

Worksheet 3 – Context: Part Two

Review: Lecture 2

In the second lecture of the unit, Prof. John McRae introduced some historical context for *A Christmas Carol* and how the novella was published.

- ✓ What was the difference between the way *A Christmas Carol* was published and Dickens's previous novels? Why was this significant?

Recall: Lecture 3

Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.

1. How much did the population of Manchester change between 1801 and 1851?
a) It doubled
b) It went up by 10,000
c) It halved
d) It tripled
2. What is the name of the engineer who invented the London sewer system?
a) Baguette
b) Basil Gates
c) Bazalgette
d) Joseph Boz
3. Who was said to have introduced the tradition of the Christmas tree to England?
a) Dickens
b) Queen Victoria
c) Queen Elizabeth I
d) Prince Albert

Analysis

4. In his lecture, Prof. McRae includes a quotation from economist Thomas Malthus: 'The poor are always with us'.
a) What do you think this quotation means?
b) How does this quotation link to the themes in *A Christmas Carol*?
5. Look at the representation of poverty in the image below, from satirical magazine *Punch*. What does the image tell you about living conditions for the urban poor in the nineteenth century?



THE LONDON BATHING SEASON.
"COME, MY DEAR!—COME TO ITS OLD THAMES, AND HAVE A NICE BATH!"

What does the image tell you about living conditions for the urban poor in the nineteenth century?

**Hint: the man with a beard is*

'Father Thames', a well-known character from the time who represented the dirty river.

Evaluation

6. Read the extract from William Blake's poem 'London', then answer the question below.

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

What influence do you think Blake's exploration of poverty in London might have had on *A Christmas Carol*?

Success Criteria:

- Write your answer as two analytical paragraphs.
- Include quotations from both 'London' and *A Christmas Carol* as evidence.
- Analyse key themes in both texts (e.g. child poverty, misanthropy, cruelty)

Challenge: Also analyse the use of language in both texts (e.g. sensory description, narrative voice, repetition)

Use the sentence starters to help you:

In 'London' Blake presents poverty as...

He does this by... For example...

Similarly, in A Christmas Carol, Dickens explores how poverty is... This is seen when...

Glossary

- **Concomitant** – naturally associated with
- **Concurrently** – at the same time
- **Prevalent** – widespread in a particular area or at a particular time
- **Nostalgia** – a wistful or excessively sentimental yearning for return to a past period of time
- **Capitalism** – an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.

- **Homosocial** – relating to social interaction between members of the same sex, typically men.