

Worksheet 1 – Story Telling

Review: Previous Learning

1. What are Christmas carols?
2. *A Christmas Carol* was written by Charles Dickens: can you think of any other famous novels or characters written by him?

Recall: Lecture 1

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

1. Which of the following terms would NOT be appropriate when describing Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*
 - a) A poem
 - b) A novella
 - c) A short story
 - d) A novel
2. How long does Dickens expect it to take to read *A Christmas Carol*?
 - a) 1 - 2 hours
 - b) 3 - 4 hours
 - c) 5 - 6 hours
 - d) 7 - 8 hours
3. The main character in *A Christmas Carol* is Ebenezer Scrooge. However, who does Prof. Mullan explain as the 'second' main character?
 - a) Marley
 - b) Charles Dickens
 - c) The reader
 - d) The Ghost of Christmas Past

Analysis

4. In the lecture (3.24 – 4.00), Prof. Mullan quotes from Stave Two of *A Christmas Carol*

The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by **a hand**. Not the curtains at his feet, nor the curtains at his back, but those to which his face was addressed.

What is the effect of seeing just '**a hand**' pull back the curtains of Scrooge's bed?

5. In the lecture (4.54 – 5.40), Prof. Mullan quotes from Stave One of *A Christmas Carol*

Marley was dead: **to begin with**. There is no doubt whatever about that.

- a) What are the **two** meanings behind the phrase 'to begin with'?
- b) Why is Dickens inclusion of 'There is no doubt whatever about that' unusual?
- c) Challenge: Why is Prof. Mullan so impressed with the colon in the sentence?

Evaluation

6. Bringing dead language back to life: In the lecture (4.54 – 5.40), Prof. Mullan quotes from Stave One of A Christmas Carol:

Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail. Mind! **I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile**; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

In the lecture (6.46 – 6.56), Prof. Mullan goes on to explain that: “Dickens brings dead language back to life, as dead people are brought back to life in his story.”

How does Dickens bring the cliché, or ‘dead language’ of ‘dead as a door-nail’ back to life?

Dickens brings the cliché of ‘dead as a door-nail’ back to life by discussing...

Dickens use of the first person is unusual because...

Dickens himself recognizes that the simile is a cliché when...

Challenge: In his lecture, Prof. Mullan highlights the popular and successful readings that Dickens gave. Watch Simon Callow’s discussion of Dickens in: [Dickens The Performer](#) and explain in your own words why Dickens was so successful when reading his novels in public. *British Library: Dickens the Performer: Simon Callow: 15 May 2014*

Glossary

- **Affluent**: (especially of a group or area) having a great deal of money; wealthy: *"the affluent societies of the western world"*
- **Amplification**: the process of increasing the volume of sound, especially using an amplifier: *"even without amplification, her voice carries to the farthest corners"*
- **Ancestors**: a person, typically one more remote than a grandparent, from whom one is descended: *"He could trace his ancestors back to James the First"*
- **Cliché**: a phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought: *"that old cliché ‘a woman's place is in the home’"*
- **Idiom**: an expression or phrase in common use: *"over the moon", "see the light"*

- **Midst:** the middle part or point: *"he left his flat in the midst of a rainstorm"*
- **Recumbent:** (especially of a person or effigy) lying down: *"recumbent statues"*

Transcript: Simon Callow on Dickens as a Performer

00:05

Dickens was very unusual among novelists in that he read from his own work. Other people

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had done this before but it was a rather tepid, tame business. But Dickens had always wanted

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to be an actor and finally now he felt that he had the chance to do it. It started with

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him reading all of the Christmas Carol in 1853 in Manchester, Birmingham actually, and

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it was a huge huge huge success and he became excited by the idea of doing other readings.

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And so he first of all did them for charity but eventually he did them for money - he

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did big tours, both of the British Isles and of America. And these tours were unbelievably

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successful. They were like rock concerts. People, literally in one case, killed in order

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to get a ticket and he played in huge huge halls and it wasn't, he didn't dress up

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at all, he wore evening dress and he stood at a lectern and he read from books, from

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adaptations, from various of his novels, and he was absolutely brilliant. Even the greatest

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actors of the day said, Dickens – had he not wanted to write novels, would have been

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a genius of an actor. And he made people scream with laughter and he made them sob with tears

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and in the case of ‘the death of Nancy’ in *Oliver Twist*, he terrified people, he scared

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the living daylights out of them. People fainted, people screamed, it was an absolute phenomenon.

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I mean neither as a novelist nor as an actor had there ever been anything like it before,

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and it bound him closer and closer to his audience, to his readers, and he felt his

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relationship with them was more important to him than probably anything else in life

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and they responded likewise. He was the most famous man in the world during his lifetime.

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He was the most admired, the most loved author and the fact that he had this personal contact

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with them, performing directly to them, was a unique phenomenon and made him into a sort

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of a god for people, especially working class people for whom he felt that he was the spokesman

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and they cheered and cheered and cheered for him whenever he appeared.