November 30, 2026 at 10:00 am

CAPA

SHORT NORTH STAGE

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

AT THE OHIO THEATRE

BASED ON THE NOVELLA BY

CHARLES DICKENS

ADAPTED BY

THOM CHRISTOPHER

DIRECTION AND MUSICAL STAGING BY

EDWARD CARIGNAN

SEASON SUPPORTERS

The Columbus Foundation

Ohio Arts Council

Greater Columbus Arts Council

Nationwide Foundation

FAMILY SERIES SPONSORED BY

HONDA

Welcome to the Ohio Theatre!



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Ohio Theatre! We are excited to have you join us as part of our 2026-2027 Passport to Learning Student Matinee Series.

For fifteen years, the Passport to Learning Series has brought history, math, science and literature to life in some of Columbus' finest historical theatres. Each school year, the program is curated to align with state and national learning standards, as it aims to help students of all ages connect what they are learning in the classroom (and in the theatre!) to real-world experiences.

Today's performance of *A Christmas Carol*, produced in collaboration with Short North Stage and directed by Edward Carignan, features a talented cast of local and national performers and brings the spirit of the season to life on one of the city's most iconic stages.

This study guide is designed to help students explore the story more and to extend their connection to the material through a variety of learning activities. We hope this guide allows the arts to contribute to your classroom learning.

Even though Charles Dickens' masterpiece was written more than 180 years ago, its themes of wealth inequality, social responsibility, and personal redemption are as relevant now as during the Victorian period in which the novel was written. The part of Scrooge's personal journey that always resonates the most with me is that it is never too late for us to make a change in our lives, and it is never too late to be kinder, more empathic versions of ourselves.

Thank you for being here today and supporting arts education programs.

Amy Handra,

Amy Handra

Senior Director of Education & Engagement

Ohio National Education Standards:

Grades 3–5
English Language Arts: RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.4.3, RL.5.3, RI.3.3, RI.5.3, W.3.3, W.4.3, W.5.3
Fine Arts: 3.1CR, 3.2CR, 3.2PE, 3.3PE, 3.3RE, 4.2CR, 4.1PE, 4.2PE, 4.1RE, 4.3RE, 5.1PE, 5.1RE, 5.1RE, 5.3RE, 5.1CO,
Mathematics: 3.MD.1

Grades 6–8
English Language Arts: RI.6.1, RL.6.3, RL.7.3, RL.8.3, RI.7.1, RI.8.1, WF.6.1, WF.7.1, WF.8.1, W.6.2, W.7.2, W.8.2
Fine Arts: 6.4CR, 6.6CR, 6.3PE, 6.1RE, 6.1CO, 6.6CO, 7.4CR, 7.5CR, 7.3RE, 8.3CR, 8.1PE, 8.3RE, 8.2CO
Mathematics: 6.EE.9

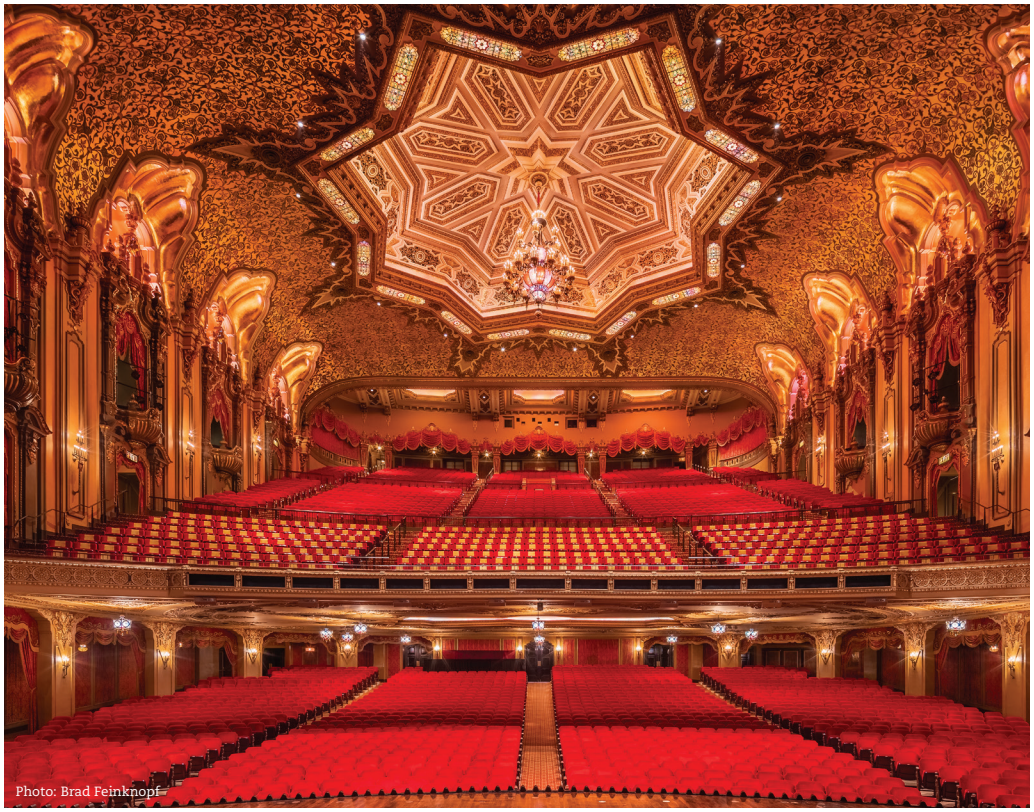
Grades 9–12
English Language Arts: RL.9-10.3, RL.11-12.3, RL.9-10.7, RI.11-12.7, W.9-10.4, W.11-12.4
Fine Arts: HSAC.3CR, HSAC.6CR, HSP.1PE, HSAC.3PE, HSP.3RE, HSAC.2RE, HSAC.5RE, HSAD.1CO,
Mathematics: N.Q.1

A Christmas Carol
STUDY GUIDE

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About the Ohio Theatre!


Photo: Brad Feinknopf

The Ohio Theatre, also known as the State Theatre of Ohio, opened on March 17, 1928, and was built by the Scottish-born architect Thomas W. Lamb.

Originally opened as a Movie Palace, the venue was designed to be "grand and opulent". This extensively detailed architecture is designed in a Spanish Baroque style, including a 20-foot-tall chandelier, and a grand staircase.

Over the years, the Ohio Theatre has become the go-to spot for Columbus performing arts experiences such as opera, Broadway musicals, movie showings, ballet, and more!

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Ohio Theatre can seat roughly 2,800 people!
- The Ohio was the first public building in Columbus with air conditioning.
- The Theatre closed in 1969 and was almost demolished.
- That same year, a committee called "Save the Ohio" was formed, raising over $2 million to successfully save the Theatre. CAPA was created out of this committee.
- The Theatre contains a famous organ called the "Mighty Morton", installed in 1928 for the Theatre's grand opening.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Here are some ways we can show respect for the performers on stage:

- Be seated about 10 minutes before the show starts.
- Refrain from talking during performances, unless requested by the performers. However, always feel free to laugh and applaud when appropriate!
- If you have an electronic device, make sure it is on silent mode and put away.
- Be considerate of your fellow audience members to ensure everyone has the best experience possible.

Can you think of other ways to show respect during a performance?

Meet the Author: About Charles Dickens



Charles John Huffam Dickens was an English author, journalist, and social commentator, who quickly became one of the greatest writers of the Victorian Era.

Born on February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, England, Dickens was one of eight children. At 12 years old, Charles was sent to work at a boot blacking factory because his father was arrested for not being able to pay his debts. Charles worked long days applying labels to jars of shoe polish. He earned six shillings a week, which equates to roughly $26 in today's currency. Most of his earnings went to support his family. His experiences with poverty and the injustices faced by ordinary people would greatly influence his writing for decades to come.

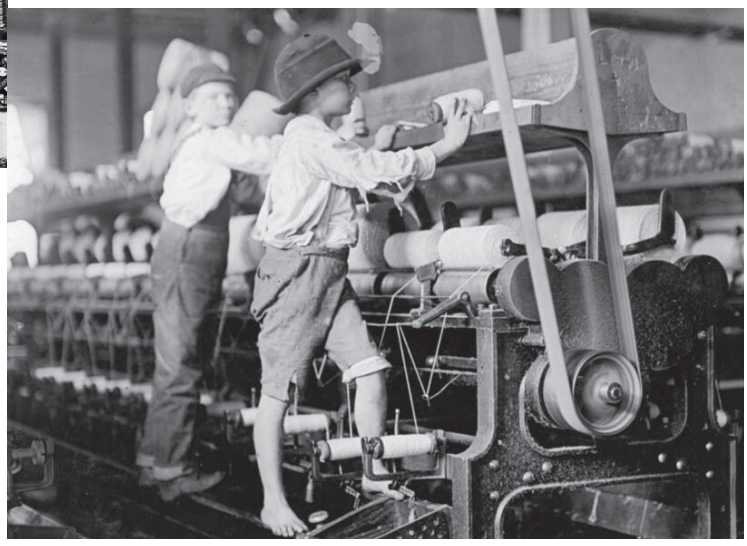
Dickens began writing at age 15 during a period called the Industrial Revolution. Factories were increasing all over the country, creating job opportunities that were often filled by children as young as 4 years old. These children would be forced to work over twelve hours a day in dangerous conditions.

Dickens was haunted by witnessing such experiences and wanted to use his writing to shed light on these social issues, inspire compassion, and teach his readers a moral lesson. In 1843, Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in only six weeks, and the first prints were sold out within days. Dickens wrote 15 novels during his lifetime, many of which are still making an impact worldwide today. Charles Dickens died on June 9, 1870, at 58 years old.

Setting: Victorian England



A Christmas Carol takes place in London, England, in the mid-1800s, and gives readers a glimpse of how the country operated during that time. This period was known as the Victorian Era, due to the reign of Queen Victoria. The population of London was rapidly growing during this time, which was a contributing factor to poverty, and the increase in child labor.



Most working-class families could not support themselves unless the children worked as well. The poor had very few luxuries; they could scarcely afford to eat, worked long hours in factories, and lived in crowded, filthy spaces. The wealthy, on the other hand, were well-fed and often lived in large houses with servants. Their children attended school and were educated, whereas the children of the poor were forced to work and could not go to school.

Synopsis


Photo: Mitchell Multimedia

It's Christmas Eve but **Ebenezer Scrooge**, a miserable old man, is not in the Christmas spirit. The story begins with a father and his two children excitedly reading the tale of *A Christmas Carol*. As the family continues to read, they are suddenly immersed in the story on the streets of London, where carolers sing familiar tunes, and families are bustling with last-minute errands in preparation for the holiday.

Bob Cratchit approaches Scrooge, owner of Scrooge & Marley's Counting House, in hopes that he will be granted Christmas Day off. Scrooge grudgingly agrees. Scrooge is visited by his nephew Fred, along with two charity collectors, but Scrooge dismisses them with a "Bah Humbug!"

Later that night, the ghost of **Jacob Marley** visits Scrooge in his home and warns him that his greed and hostility towards others will have consequences. Marley tells him that he will be haunted by three spirits, in hopes that he will reflect on his actions and change his ways.


Photo: Mitchell Multimedia

The first spirit, the **Ghost of Christmas Past** takes Scrooge on a journey through his childhood. Scrooge encounters **Fan**, his late sister, **Fezziwig**, his old boss, and **Belle**, his ex-fiancée who left him due to Scrooge's obsession with money. Witnessing these memories move Scrooge to tears, filling him with regret.

Scrooge is awakened once again by the second spirit, the **Ghost of Christmas Present**, who takes Scrooge to Fred's party, and the Cratchit Family's Christmas Celebration with a humble feast. Scrooge sees **Tiny Tim**, Cratchit's sick son, and is deeply moved by Scrooge's lack of care toward the Cratchit family

The third spirit, the **Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come**, shows Scrooge a bleak future. The spirit shows him a man who has been robbed, and the Cratchit family mourning the loss of Tiny Tim, along with Scrooge's own grave. Scrooge, terrified, recognizes how poorly he has treated others, and begs the spirit for a different outcome.


Photo: Mitchell Multimedia

Scrooge awakens on Christmas morning rejuvenated, grateful for the chance to change his future. He buys the Cratchits the prize turkey, makes a large donation to the charity collectors, and reconnects with Fred. He even decides to raise Bob Cratchit's salary, and becomes a father figure to Tiny Tim. The community celebrates Scrooge's transformation and newfound Christmas Spirit.

Character Breakdown

THE GHOSTS

JACOB MARLEY
Scrooge's former business partner who appears as a ghost.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST
The spirit who shows Scrooge memories from his childhood.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT
The spirit who shows Scrooge the inner lives of people in the present.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME
The spirit who shows Scrooge what could happen if he does not change his ways.

THE SCROOGES

EBENEEZER SCROOGE
A greedy businessman who refuses to celebrate Christmas

FRED
Scrooge's nephew

FAN
Scrooge's late sister

THE CRATCHITS

BOB CRATCHIT
A counting house clerk. A poor man who is compassionate and loving.

MRS. CRATCHIT
Wife of Bob Cratchit

TINY TIM
The youngest Cratchit child who has been crippled since birth

MARTHA, BELINDA, & THOMAS
The other Cratchit children

OTHER CHARACTERS

MR. FEZZIWIG
Scrooge's first employer

MRS. FEZZIWIG
Wife of Mr. Fezziwig

LILY
Fred's wife

BELLE
Scrooge's ex-fiancée

Themes in *A Christmas Carol*

A **theme** is *a central idea or message of a story*.

Authors write themes to inform readers about what's going on in the world around us. In *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens highlights and responds to a variety of issues that were prevalent in Victorian England. See below to learn more about the main themes in the show.

Can you think of some other themes that might be present in *A Christmas Carol*?

Compassion

Caring for others is one of the most important ways to make the world a better place. The Cratchits' warmth, Scrooge's change of heart, and acts of kindness seen in the community remind us that even small acts of generosity make a large impact.

Family Relationships

No matter what someone's financial situation may be, no amount of money can compare to friendship and family. Although the Cratchit family may be monetarily poor, they are richer than Scrooge in the sense that they have the love of family, while Scrooge is alone. As a result of Scrooge's journey with the Spirits, he realizes the importance of family by doubling Cratchit's salary and agreeing to celebrate the holiday with Fred.

Poverty vs. Wealth

Caring for others is one of the most important ways to make the world a better place. The Cratchits' warmth, Scrooge's change of heart, and acts of kindness seen in the community remind us that even small acts of generosity make a large impact.

Personal Transformation

In the beginning of the story, we see Scrooge as a greedy, bitter, and isolated man. Through confronting his past, present, and future, he discovers that it is never too late to change his ways and be kind. Dickens suggests through his works that transformation is always attainable, so long as we are willing to confront ourselves.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Pre-Show Discussion Questions

- Have you ever read or seen a production of *A Christmas Carol*? What was it like? What do you remember about it?
- Describe a time you helped someone. How did that make you feel, and how did it make the other person feel?
- What does it mean to be generous? Besides money, what are some ways someone can be generous?
- What are some ways in which Victorian England in the 1800s was different from where you live today?
- Are you the same person as you were five years ago? Name one way in which you have ever changed. Do you find change to be easy, or difficult?
- Have you made a mistake in the past? What did you do to correct it, and what did you learn from it?

Post-Show Discussion Questions

- What was your overall reaction to the production? Which aspects of the production (characters, themes, design elements, songs) stood out to you the most?
- Do you have a favorite character? What made them stand out to you?
- Do you have a least favorite character? What did you dislike about that character?
- Compare and contrast this version of *A Christmas Carol* to the book, or other adaptations of the story you've seen. What was similar? What was different? How did the differences influence your interpretation of the story?
- Do you think Scrooge is a good or a bad person? Support your answer with examples from the play.
- How did Scrooge change from the beginning to the end of the story? What caused him to change, and what did he learn?
- How do the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come use time to persuade Scrooge to change?
- Compare and contrast the three spirits. What sets them apart from one another? Why do you think they each look so different?

THEATRICAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Theatre Vocabulary:

- **CHARACTERIZATION:** The process an actor uses to develop and portray a character, involving voice, body, movement, and interaction with other characters on stage.
- **DIRECTOR'S VISION:** The director's unique interpretation of a production that shapes how the story is told, how the characters are portrayed, and what the audience takes away from the show.
- **SCENERY:** The visual elements used to represent different locations.



Photo: Mitchell Multimedia

The questions below focus on the theatrical elements of the production.

- Who was your favorite performer? What **characterization** choices did that performer make that stood out to you?
- How did the technical elements (lights, **scenery**, sound and costumes) enhance the story? Did you feel transported into the world of the play?
- How do the colors of each of the three spirit's costumes contribute to the mood of the scene they appear in?
- Music is an integral part of this production of *A Christmas Carol*. In what ways are sound effects and singing Christmas carols used as theatrical devices to tell the story? How did these intensify the important moments in the performance?
- Discuss the **director's vision** of the production. What tools did the director use to navigate between different events in the story? What tools did the director use to convey the themes to the audience?

Counting Houses and Currency

ALL Grades

Scrooge owns a counting house, a building where the financial books and money of a business were kept. Scrooge was a money lender, meaning people would borrow money from him while promising to pay it back later.

The most common types of currency in Victorian England were pounds, shillings and pence.

The **POUND** was represented by a **£ sign**.



The **SHILLING** was represented by an '**s**.'



PENCE (or penny) was represented by a '**d**.'



In the story, Bob Cratchit makes 15 shillings a week. This would be equivalent to $65 today.

BEGINNER

- Trace the symbol of the pound 4 times: £ £ £ £
- What is the symbol for the shilling? _____ What is the symbol for pence? _____
- Victorians wrote money like this: £1 2s 3d, meaning 1 pound, 2 shillings, and 3 pence. Write out the following using their appropriate symbols:
  - 5 pounds, 7 shillings, 9 pence: _____
  - 10 pounds, 7 shillings, 8 pence: _____
  - 6 pounds, 17 shillings, 7.5 pence: _____

Answer the questions below:

- 1. A shopkeeper sells a candle for 2s 6d and a book for 7s 8d. How much more was the book than the candle? _____
- 2. Mrs. Cratchit has 20 shillings. If a toy she wants to buy for Tiny Tim costs 4 shillings, how many toys can she purchase? _____
- 3. A child buys 4 oranges at 3d each and 5 bells for 7d each. How much did the child spend in total? _____

The chart on the left shows the conversions between different Victorian currencies. The table on the right shows how Victorian currency equates to American currency.

- 1 pound = 20 shillings
- 1 shilling = 12 pence
- 1 pound = 240 pence

Victorian Currency	Value in USD
0.25d	$0.10
0.5d	$0.25
2.75d	$1.00
1s 2d	$5.00
2s 4d	$10
£1 3s 6.25d	$100

ALL Grades

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INTERMEDIATE

Using the conversion chart, solve the following equations:

- 1. In the story, Bob Cratchit makes 15 shillings a week.
  How many pence does he make?_____
- 2. If Scrooge donated 8 pounds to charity, how many pence did he donate? _____
- 3. A prize turkey costs 14 shillings. How many pounds would the turkey cost? _____
- 4. A copy of *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 sold for 5 shillings. If someone wanted to buy 9 copies, how many shillings would they need?_____
- 5. A sled costs 3 pounds. A lady bought 4 sleds but returned 2 for a refund of 515 pence each. How many pence did she spend in total?_____

ADVANCED

Using the conversion chart, solve the following equations:

- 1. If Scrooge donated 8 pounds to charity, how many American dollars did he donate? _____
- 2. The price a prize turkey cost 14 shillings. How many pounds would the turkey cost?
  _____. How many American dollars would the turkey cost? _____
- 3. A copy of *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 sold for 5 shillings. If someone wanted to buy 9 copies, how many American dollars would they need? _____
- 4. A loaf of bread cost 4s 6d. If the price increased by 20%, how much would the bread cost now?
  _____
- 5. A librarian earns 14 shillings per day. After working x days, she has £5 12s. How many days did she work? _____

Costume Design

One of the most important jobs of a costume designer is using color to tell the audience about the characters. Color reflects a character's personality, social status, and their role in the story.

Grades 3–5

Pictured below are Scrooge and Tiny Tim. What are three ways these characters are different from each other?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Using what you wrote above, color the outlines below to create costumes for these two characters. In your creations, make sure to use different colors to capture their unique personality.





Creative Writing: A Letter to Scrooge

Scrooge is not in the Christmas spirit at the beginning of the show. Write a friendly letter to Scrooge, giving him advice on how to be a kinder and happier person. In your letter, use at least one example from your own life.

Grades 3–5

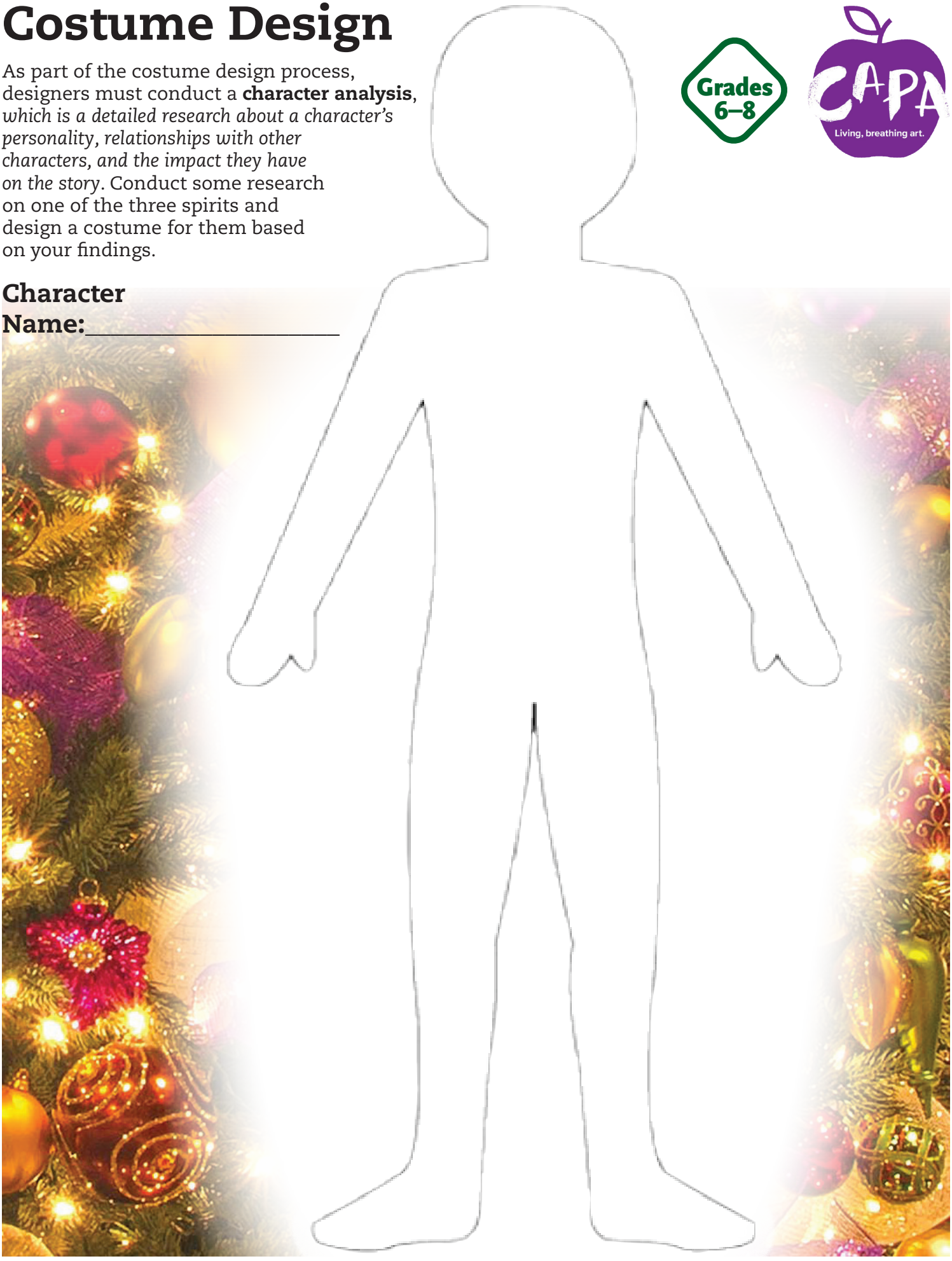
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Costume Design

As part of the costume design process, designers must conduct a **character analysis**, *which is a detailed research about a character's personality, relationships with other characters, and the impact they have on the story*. Conduct some research on one of the three spirits and design a costume for them based on your findings.

Character Name:_____



Creative Writing

Grades 6–8

Charles Dickens was passionate about bringing awareness to social issues present in Victorian England. Choose one of the themes below and write a short story about it. Your response should include **characters**, a **setting**, a **conflict**, and a **resolution**.

1. Poverty (poor vs. wealthy)
2. Greed
3. Family and Relationships



Costume Design

Costume design is *a multi-step process involving detailed research on the time period, script & character analysis, creating sketches, and the physical construction of the costume*. For Broadway shows, this process usually takes 6–12 months!

Grades 9–12

Now it's your turn to step into the shoes of a costume designer!

1. Choose one of the following characters from the show: Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim, Ghost of Christmas Past, Present, or Yet to Come.

2. Research the types of clothing Londoners wore in the Victorian Era. What types of fabrics were most common?

What colors were most common?

How did attire differ between social classes?

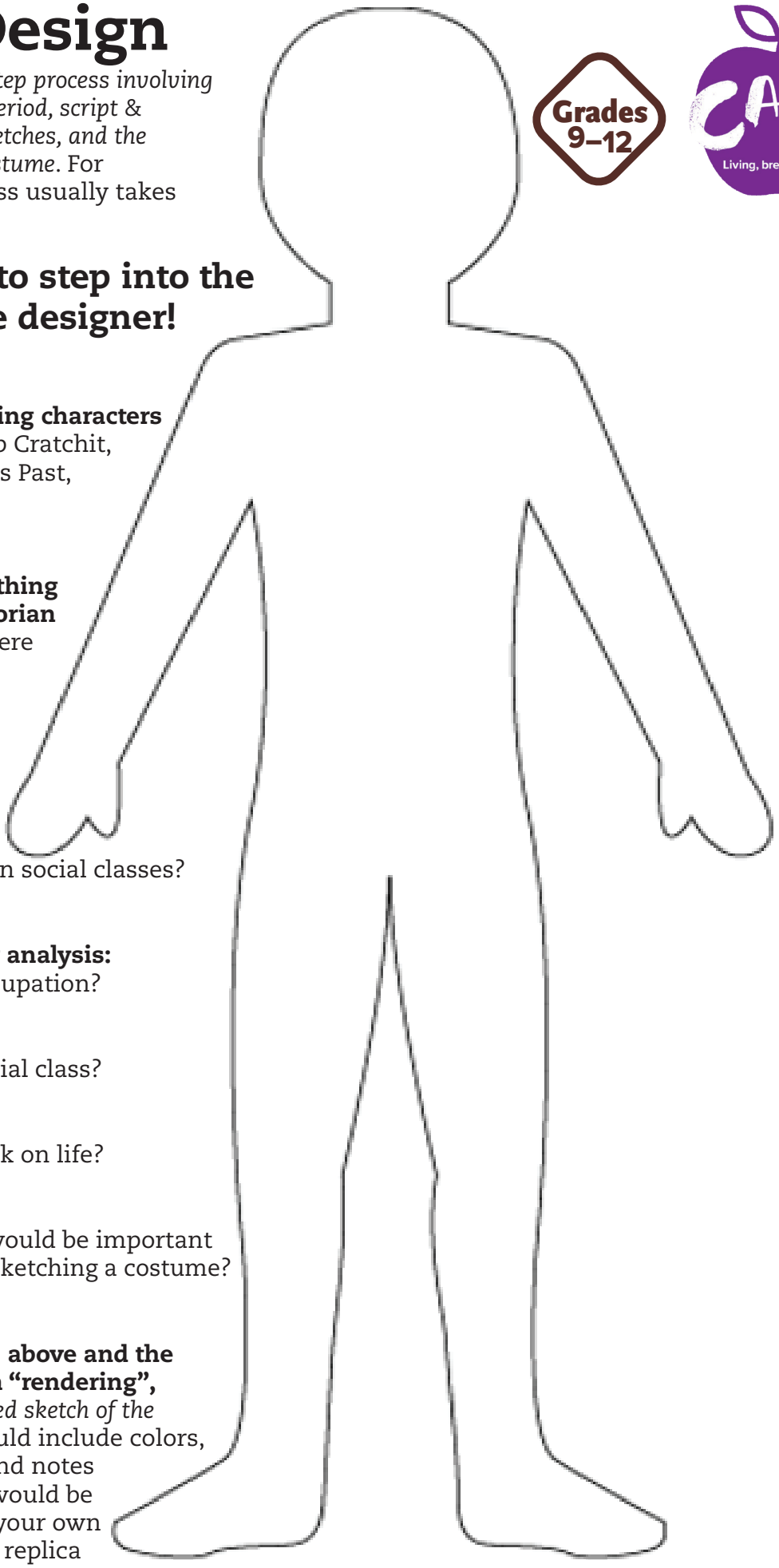
3. Conduct a brief character analysis: What is your character's occupation?

What is your character's social class?

What is their general outlook on life?

Is there anything else that would be important to know about them before sketching a costume?

4. Using all the information above and the outline to the right, create a "rendering", otherwise known as *a detailed sketch of the costume*. Your rendering should include colors, accessories (if applicable), and notes regarding what fabrics you would be using. Note: This should be your own unique interpretation, not a replica of a costume you saw at the show.



Creative Writing: A Fourth Ghost

Grades 9–12

Imagine *A Christmas Carol* had one more spirit visit Scrooge. What would this spirit be, and what lesson do they teach Scrooge?



Scene Work

Using a separate sheet of paper, write a scene between Scrooge and your new spirit. In your scene, be sure to include where the spirit takes Scrooge to teach him the lesson, and how that impacts Scrooge's actions.





The Ghost of Christmas Present, 1843

Full Class Extension Activities



Tableaus

In groups, students use their bodies to create a frozen picture of different scenes from the show (carolers/reading a story/Fezziwig party/snowball fight/eating dinner).



Music with Scrooge

Create a "playlist" of songs that encapsulate Scrooge at different points in the show. Find a song for each of the following moments:

- Scrooge at the beginning of the story: What song reflects his mood?
- Jacob Marley's Warning: What song captures Scrooge's confusion and fear?
- The Ghost of Christmas Past: What song reflects the memories we see of Scrooge's childhood?
- The Ghost of Christmas Present: What song captures the joyful celebration Scrooge witnesses?
- The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come: What song represents Scrooge's fear of what might happen if he doesn't change his ways?
- Scrooge at the end: What song captures Scrooge's new optimistic outlook on life?

Mock Interview

In pairs, choose an event in the story, and "interview" the character involved about that event.







A Christmas Comic Strip

Create a comic strip of 5–6 panels that follows the plot of the show.

Charades

Have each student write a noun related to the story on a piece of paper and put them in a hat. Then, split students into teams, and have each team alternate choosing and acting out a sheet of paper from the hat.

"Spread the Christmas Spirit"

Part 1: Examining Social Issues

1. Define a social issue. What causes social issues to develop? What major historical events would constitute as a social issue?

2. What social issues were highlighted in *A Christmas Carol*?

3. Looking back at your answers to question 2, which of these issues have you noticed in your community?

4. What can you do to advocate for these issues in your community?

Part 2: Extension Activity

Place students into small groups. Then, ask each group to choose one of the social issues identified in Question 3 to research in greater depth, analyzing the cause and effect of this issue relative to their community. Students must cite at least three sources. Encourage students to also identify ways to positively impact the community regarding their group's social issues.

Part 3: Service Activity

Have students create holiday cards and send them to a local children's hospital or nursing home.

Part 4: Additional Opportunities for Service Learning

Below is a list of local organizations with missions that target various social issues. Explore these organizations in greater depth with your class!

Click to learn more

Kaleidoscope Youth Center: MORE INFO

Freedom a la Cart: MORE INFO

Broad Street Food Pantry: MORE INFO

The Buckeye Ranch: MORE INFO

SIGMA 614 Foundation: MORE INFO

Study Guide Additional Resource Links

Victorian Money Converter
Currency–Northumberland Archives
The Charles Dickens Page: His Work, Life, and Times
BBC–History–Overview: Victorian Britain, 1837–1901
https://getdrawings.com/a-christmas-carol-coloring-pages