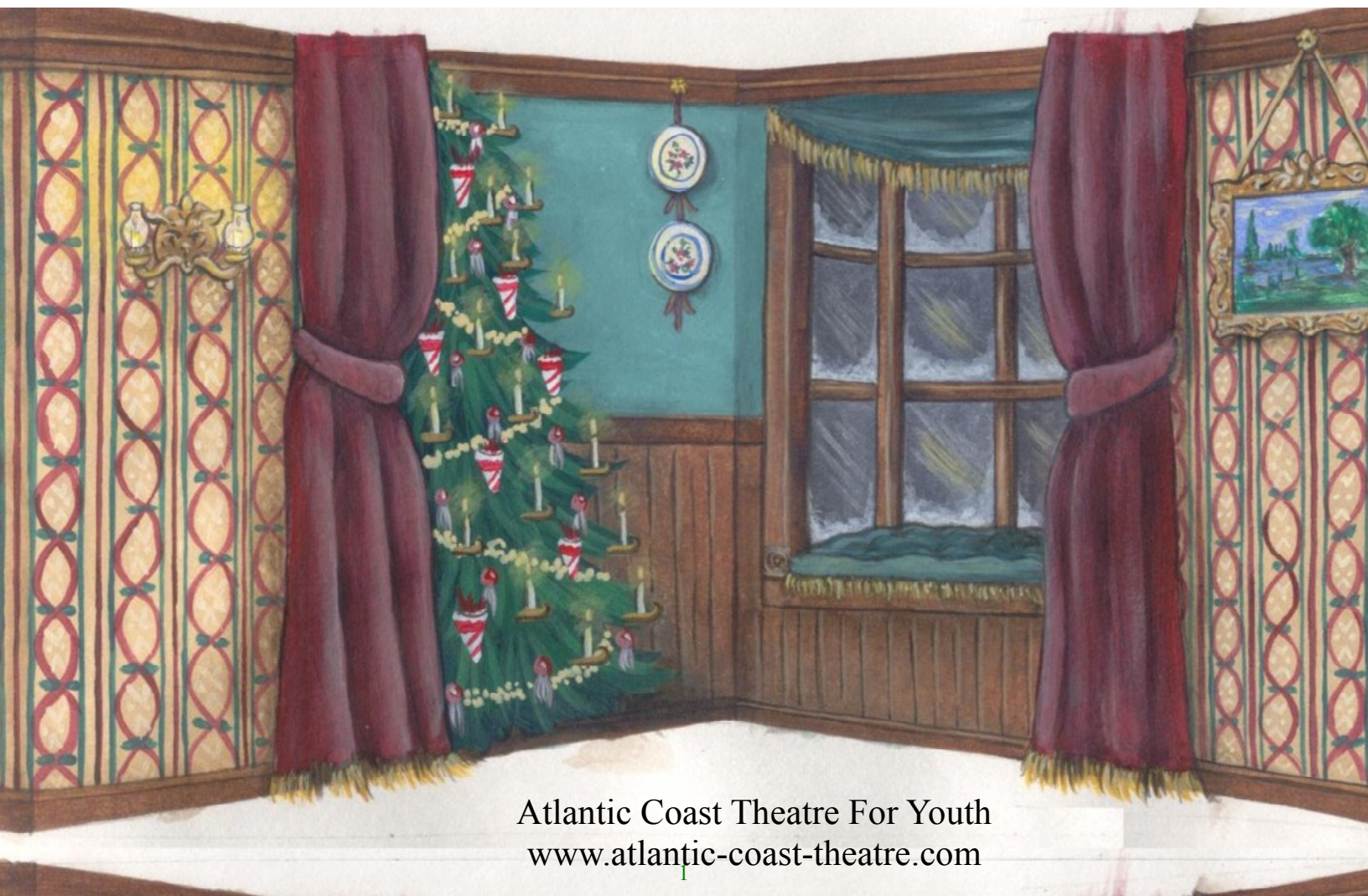


Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*

Study Guide

Teachers:

Please use this study guide to help your students get the highest educational experience and the most enjoyment from the production.



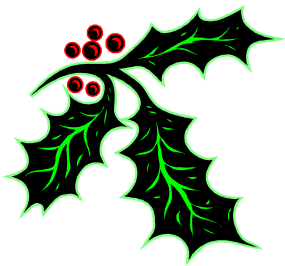
Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth
www.atlantic-coast-theatre.com

Charles Dickens &

His Sister- Fan



Dickens



Charles Dickens
(1812-1870)
Frances Elizabeth Dickens
(1810-1848)



Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812 in England. Throughout his life, Charles was very close to his older sister **Fan**. Charles' father, John Dickens, was a clerk (just like Bob Cratchit). Charles' father was a big spender and could not pay off his debts. In 1824, his father was sent to 'debtor's prison'. Charles was only 12 years old. He was forced to leave school and work at a boot-blackening factory to help support his family. At the factory, he worked under terrible conditions and would later write, "how could I have been so easily cast away at such an age". Luckily, after three years, Charles returned to school- but he would never forget his horrible experiences at the factory.

His sister Fan had been accepted as one of the first admitted into the Royal Academy of Music as a singer. Although Charles eventually became a 'star' in the literary world, Fan was considered to be the first 'star' of the Dickens family. Unfortunately, because of her father's lack of funds, she was forced to quit the school.

Because of his childhood poverty and his extreme dislike of the gap between people who had money and those who did not, he became one of the greatest writers in history. His stories were written to encourage people to change the way society treats the poor and to inspire people to give to charity, love one another, and never be afraid to change the world.

Perhaps one of his most famous and cherished books is A Christmas Carol. In 1843, Charles was in desperate need of money and needed cash fast! He suddenly got an idea to write a story about a man named Scrooge who was greedy and needed redemption. It only took him two months to write his masterpiece! This popular book has been in constant circulation ever since its first publication! The character of Tiny Tim was based upon Fan's own crippled son, Henry Jr.



Charles Dickens was a huge fan of the THEATRE!

His first dream was to become an actor. Even though he became a famous writer, the theatre was always a part of his life!

One of his favorite pastimes was to create

AMATEUR THEATRICALS- just like if you (as a non-professional actor) were to put on a play in your living room for your family and friends. Dickens had his own troupe of actors that he liked to perform with. They would entertain party guests in home parlors (a Victorian type of formal living room).

Another way that Charles kept his acting skills alive was in his live readings of his books. He would perform one-man readings of his books. Even today, actors perform one person versions of A Christmas Carol in honor of Dickens.

A Victorian Christmas

The *Victorian Era* lasted from 1839-1901. That was the time period during the reign of Queen Victoria in England. During her time in the palace, many changes occurred in England. One of those changes was in Christmas Traditions! Here are just a few!

Christmas Tree- The Queen's husband was originally from Germany. So in 1841, a Tree was decorated in the palace for the first time (you see- decorating Christmas Trees was a German Tradition). It suddenly became very popular in England and in America to have a tree!

Wassailing- Christmas Caroling door to door became a holiday tradition. This ancient English tradition was revived as people could spread Holiday merriment by singing Christmas carols and being welcomed inside to drink from the Wassailing Bowl.

Christmas Cards- Before the Victorian Era, Christmas Cards were never sent out. Once those messages of cheer were first delivered they instantly became popular, and the trend has stuck ever since!

Plum Pudding- In England the word 'pudding' means dessert. One of the famous holiday desserts from this era was a plum or raisin flavored round pudding. It sort of looks like a cannonball with a piece of holly stuck at the top!



A Recipe for Wassail

~Serve warm~

1 Gallon of Apple Cider
2 Teaspoons Whole Cloves
4 Cinnamon Sticks
1/2 Cup of Sugar

~Mix all ingredients and let simmer on top of the stove. Make sure when you drink it, you take out the cloves and cinnamon sticks!

(Another easy way is to buy a package of mulling spices from the store to mix with the cider)



Vocabulary Words

- ~ **Mourner**– A person who is grieving over someone who has died
- ~ **Parliament**– The national legislature of the United Kingdom made up of the House of Lords and the House of Commons
- ~ **Pound**– A unit of money used in England, 1 pound = 20 Shillings = 240 Pence
- ~ **Pence**– The plural for penny
- ~ **Constable**– An English police officer
- ~ **Workhouses**– A type of jail where people, including children, worked to serve a sentence, also known as a poorhouse
- ~ **Debtor's Prison**– A type of jail where people had to go if they couldn't pay their debt
- ~ **Apparition**– A ghostly figure or a sudden or unusual sight



Scrooge's third Visitor.

London: Chapman & Hall, 1843.



Mr. Fezziwig's Ball.

London: Chapman & Hall, 1843.

- ~ **Obliged**– To be grateful to someone for something they have done
- ~ **Apprentice**– A young person who works for an expert to learn a trade
- ~ **Crippled**– A person that is partially disabled or unable to use a limb or limbs
- ~ **Spectre**– An unusual appearing ghostly figure



Before The Show Activities

- You will be seeing a live theatre production. What are the differences between a play and theatre or TV? What kinds of theatre manners should be used when watching a play?
- Look at the background information found in the Study Guide. It will help you understand what is happening in the play!
- How do you think that life was different during the time of Charles Dickens? What were the clothes like? What was the weather like in London during the Holiday season? Would you have liked being a poor person who lived on the street in London during that time?

After The Show Activities

- The Atlantic Coast Theatre loves to get letters from our audiences! Draw us pictures or write us letters about your favorite part of the play!
- Charles and Fan loved entertaining their party guests by participating in an Amateur Theatrical version of his book. Break up into groups and create Amateur Theatricals of different holiday stories.
- Traditions are very important during the Holidays! What kinds of traditions does your family participate in? Research about other Victorian Christmas Traditions. What sorts of Victorian traditions would you like to have in your own home?
- Scrooge learns that it is better to be kind and charitable. What kinds of things could you do to be charitable this Holiday season? Plan a project as a class to help others in need.
- Dickens enjoyed performing dramatic readings of his books. Have each student find a favorite book and read part of it to the class in a dramatic way.
- Charles Dickens wrote many books and essays. Go to the library and check one out!
- Charles and Fan were very close. Unfortunately, Fan died at a very young age. She was only 38 years old. Her death inspired Charles Dickens to start writing David Copperfield. Also, Dickens wrote a short story in her memory called "Child's Dream Of A Star". It starts out, "*There was once a child, and he strolled about a good deal, and thought of a number of things. He had a sister, who was a child too, and his constant companion. These two used to wonder all day long. They wondered at the beauty of the flowers; they wondered at the height and blueness of the sky...*" You can read the rest of it online. Check it out! www.rc.net/wcc/star.htm

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol

National Standards: Kindergarten – 4th Grade

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play, your students can meet aspects of several National Education Standards)

NA-T.K-4.6

COMPARING AND CONNECTING ART FORMS BY DESCRIBING THEATRE, DRAMATIC MEDIA, AND OTHER ART FORMS

- Students describe visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts
- Students compare how ideas and emotions are expressed in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts

NA-T.K-4.7

ANALYZING AND EXPLAINING PERSONAL PREFERENCES AND CONSTRUCTING MEANINGS FROM CLASSROOM DRAMATIZATIONS AND FROM THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

- Students explain how the wants and needs of characters are similar to and different from their own
- Students articulate emotional responses to and explain personal preferences about the whole as well as the parts of dramatic performances

NA-T.K-4.8

UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT BY RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN DAILY LIFE

- Students identify and compare similar characters and situations in stories and dramas from and about various cultures, illustrate with classroom dramatizations, and discuss how theatre reflects life
- Students identify and compare the various settings and reasons for creating dramas and attending theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

NA-M.K-4.9

UNDERSTANDING MUSIC IN RELATION TO HISTORY AND CULTURE

- Students demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed

NSS-USH.K-4.1

LIVING AND WORKING TOGETHER IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITITES, NOW AND LONG AGO

- Understands family life now and in the past, and family life in various places long ago

NSS-USH.K-4.3

THE HISTORY OF PEOPLES OF MANY CULTURES AROUND THE WORLD

- Understands selected attributes and historical developments of societies in...Europe

NSS-ENG.K-12.2

UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

- Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions of human experience

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol

National Standards: 5th – 8th Grades

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play your students can meet aspects of several National Education Standards)

NA-T.5-8.6

COMPARING AND CONNECTING ART FORMS BY DESCRIBING THEATRE, DRAMATIC MEDIA, AND OTHER ART FORMS

- Students describe characteristics and compare the presentation of characters, environments, and actions in theatre, musical theatre, dramatic media, dance, and visual arts
- Students express and compare personal reactions to several art forms
- Students describe and compare the functions and interaction of performing and visual artists and audience members in theatre, dramatic media, musical theatre, dance, music, and visual arts

NA-T.5-8.7

ANALYZING AND EXPLAINING PERSONAL PREFERENCES AND CONSTRUCTING MEANINGS FROM CLASSROOM DRAMATIZATIONS AND FROM THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

- Students describe and analyze the effect for publicity, study guides, programs, and physical environments on audience response and appreciation of dramatic performances

NA-T.5-8.8

UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT BY RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN DAILY LIFE

- Students describe and compare universal characters and situations in dramas from and about various cultures and historical periods, illustrate in improvised and scripted scenes, and discuss how theatre reflects a culture

NSS-WH.5-12.7

ERA 7: AN AGE OF REVOLUTIONS

- Patterns of nationalism, state-building, and social reform in Europe and the Americas 1830-1914

NSS-ENG.K-12.2

UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

- Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions of human experience

ATLANTIC COAST THEATRE FOR YOUTH

Florida Sunshine State Standards: Pre-K-2nd Grades

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play, your students can meet aspects of several standards)

THEATRE

TH.A.1.1

The student acts by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisation and formal or informal productions

- Creates imagined characters, relationships, and environments using basic acting skills
- Creates individually and in groups, animate and inanimate objects through the movement of the human body

TH.C.1.1

The student understands context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and present

- Expresses remembered ideas, feelings, and concepts of daily activities through dramatic play
- Understands how we learn about ourselves, our relationships, and our environment through forms of theatre
- Understands characters, situations, and dramatic media from the stories and dramas of various cultures

TH.D.1.1

The student analyzes, criticizes, and constructs meaning from formal and informal theatre, film, television, and electronic media

- Portrays imaginary sensory experiences through dramatic play
- Gives reasons for personal preferences for formal and informal performances
- Understands appropriate audience responses to dramatic presentations
- Understands how theater communicates events of everyday life
- Understands the similarities and differences between play acting, pretending, and real life

TH.E.1.1

The student understands applications of the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in everyday life

- Understands the similarities and differences among how emotions are expressed in theatre, dramatic media, music, dance, and visual art
- Cooperates with others to create formal and informal theatrical works and to solve the problems inherent in simple scenes

MUSIC

MU.D.1.1

The students listens to, analyzes, and describes music

- Understands how music can communicate ideas suggesting events, feelings, moods, or images

MU.E.2.1

The student understands the relationship between music and the world beyond the school setting

- Knows appropriate audience behavior in a given music setting

LANGUAGE ARTS

LA.C.1.1

The student uses listening strategies effectively

- Listens for a variety of informational purposes, including curiosity, pleasure, getting directions, performing tasks, solving problems, and following rules
- Recognizes personal preferences in listening to literature and other material
- Retells specific details of information heard, including sequence of events

LA.E.1.1

The student understands the common features of a variety of literary forms

ATLANTIC COAST THEATRE FOR YOUTH
Florida Sunshine State Standards: 3rd-5th Grades

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play, your students can meet aspects of several standards)

THEATRE

TH.A.1.2

The student acts by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisation and formal or informal productions

-Creates imagined characters, relationships, and environments using basic acting skills

TH.C.1.2

The student understands context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and present

-Understands how theatre is an interpretation of actual events in history and everyday life

-Understands how theatre reflects culture through universal characters and dramas from various cultures and historical time periods

TH.D.1.2

The student analyzes, criticizes, and constructs meaning from formal and informal theatre, film, television, and electronic media

-Knows how theatre uses visual elements (e.g. set design and costuming), sound (e.g. sound effects and vocal inflection), and movement (e.g. staging and character portrayal) to communicate

-Understands the similarities and differences between real life and the theatre's representation of life (e.g. the meaning of the concept, "willing suspension of disbelief")

-Articulates emotional responses to the whole, as well as parts of, dramatic performances

TH.E.1.2

The student understands applications of the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in everyday life

-Understands theatre as a social function and theatre etiquette as the responsibility of the audience

-Collaborates in the construction of formal and informal productions

MUSIC

MU.E.2.2

The student understands the relationship between music and the world beyond the school setting

-Knows and applies appropriate audience behavior in various musical settings

LANGUAGE ARTS

LA.C.1.2

The student uses listening strategies effectively

-Listens and responds to a variety of oral presentations, such as stories, poems, skits, songs, personal accounts, and informational speeches

-Identifies specific personal listening preferences regarding fiction, drama, literary nonfiction, and informational presentations

LA.E.1.2

The student understands the common features of a variety of literary forms

-Identifies the distinguishing features among fiction, drama, and poetry and identifies the major characteristics of nonfiction

-Understands the development of plot and how conflicts are resolved in a story

ATLANTIC COAST THEATRE FOR YOUTH
Florida Sunshine State Standards: 6th-8th Grades

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play, your students can meet aspects of several standards)

THEATRE

TH.C.1.3

The student understands context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and present

- Understands how social and universal concepts in various cultures and historical periods are expressed through universal themes in theatre
- Understands the social impact of historical and cultural events on the theatre (e.g., art imitates life, life imitates art)

TH.D.1.3

The student analyzes, criticizes, and constructs meaning from formal and informal theatre, film, television, and electronic media

- Understands a character in a play through exploration of internal characterization (e.g., emotions and motivations) and external characterization (e.g., background, posture, mannerisms, & dress)
- Understands the relationship of plot, conflict, and theme in a play
- Develops criteria for the evaluation of dramatic texts and performances
- Understands that theatre experiences involve empathy (e.g., vicarious identification with characters and actions) and aesthetic distance (e.g., recognition that the play is not real life)

TH.E.1.3

The student understands applications of the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in everyday life

- Understands the reasons for personal reactions and audience reactions to various media and multiple art forms (e.g., staging environment, past experiences, culture)

MUSIC

MU.E.2.3

The student understands the relationship between music and the world beyond the school setting

- Understands the uniqueness of music and its importance in society

LANGUAGE ARTS

LA.C.1.3

The student uses listening strategies effectively

- Listens and uses information gained for a variety of purposes
- Acknowledges the feelings and messages sent in a conversation

LA.C.2.3

The student uses viewing strategies effectively

- Determines main concept, supporting details, stereotypes, bias, and persuasion techniques in a non-print message

LA.E.1.3

The student understands the common features of a variety of literary forms

- Recognizes complex elements of plot, including setting, character development, conflicts, and resolutions