

THE
GOODMAN



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

STUDY GUIDE
2026/2027

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A WELCOME LETTER TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

BY JARED BELLOT, CLIFFORD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Welcome to *A Christmas Carol*!

For nearly 50 years, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* has been a beloved part of The Goodman's season. While it is undoubtedly a cherished Chicago holiday tradition (complete with festive lobby decorations, trips to Daley Plaza's Christkindlmarket and thousands of cups of hot chocolate), we don't return to it year after year just because it's familiar. We return because this story asks a big and beautifully messy question: **What causes people to change?**

A Christmas Carol isn't just a story about a holiday. It's a tale about transformation, kindness and hope. It reminds us that anyone can change, even someone as seemingly set in their ways (and as spectacularly grumpy) as Ebenezer Scrooge. It teaches us that change doesn't happen through force, but through reflection, empathy and the courage to imagine a better future. And it shows us that, more often than not, change starts with a story.

Scrooge begins this play closed off from the world—focused on money, stuck in routine and disconnected from his community. But everything changes for him that fateful Christmas Eve when he is visited by three spirits who guide him through past, present and future, reminding him of who he was, revealing who he is and warning him of who he might become. By witnessing these stories (not just his own, but those of others he knows), Scrooge begins to see the world differently. He softens. And most importantly, he begins to care.

At the end of the day, that is the magic of storytelling. To tell a story, or to listen to one being told, is a radical act. Stories challenge our assumptions, help us feel what others feel, and open us up to the possibility of something new. When Scrooge listens, he begins to understand. And when we, as an audience, bear witness to Scrooge's story, we're invited to ask ourselves: *What is it that makes change possible? Is it personal loss? A sudden realization? The courage to hope for something better?* Dickens' story reminds us that change isn't just possible—it is a necessary part of being human.

This year's production, directed by Malkia Stampley, breathes new life into Victorian-era London by embracing the diverse voices and identities that shaped it. Because while Dickens' story may be set in the 1840s, the questions it raises are timeless: *What do we value? Who are we responsible for? How do we repair what's been broken? How do we grow?*

Whether you're here as a student, teacher or lifelong learner, we hope this study guide helps you explore those questions more deeply. Inside, you'll find tools to better understand the world of the play and to reflect on your own.

Thank you for sharing in this story with us. We're so glad you're here.



JARED BELLOT

CLIFFORD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

BAH. HUMBUG! A CHRISTMAS CAROL SYNOPSIS

BY ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN, SCHOOL PROGRAMS MANAGER

STORY BY CHARLES DICKENS

ADAPTED BY TOM CREAMER

It is Christmas Eve, and Ebenezer Scrooge hates Christmas. At work, he sends away people requesting donations and brushes off a Christmas dinner invitation from his niece, Frida, with a grumpy, "Bah. Humbug!" His clerk, Bob Cratchit, requests Christmas Day off work. Begrudgingly, Scrooge agrees.

That night, Scrooge keeps seeing visions of his former business partner, Jacob Marley. He figures his mind is just playing tricks on him, and he tries to go to sleep. Then, Marley's ghost finally manifests in full, shackled in chains. Marley warns that Scrooge must change his ways in order to escape Marley's fate. Marley tells Scrooge to expect visits from three spirits—for his own sake.

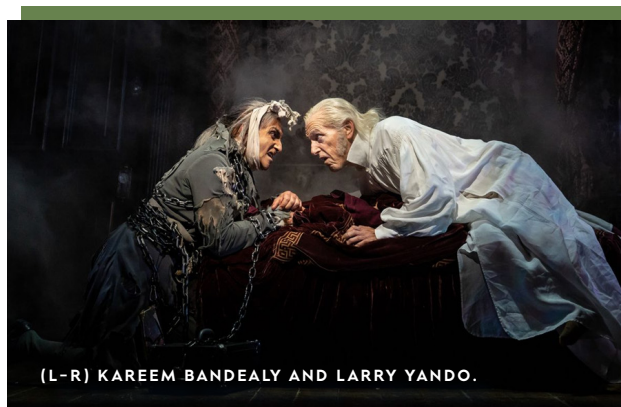


(L-R) DANIEL JOSÉ MOLINA
AND AMIRA DANAN.

Soon after, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come arrives. This spirit frightens Scrooge with scenes from the future. Scrooge sees how little people grieved his death. He learns that Tiny Tim died as well. Scrooge pleads with the spirit to let him change his ways, so as to avoid this future.

Scrooge wakes up on Christmas morning. With deep relief and joy, he buys the prize turkey for the Cratchits, makes a large donation to charity then visits Frida's house for Christmas dinner. When Bob Cratchit arrives at work the following morning, Scrooge gives him a raise.

Scrooge becomes a devoted friend, uncle and man. He also becomes a father figure to Tiny Tim, who survives. The community rejoices, and Tiny Tim proclaims, "God bless us, every one!"



(L-R) KAREEM BANDEALY AND LARRY YANDO.

As the clock strikes one, the Ghost of Christmas Past arrives. Together, they visit moments from Scrooge's past. Scrooge sees his late sister, Fan; his former boss, Fezziwig; and his ex-fiancée, Belle. The scenes reveal how his heart was hardened over the years. Scrooge is filled with regret.

Later in the night, Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present. They visit present-day Christmas celebrations, including that of Bob Cratchit's family. Scrooge sees how the family is wealthy in love, even if not in money. Scrooge finds himself worrying about the illness of Cratchit's youngest son, Tiny Tim. Scrooge and the spirit then visit Frida's Christmas party, where Scrooge starts to feel inclined to join in the festivities.



(FRONT ROW, L-R) AMIR HENDERSON, LEIGHTON TANTILLO,
CHRISTIAN LUCAS, VIVA BORELLI AND RIKA NISHIKAWA.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE: A CHRISTMAS CAROL CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

BY ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN, SCHOOL PROGRAMS MANAGER

Scrooge interacts with characters from the past, present and future. Meet some of them below, and click [HERE](#) to view the full cast list!

JACOB MARLEY

Former business partner of Scrooge who appears as a ghost

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

The first Christmas spirit to visit Scrooge

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

The second Christmas spirit to visit Scrooge

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

The final Christmas spirit to visit Scrooge



WILLIAM DICK AS JACOB MARLEY

EBENEZER SCROOGE

Grumpy businessman who refuses to celebrate Christmas



(L-R) BRI SUDIA AND CHRISTOPHER DONAHUE AS GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT AND EBENEZER SCROOGE

MR. FEZZIWIG

Scrooge's kindhearted first employer

MRS. FEZZIWIG

Jolly wife of Mr. Fezziwig

BOB CRATCHIT

Hardworking, underpaid employee of Scrooge

MRS. CRATCHIT

Loving wife of Bob Cratchit

BELLE

Scrooge's ex-fiancée

DICK WILKINS

Former apprentice with Scrooge

PETER CRATCHIT

Cratchit son

BELINDA CRATCHIT

Cratchit Daughter

FRIDA

Fan's daughter and Scrooge's niece

FAN

Scrooge's late beloved sister

MARTHA CRATCHIT

Eldest Cratchit daughter

TINY TIM

Youngest Cratchit son



THE 2024 CAST OF A CHRISTMAS CAROL



(L-R) ANTHONY IRONS, CHRISTOPHER DONAHUE, AVA ROSE DOTY, XAVIER IRONS, HENRY LOMBARDO, ISABEL ACKERMAN, VIVA BORESI, TAFADZWA DIENER AND SUSAN JAMSHIDI AS THE CRATCHIT FAMILY AND EBENEZER SCROOGE.

CHARLES DICKENS

THE MAN BEHIND THE CAROL

BY JARED BELLOT, CLIFFORD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Charles John Huffam Dickens was an English novelist, journalist, short story writer and social critic, widely considered to be one of the greatest writers of the Victorian era. He wrote many beloved books, including *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, *Our Mutual Friend* and *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens was famous in his own time and admired by readers from all walks of life, from working-class families to royalty all around the world. Known for his humor, unforgettable characters and sharp social commentary, Dickens used his writing to shine a light on the struggles of society and to inspire compassion, justice and change.



CHARLES DICKENS
(FEBRUARY 7, 1812 - JUNE 9, 1870)

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY YEARS

Born on February 7, 1812 in Portsmouth, England, Dickens was the second of eight children. His father, John Dickens, worked as a clerk in the Navy but often spent more money than he earned. This led the family into repeated financial struggles, shaping young Dickens' understanding of poverty from a young age. His childhood was spent moving between towns like Portsmouth, Chatham and London, giving him a broad view of English life, from coastal towns to crowded cities.

When Dickens was 12 years old, his father was arrested for not being able to pay his outstanding debt. The rest of the family, except for young Charles, was sent to Marshalsea Debtor's Prison, a place where people and their families were sent when they couldn't afford to pay their bills. Dickens was forced to leave school and work long, ten-hour days at Warren's Blacking Factory where he applied labels to jars of shoe polish. He earned only six shillings a week (about \$26 in today's money), most of which went to support his family. After three months, John Dickens declared himself an "Insolvent Debtor," which allowed him to free his family from jail. Dickens stopped working at the factory and was sent to private school, where he excelled academically and discovered a deep love for reading and storytelling.

EARLY CAREER: JOURNALISM AND WRITING

At age 15, Dickens left school to work as a law clerk and then as a shorthand reporter in London's courts. His work exposed him to the legal system and the injustices faced by ordinary people, which later became recurring themes

in his writing. Around 1833, he began submitting short stories and essays to newspapers and magazines under the pen name "Boz." His first published story, "A Dinner at Poplar Walk," marked the beginning of a literary career that would capture the attention of readers across England and across the world.

In 1836, Dickens' first collection, *Sketches by Boz*, was published, followed soon after by *The Pickwick Papers*, both of which received widespread critical and popular acclaim. Dickens' novels were often serialized (published in monthly or weekly installments) so readers of all social classes could follow along. This format not only made his work accessible but also allowed him to react to public interest, sometimes re-writing characters or plots based on audience response.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, SOCIAL AWARENESS AND THE BIRTH OF A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Dickens wrote during a period of enormous change known as the Industrial Revolution. Factories were multiplying in cities, creating low-paying, low-skill jobs, many of them filled by children. Without protections, these young workers often labored for twelve plus hours a day in dangerous, unhealthy conditions. Dickens' own childhood experiences gave him deep empathy for these children, and he often used his novels to shed light on their struggles. He became a passionate advocate for social reform, emphasizing the importance of compassion, fairness and education.



CHILD LABOR WAS COMMON DURING THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, WITH YOUNG WORKERS LIKE THIS OFTEN SPENDING LONG HOURS IN DANGEROUS FACTORIES FOR VERY LITTLE PAY, A REALITY THAT DEEPLY INFLUENCED DICKENS' WRITING.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

In 1843, Dickens visited several "Ragged Schools," institutions that provided free education to children living in extreme poverty. Many of the enrolled students he met were sick, hungry or forced into work, and some had already been exposed to criminal organizations. Dickens wrote that he had "very seldom seen anything so shocking as the dire neglect of soul and body exhibited in these children." At the same time, he read a government report on child labor that described children as young as five working in coal mines. These images haunted him. He wanted to do something to not just raise awareness, but to inspire real change.

"IN THE LITTLE WORLD IN WHICH
CHILDREN HAVE THEIR EXISTENCE,
WHOSOEVER BRINGS THEM UP,
THERE IS NOTHING SO FINELY
PERCEIVED AND SO FINELY FELT,
AS INJUSTICE."

- CHARLES DICKENS

His first idea was to write a pamphlet called *An Appeal to the People of England, on Behalf of the Poor Man's Child*. But Dickens realized a story could reach people's hearts and minds in a way a pamphlet couldn't. So, in just six weeks, he wrote *A Christmas Carol*, a short novel that combined a ghost story, a moral lesson and a celebration of compassion.

Published in December 1843, *A Christmas Carol* tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a wealthy and bitter man who cares only about money. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by three spirits (the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come) who show him the harm his selfishness has caused and what might happen if he doesn't change. By the end of the story, Scrooge becomes generous and kind, embodying Dickens' belief that people have the ability to choose to help one another and make society better.

The book was a fast success, selling out its first printing within days. It also helped revive some Christmas traditions in England, such as family gatherings, festive meals and charitable giving. Today, *A Christmas Carol* is one of the most adapted works of literature ever turned into countless plays, films and TV specials. Its message of kindness, generosity and redemption continues to inspire people around the world every holiday season. For Dickens, the book was more than a holiday story. It was a call to action and a reminder that no matter how powerful or wealthy someone is, they have a responsibility to care for others.



SCROOGE MEETING THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME, ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN LEECH, FROM THE FIRST EDITION OF *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* (1843).

LIFE AND LEGACY

Dickens went on to write 15 novels, including *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*. He was a master at creating memorable characters and vivid settings, often drawing on his own lived experiences. His novels combined humor, drama, social critique and moral lessons, making them widely appealing to both children and adults, the poor and the wealthy (even Queen Victoria, the Queen of England, was said to have loved Dickens' writing).

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"HE WAS A SYMPATHIZER TO THE POOR, THE SUFFERING, AND THE OPPRESSED; AND BY HIS DEATH, ONE OF ENGLAND'S GREATEST WRITERS IS LOST TO THE WORLD."

- INSCRIPTION ON CHARLES DICKENS' TOMB



POET'S CORNER AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY, WHERE CHARLES DICKENS IS BURIED.

One of Dickens' unique strengths was his ability to portray the humanity of people from all walks of life. He depicted both the joys and hardships of the working class, often critiquing institutions that neglected or exploited the poor. Even as his works became popular entertainment, beloved by many, they carried urgent social messages about justice, education and compassion.

Dickens married Catherine Hogarth in 1836, and together they had ten children. Though his family life was complicated (he separated from Catherine in 1858 and started a relationship with actress Ellen Ternan), his experiences of love, loss and family also deeply influenced the emotional heft of his novels.

In 1842, Dickens toured the United States with his wife, giving lectures and readings. He was warmly received but was also very critical of certain American practices, especially the lack of copyright protection and the persistence of slavery. These experiences informed his later writing, including *American Notes for General Circula-*

tion and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Despite initial criticism from American audiences, Dickens toured the country again in 1867-1868, giving public readings and winning critical praise for his storytelling abilities.

Dickens died on June 9, 1870, at his home in Gad's Hill, Kent. He was buried in Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey, where thousands mourned the passing of a man many considered a voice of deep reason and morality. His novels remain in print today, and *A Christmas Carol* continues to inspire audiences worldwide, teaching us about the power of empathy, reflection and the possibility of personal transformation.

Dickens' life reminds us that stories are more than entertainment; they are a way to witness the world of others, imagine better futures and understand what causes people to change. Through his writing, he encouraged readers to act with compassion, think critically and believe that meaningful change is always possible.

CHARLES DICKENS' NOTABLE WORKS

A quick snapshot of 10 of the most important and influential stories penned by Charles Dickens, highlighting his unforgettable characters, social commentary and timeless stories.

OLIVER TWIST (1837–1839)

The story of an orphan boy who faces poverty, crime and corruption in London. Introduces famous characters like Fagin, the Artful Dodger and Bill Sikes.

DAVID COPPERFIELD (1849–1850)

A semi-autobiographical novel following David from childhood to adulthood, exploring personal growth, family and social challenges.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS (1860–1861)

Follows the life of Pip, an orphan who rises in society with the help of a mysterious benefactor, exploring ambition, love and personal growth.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES (1859)

Set during the French Revolution, this story explores themes of sacrifice, love and justice across London and Paris.

BLEAK HOUSE (1852–1853)

A critique of the British legal system, filled with mystery, social commentary and memorable characters.

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT (1843–1844)

A satirical novel about greed, selfishness and human folly, including memorable journeys to America.

THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP (1840–1841)

Centers on Little Nell and her grandfather, highlighting Victorian sentimentality and the hardships faced by the poor.

LITTLE DORRIT (1855–1857)

The story of Amy Dorrit and her family trapped in debtors' prison, examining social injustice and the gap between rich and poor.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY (1838–1839)

Tells the story of a young man navigating family struggles, injustice and adventure in 19th-century England.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL (1843)

Dickens' most famous holiday story, featuring Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim and the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come. A tale of transformation, compassion and hope.



A PARADE OF DICKENS CHARACTERS!

IN SERVICE TO OTHERS:

A CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR MALKIA STAMPLEY

BY ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN,
SCHOOL PROGRAMS MANAGER



MALKIA STAMPLEY



ANNA ROGELIO
JOAQUIN

ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN: CONGRATS ON BEING AT THE HELM OF SUCH AN ICONIC STAPLE FOR THE GOODMAN AND CHICAGO!

MALKIA STAMPLEY: Thank you!

ANNA: CAN YOU SHARE MORE ABOUT YOUR ROLE? WHAT DOES THE DIRECTOR OF A PLAY DO?

MALKIA: I'd say the director leads and guides the creative team based on a vision and concept. It uses two different brains: You have to be very creative because you have to have the vision, but you have to also be very organized with time.

ANNA: YOU'RE JUGGLING SO MUCH! WHO ELSE IS A PART OF YOUR CREATIVE TEAM?

MALKIA: Yes! There's a choreographer, music director, voice and dialect coach and assistant director. These are all people who are in rehearsal at some point. And we also have the design team—that's lighting, scenic, costumes, sound and composition.

ANNA: WHAT'S THE REHEARSAL PROCESS LIKE?

MALKIA: We rehearse for three and a half weeks, but we all learn the show together months in advance, sometimes a year in advance. The design team works on the show before the creative team. Sometimes you call that pre-production. Then in-production would be rehearsal and tech. When we get in the rehearsal room for those three and a half weeks, we put all those pieces together with the cast, and we see it all come together. Once we start rehearsal, it's really fast, and there's kind of no stopping.

ANNA: YOU MENTIONED HAVING A VISION GUIDING THE DESIGNERS AND CREATIVE TEAM THROUGH THIS PROCESS. WHAT IS YOUR VISION OR CONCEPT FOR THIS YEAR'S A CHRISTMAS CAROL?

MALKIA: With *A Christmas Carol*, it's a challenge, because it's a show that so many people know. It's been made into movies so many times. Even if you've never been to the theater, you might have seen a version of it. Each director, then, who comes in to do *A Christmas Carol* has to have a concept for

how you tell the same story. For me, I wanted this year to be a more inclusive and worldly *A Christmas Carol*. London in the 1840s had a lot of different people from around the world, similar to today.

ANNA: ABSOLUTELY! SO, THE GOODMAN HAS BEEN DOING A CHRISTMAS CAROL SINCE 1978, BUT AS YOU'RE SAYING, IT'S NEVER BEEN EXACTLY THE SAME EVERY YEAR. WHAT KINDS OF CHOICES CAN YOU MAKE AS THE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE YOUR CONCEPT?

MALKIA: Well, we're not in a place to change big scenic elements or even make big costume changes, so maybe it's in the accents. Maybe there is someone with a Chinese accent and dialect, or is from the Caribbean, or someone who is from Scotland and someone who is from India. I want to explore that with the music as well, because music from all over the world was heavily influencing music in London at that time. Also, the dances! What do the dances look like when you have people who haven't lived in London for the last 1,000 years, but people who have only been there one generation and knew a different dance in Poland? I'd say my concept is embracing everyone's individualities in London and not trying to have the people in *A Christmas Carol* feel like a homogenous or single culture.

ANNA: I LOVE HEARING HOW YOU'RE EMBRACING THIS RANGE. AS YOU MENTIONED, THE BOOK BY CHARLES DICKENS WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1843, BUT IT'S REALLY STOOD THE TEST OF TIME. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS? AND WHY DOES IT CONNECT WITH SO MANY CULTURES?

MALKIA: I think every country in the world has been influenced and impacted by capitalism. It has been widely considered the dream. I think that it stays relevant because in the pursuit of success or happiness, you can ask how you balance your ambition with your purpose. I grew up in the church, as a Christian, and my parents really instilled in me that it didn't really matter what you did—your purpose was to be in service to others. I feel like that value has been in every major religion. It's a family value as well, and friendship. It's a core, fundamental human thing. Scrooge allows me to assess, "How I am living up to the mandate of being in service to others?" I feel that the play asks, "How much more are you of Scrooge? How? How are you trying? How are you loving? And if you are repelled by Scrooge, how are you loving the Scrooges in your life? How can you challenge them?"

ANNA: SOMETHING SO MOVING ABOUT SCROOGE IS HIS REDEMPTION ARC AND HOW HE CHANGES. IN THIS STUDY GUIDE, WE'RE FOCUSING ON AN ESSENTIAL QUESTION, WHICH IS, "WHAT CAUSES PEOPLE TO CHANGE?" HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THAT QUESTION?

MALKIA: When it hits you. When you believe that something could happen to you. Not until it hits close to home. I feel like this time in our country, especially with all that's happening with immigration and those who are being removed from their homes, it's now not in another country—it can be down the street. And when you think, "Oh, it couldn't be me. It's just that group." There are now exceptions to those rules. Or, for all of us to go through the pandemic. It's not just, "Oh, I learned about a plague hundreds of years ago." It is now. That's what I believe allows change to stick. When something happens to you or to someone you love. Or, when you believe that it could, which is the power of theater. And that's empathy.

PAGE TO STAGE: STORY ADAPTATION ACTIVITIES

BY TYRA BULLOCK, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



(ABOVE) LUCKY STIFF.
(L-R, BELOW) TAFADZWA DIENER, CHRISTOPHER DONAHUE,
ARASH FAKHRABADI AND JALBELLY GUZMÁN.

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens is widely considered the best-known holiday classic of all time! With more than a hundred renditions, this story has been adapted numerous times for film, television, radio, the stage and beyond. Below is a list of options that invites students to explore the dramatic structure of *A Christmas Carol* and practice story adaptation by reimagining the tale in new forms of storytelling, from tableaux and poems to comic strips and modern retellings.

STEP 1: CONTEXTUALIZE (5-10 MINUTES)

1. Check in with the students on their prior knowledge of *A Christmas Carol*. If unfamiliar, provide a summary or have the students read the play synopsis on p. 3 of this guide.
2. Share that The Goodman's *A Christmas Carol* is an adaptation of the novel *A Christmas Carol* written by Charles Dickens in 1843. **Adaptation** is the transformation of literature from its original source into another medium of art.
3. Have students share some additional examples of adaptations in pop culture (i.e. *Harry Potter*, *Percy Jackson & the Olympians*, *Disney live-action films*, etc.)

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

TIME: 35-60 MINUTES

VOCABULARY

- Adaptation
- Dramatic Structure
- Exposition
- Inciting Incident
- Rising Action
- Climax
- Falling Action
- Resolution

MATERIALS

- Board or large sheet of paper
- Notebook paper (1 sheet per student)
- Writing utensil (1 per student)
- *A Christmas Carol* Synopsis, found on p. 3 of this guide (optional)
- Charles Dickens: The Man Behind the Carol, found on p. 5 of this guide (optional)
- *A Christmas Carol* Character Breakdown, found on p. 4 of this guide (optional)

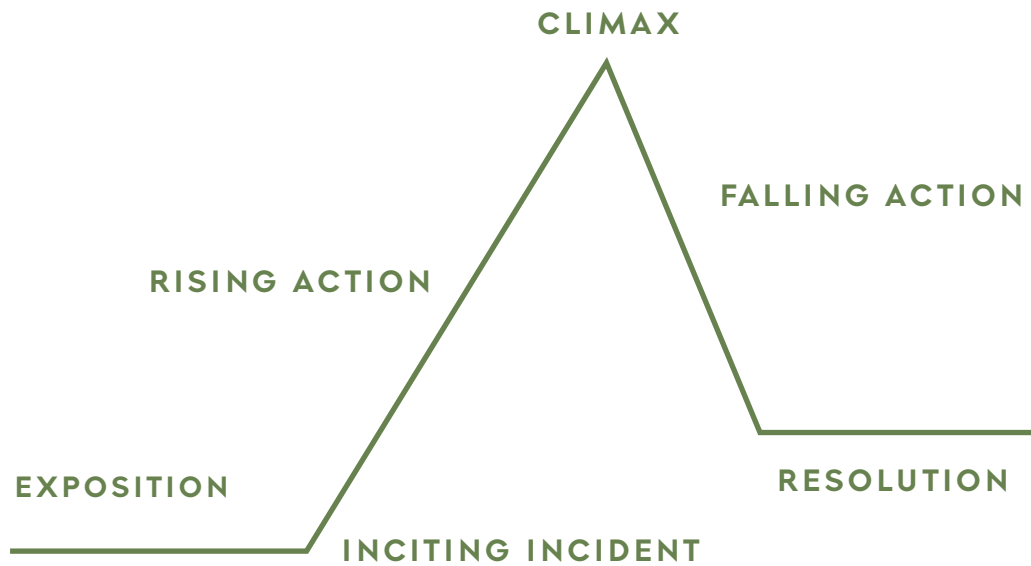
OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

- Adapt an existing narrative into a new medium of storytelling.
- Identify and define the elements of a dramatic structure for analyzing the plot of a story.
- Prepare a unified drama/ theatre work for performance that conveys meaning.

STEP 2: STORYBOARD (10-15 MINUTES)

1. Draw the dramatic structure chart, also known as 'Freytag's Pyramid' (as shown below), on a board or large sheet of paper.



2. Define the elements of a story, or dramatic structure, with the students. Have students write out each element and their description as introduced on a sheet of paper.
 - a. Exposition – What happens at the beginning of the story?
 - b. Inciting Incident – What is the moment that causes a conflict/problem in our story?
 - c. Rising Action – What happens to the characters as a result of the conflict/problem?
 - d. Climax – What is the highest point of tension and drama in the story?
 - e. Falling Action – What happens in the story after the climax?
 - f. Resolution – How does the story end?
3. Ask the students to identify the elements of dramatic structure within *A Christmas Carol*. (Examples of possible answers below.)
 - a. Exposition – We learn that Scrooge is a greedy, bitter old businessman who prefers money over the companionship of others, including his own sister's child.
 - b. Inciting Incident – The ghost of Jacob Marley, Scrooge's former business partner, warns Scrooge that if he doesn't change his selfish ways, he will suffer the same fate as Marley in the afterlife. He also shares that Scrooge will be visited by three spirits: the Ghost of Christmas Past, Ghost of Christmas Present, and Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.
 - c. Rising Action – Scrooge goes on a journey with two of the Christmas spirits, the Ghost of Christmas Past and the Ghost of Christmas Present. We see glimpses of Scrooge's childhood with his sister Fan and early adulthood with his ex-fiancée Belle before transitioning to present-day Christmas Eve at the Cratchit's home and his niece/nephew's holiday party.
 - d. Climax – Scrooge is guided by the third ghost, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. In this future reality, Tiny Tim, the son of his employee Bob Cratchit has died from uncured illness. Scrooge also realizes that he too has died, but no one mourns his death.
 - e. Falling Action – Scrooge wakes up to present-day Christmas morning and decides to change his ways. He donates to charity and gifts the Cratchit family with a turkey dinner and salary raise for Bob Cratchit.
 - f. Resolution – Scrooge repairs his relationship with his niece/nephew and joins them for Christmas dinner. He finally learns to be a better man, uncle and friend, vowing to always keep the spirit of Christmas in his heart.

TIP:

For younger students, consider simplifying this activity by guiding students through the beginning, middle and end of the story.

STEP 3: ADAPT THE STORY (20–35 MINUTES)

For this section, we encourage teachers to choose a mode of storytelling adaptation that works best for your students!

STORY TABLEAUS

TOPICS

- Tableaus
- Scene or theme
- Theatre production (optional)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Students use their bodies to create frozen pictures of a scene or theme from *A Christmas Carol*. Once students have practiced their tableaus, each group will take turns presenting for one another. As an extension, consider having students add technical elements such as sound, lights, props or costumes!

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- CC.7.R.L.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

- TH.Pr4.1.2b: Make physical and vocal choices to develop a character in a guided drama experience (for example, process drama, story drama, creative drama).
- TH.Pr4.1.7a: Analyze the dramatic arc of a drama/theatre work.
- TH.Pr5.1.5b: Demonstrate the use of technical elements in a drama/theatre work

FREE-WRITE ADAPTATIONS

TOPICS

- Personal narrative
- Playwriting
- Reader's Theatre (optional)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Students free-write a response to a personal narrative prompt connected to an idea or moment explored in *A Christmas Carol* (i.e. Describe a time when you felt loved). Using the dramatic structure chart, students identify these elements within their story. Finally, have students adapt their free-write into an original scene or short play. As an extension, consider casting students to read aloud each other's works.

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- CC.3-12.W.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details and clear event sequences.
- CC.6-12.W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

- TH.Pr4.1.7a: Analyze the dramatic arc of a drama/theatre work.
- TH.Cr3.1.3a: Contribute to the adaptation of the plot and dialogue in a drama/theatre work.

MOCK INTERVIEW

TOPICS

- Research
- Character analysis
- Multiple perspectives

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Choose an idea or scene from *A Christmas Carol* that highlights a social or political theme. Have students work in small groups to research that theme within the context of the story. Once complete, instruct students to choose a character from the play to interview about their thoughts on the topic. For additional support, see 'Charles Dickens: The Man Behind the Carol' on pp. 5-8 and 'A Christmas Carol Character Breakdown' on p. 4 of this guide.

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- CC.5.R.L.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
- CC.3-12.W.3a: Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

- TH.Cr3.1.3a: Contribute to the adaptation of the plot and dialogue in a drama/theatre work.
- TH.Cn11.1.7a: Examine contemporary social, cultural, or global issues by using music, dance, art and/or media in a drama/theatre work.
- TH.Cr1.1.5c: Imagine how a character's inner thoughts impact the story and given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

COMIC STRIP

TOPICS

- Visual literacy
- Reading comprehension

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Use a comic strip template to draw out moments highlighting each of the dramatic structure elements in *A Christmas Carol*. There should be a total of six panels. Have students present their comics in small groups or put them on display for the class to observe.

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- CC.1.S.L.5: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- CC.7.R.L.3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

- TH.Cr3.1.3a: Contribute to the adaptation of the plot and dialogue in a drama/theatre work.
- TH.Pr4.1.7a: Analyze the dramatic arc of a drama/theatre work.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

- VA.Cr2.3.7a: Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce a work of art, design, or media that clearly communicates information or ideas.

POEM

TOPICS

- Literacy
- Poem structures (optional)
- Theme

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Assign students a scene or theme from *A Christmas Carol* to adapt into a poem. For younger grades, consider using an existing poem or template to support their writing. For older grades, challenge students by introducing different types of poem structures. Students may present their works as written or perform as spoken word for the class.

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- CC.5.R.L.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
- CC.6-12.W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

- TH.Cr3.1.3a: Contribute to the adaptation of the plot and dialogue in a drama/theatre work.

DECONSTRUCTED STORYTELLING

TOPICS

- Reimagining
- Scene creation

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

For each element of the dramatic structure, create a question that prompts the class to reimagine an aspect of *A Christmas Carol*. Some examples may include shifts to the plot, characters, time period, location and/or theme. Once you've identified these changes, have students take turns presenting this new adaptation. Consider having students use written dialogue, mad-libs, tableaux or improvisation to share their story with the class.

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- CC.7.R.L.3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
- CC.3-12.W.3b: Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events and/or characters.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

- TH.Cr3.1.3a: Contribute to the adaptation of the plot and dialogue in a drama/theatre work.
- TH.Pr4.1.7a: Analyze the dramatic arc of a drama/theatre work.

COMPARE & CONTRAST

TOPICS

- Analyzation
- Compare & contrast
- Venn diagram

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Select another adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* for students to examine such as Disney's *A Christmas Carol* (2009) or *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992) films. Using a Venn diagram and guided discussion, analyze the differences and similarities between Goodman's production and the other adaptation. How does each work of art interpret the text?

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- CC.7.R.I.7: Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).
- CC.11-12.R.L.7: Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

- TH.Cr3.1.3a: Contribute to the adaptation of the plot and dialogue in a drama/theatre work.
- TH.Cn11.2.6a: Research and analyze two different versions of the same drama/theatre story or plot to determine differences and similarities in the visual and aural world of each story.

BEHIND THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS: MEET THE DESIGN AND CREATIVE TEAM

BY ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN,
SCHOOL PROGRAMS MANAGER

When you see a show, you may notice several ways you are transported to the world of the play. Perhaps you have experienced sounds that alter the mood or costumes that signal a different time period. Behind the sights and sounds of *A Christmas Carol* are a design and creative team helping bring the show to life. On The Goodman's team for this production are Sound Designer Pornchanok Kanchanabanca and Costume Designer Heidi McMath.

Read on to learn about their vision for *A Christmas Carol* and what they hope you notice! For a deeper dive into costume design, check out *Costumes Past and Present: A Q&A with Costume Designer Heidi McMath* on p. 15.



PORNCHANOK KANCHANABANCA
SOUND DESIGNER

My ultimate goal is to weave an enchanting narrative. Each year with *A Christmas Carol*, we unveil new auditory elements that elevate the experience. For example, the haunting sound of chains rattling embodies Marley's ghost, while the Ghost of the Future is enveloped in a chilling, ethereal atmosphere. The thrill of crafting the Future scene is unmatched, as we skillfully navigate through time and space, even with the actors rooted in their spots, on the bare stage. Using only light and sound to conjure the illusion of shifting environments is an exhilarating challenge, immersing the audience in a captivating soundscape that brilliantly enhances the scene and sets a riveting mood.

Can you spot the musical theme that starts at the preshow music and threads throughout the show? It is a long, collaborative design that makes The Goodman's *A Christmas Carol* unique.



HEIDI MCMATH
COSTUME DESIGNER

What are the costumes of the Spirits saying about them? Are they frightening? Are they helpful to Scrooge? What is their purpose? What is their relationship to Scrooge and his journey? Look closely at the non-spirit characters. What does this world of Dickensian London look like and feel like? How are the classes mingling?

COSTUMES PAST AND PRESENT:

A CONVERSATION WITH COSTUME DESIGNER HEIDI MCMATH

BY ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN, SCHOOL PROGRAMS MANAGER



HEIDI MCMATH



ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN

ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN: IT'S SUCH A TREAT TO BE ABLE TO CHAT WITH YOU GIVEN YOUR IMPRESSIVE HISTORY WITH A *CHRISTMAS CAROL* AT THE GOODMAN. YOU STARTED DESIGNING COSTUMES FOR THE SHOW IN 2001, RIGHT?

HEIDI MCMATH: Yes, I have been here for 39 years at The Goodman, but I did not take over the official design of the show until 2001.

ANNA: COULD YOU SHARE MORE ABOUT WHAT COSTUMING A SHOW ENTAILS? WHAT IS COSTUME DESIGN?

HEIDI: Costume design is the design for everything that actors wear in a play. When the director is at the point where they're ready to talk about their vision and what they want people to be wearing, that's when they start talking to the costume designer.

ANNA: WHAT ARE SOME WAYS COSTUMES HELP TELL THE STORY? WHAT DO COSTUMES COMMUNICATE IN A *CHRISTMAS CAROL*?

HEIDI: In the case of *A Christmas Carol*, it's a period show set in 1843, which is when the book was written. Most of our costumes are based on a lot of research of what people wore in 1843 or thereabout. Some of the show is a flashback to Scrooge as a young boy, so that's 30 years earlier. It's based on photographs, paintings, drawings—anything we can find that helps us to understand what people wore and what each class of people wore. We have some people who are upper middle class in the show, and we have people who are very poor. And there is a lot of research to be found for different occupations, too—if you were a maid or if you were working any one of the laboring jobs in the streets of London.

ANNA: WHAT KINDS OF JOBS DO YOU REPRESENT THROUGH THE COSTUMES?

HEIDI: One of my favorite characters has always been the poulterer. The poulterer is a character who has his own shop, so that means he has a little bit more station in life, a little bit more money, but he does still take out his wares and sell them on the streets. So I had a sketch of men from the period, from a book on

laborers in 19th century London, and there were all these dead hens and ducks hung everywhere. They're plucking and working, and every one of them is in what we would call a frock suit: a jacket, vest, shirt, pants, boots, a big apron over it and big sleeve guards over it. We wouldn't walk into doing that kind of work and wear anything but washable things. The world of clothing was a little bit more formal in those days than what we do in our sweats and our yoga pants and so forth, and so I like that indication of his class status being slightly more, but also that he's still a worker, and he's got these aprons and things on with some blood on the apron to identify what his occupation is.

ANNA: I LOVE HOW INTENTIONAL THESE DETAILS ARE!

HEIDI: It's fun. Also, the way things worked in those days is people brought their farm wears up into the city from the farm on market days, much like when we have market day in the Loop here, or any of the neighborhoods where people are bringing their produce. This is basically how you bought all your produce. So, a lot of the people coming in would be in farm wear. One of my favorite characters has a straw hat that, in the day, anybody would have seen and known that man was from the country. One of the things that identified country people when they came into the city is they often wore these long smocks that were somewhat embroidered and sometimes fanciful, but usually was their workday clothing. I know our broader audiences won't necessarily catch that, but you definitely see they're different than all the people in jackets and pants, you know.

And then, of course, there are the spirits. There's a lot of freedom for the director and the designer to say, "What do we want that character to be about, and therefore, what do we want them to look like?"

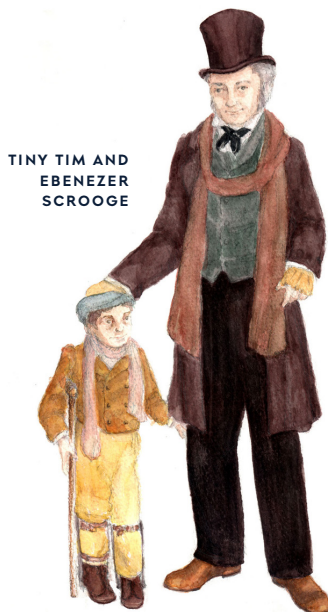
ANNA: SO IT SOUNDS LIKE THE SPIRITS CHANGE THE MOST FROM YEAR TO YEAR, AND OTHER COSTUMES MIGHT STAY THE SAME? HOW MUCH IS REUSED? WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU NAVIGATED OVER THE YEARS?

HEIDI: Well, we do have a set of clothes. They don't last forever, unfortunately. They get a lot of wear—actually, more wear than you might put on your own clothes because we do eight to nine shows a week for a period



CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

"ONE OF MY FAVORITE CHARACTERS HAS A STRAW HAT THAT, IN THE DAY, ANYBODY WOULD HAVE SEEN AND KNOWN THAT MAN WAS FROM THE COUNTRY. ONE OF THE THINGS THAT IDENTIFIED COUNTRY PEOPLE WHEN THEY CAME INTO THE CITY IS THEY OFTEN WORE THESE LONG SMOCKS THAT WERE SOMEWHAT EMBROIDERED AND SOMETIMES FANCIFUL, BUT USUALLY WAS THEIR WORKDAY CLOTHING. I KNOW OUR BROADER AUDIENCES WON'T NECESSARILY CATCH THAT, BUT YOU DEFINITELY SEE THEY'RE DIFFERENT THAN ALL THE PEOPLE IN JACKETS AND PANTS, YOU KNOW."



TINY TIM AND
EBENEZER
SCROOGE

of weeks. So they do wear down, and then we have to replace them. And then maybe we can't get the same fabrics. Maybe it's a different actor, maybe it's a different director. We've had different directors every few years, and a different director is going to have a different angle on it, a different point of view. They're going to want to say, "Well, I want to downplay this. This is more important to me." And then I'm, within the limited resources of time and money, trying to honor that, particularly in the case of the spirits—those are the ones that directors make the most changes in.

ANNA: WHAT KINDS OF SHIFTS IN COSTUMES HAVE DIRECTORS INFLUENCED?

HEIDI: If we have somebody coming back in the same role, it's generally the same, but even then, occasionally, the director will say, "Let's try something a little different this year." I can also remember, in years gone by, one of our characters in what's now the Frida party—used to be the Fred party when it was the nephew, Fred—that was a big change because in the book, it is the nephew Fred, and in our version, for about 10 years or more now, it's been the niece. In the past, some of those characters in that scene were much more comic. And I think [with] the directors, over time, I've seen a more serious tone come in. They want some humor, they want some laughs, they want some uplift—but they want it to be a world that shows the problems and the darkness, too. And so over time, the particular role of Philomena—who, when I got here, was very giddy and very silly with bouncy curls, always laughing—is just another party guest, without this distinction of being specifically comic. And so that is how the director and the actors have been influencing that role. Which means, then, I had to look at the costume when it started shifting, and say, "I have all these flippy, floaty ruffles and bows and curls and pigtails," and suddenly it doesn't speak to a more serious character.

ANNA: WHAT'S THE PROCESS OF CREATING A NEW COSTUME FOR THE SHOW LIKE? HOW MUCH DO YOU MAKE FROM SCRATCH, AND HOW MUCH DO YOU PULL FROM YOUR STOCK?

HEIDI: When I started designing it in 2001, we were only able to replace something upwards of half of the show because it's just too costly and too big. A lot of times, what will happen is some of the clothes that were on wealthier characters get distressed down and get worn by more of the street people, which was actually pretty typical, because in those days, you couldn't just go and buy ready-made, inexpensive clothing. And so what people tended to do was either they made their own, if they had the skill at the time, or they would go to rag shops, like we would go to a used clothing store. In this situation of Philomena that I was just talking about, I took her bows off, I reduced the ruffles, I changed the hairstyle so it was more serious, I toned down the color. I had an actress that was a similar size, and I couldn't afford to rebuild that.

ANNA: YOU MENTIONED HOW LARGE THIS CAST IS. HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU COSTUME FOR THIS SHOW?

A CHRISTMAS CAROL STEAM ACTIVITIES

BY ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN, SCHOOL PROGRAMS MANAGER

Watch The Goodman on City Science to learn more about science, technology, engineering and math in *A Christmas Carol*! Then, read on for a list of topics covered in the video and activities that explore them.



<https://youtu.be/dmy90jkvUA0>



<https://youtu.be/BydLv614yQ4>



<https://youtu.be/9M5Uy2qjXKs>

TOPICS, ACTIVITIES AND STANDARDS

LIGHTING

LIGHTING TOPICS

- Color theory and perception
- Direction
- Intensity
- Tonality
- Prisms
- Rainbows
- White light
- Subtractive and additive lighting
- Shadows

LIGHTING ACTIVITIES

- Mix colors of paint to demonstrate how different colors of light would blend. Blend colors for three specific moments in *A Christmas Carol*.
- Shine a flashlight at various angles and levels of brightness to observe changes in direction, intensity and tonality. Use flashlights to light classmates as they read a scene from *A Christmas Carol*. How can you use light to make someone look more intimidating? How can you use light to make a scene more joyful?

STANDARDS

NGSS: PHYSICAL SCIENCE

- **1-PS4-2:** Make observations to construct an evidence-based account that objects in darkness can be seen only when illuminated.
- **1-PS4-3:** Plan and conduct investigations to determine the effect of placing objects made with different materials in the path of a beam of light.
- **4-PS4-2:** Develop a model to describe that light reflecting from objects and entering the eye allows objects to be seen.
- **MS-PS4-2:** Develop and use a model to describe that waves are reflected, absorbed, or transmitted through various materials.
- **HS-PS4-1:** Develop a quantitative model that relates the wavelength, frequency and speed of a wave.

COSTUMES

COSTUME TOPICS

- Color
- Fabric
- Lighting and costume interactions

COSTUME ACTIVITIES

- Shine a flashlight through different fabrics and determine whether light is transmitted, absorbed or reflected. Play around with layering different colors of translucent fabrics. Create fabric blends for specific scenes in *A Christmas Carol*.
- Design a costume for one of the spirits in *A Christmas Carol* to be used in low light. Maximize visibility in the dark using principles of reflection. Beyond the stage, where else do materials need to maximize visibility in low light?

STANDARDS

NGSS: PHYSICAL SCIENCE

- **1-PS4-3:** Plan and conduct investigations to determine the effect of placing objects made with different materials in the path of a beam of light.
- **4-PS4-2:** Develop a model to describe that light reflecting from objects and entering the eye allows objects to be seen.
- **MS-PS4-2:** Develop and use a model to describe that waves are reflected, absorbed, or transmitted through various materials.

NGSS: ENGINEERING

- **HS-ETS1-2:** Design a solution to a complex real-world problem by breaking it down into smaller, more manageable problems that can be solved through engineering.

SET TOPICS

- Plaster line
- Center line
- Upstage
- Downstage
- Automated winch
- Motors
- Measurements and calculations
- Model
- Scale
- Engineers
- Pulley system
- Mechanical advantage
- Simple machines

SET ACTIVITIES

- Draw a ground plan for a scene in *A Christmas Carol* to scale.
- Build a scale model of a set for a scene in *A Christmas Carol*.
- Build a scale model for a set transition in *A Christmas Carol* that demonstrates how set pieces will move.
- Build a pulley system to make objects “fly” like the actors and set pieces in *A Christmas Carol*. Identify forces, motion and tension. Investigate relationships between force, mass and motion.
- Calculate mechanical advantage for fixed, movable and compound pulleys. Determine which pulleys you would use for *A Christmas Carol*.
- Look up the specs of automated winches. How do they compare to pulleys? Determine which winches you would buy for your own production of *A Christmas Carol*.

STANDARDS

NGSS: PHYSICAL SCIENCE

- **3-PS2-1:** Plan and conduct an investigation to provide evidence of the effects of balanced and unbalanced forces on the motion of an object.
- **3-PS2-2:** Make observations and/or measurements of an object's motion to provide evidence that a pattern can be used to predict future motion.
- **MS-PS2-2:** Plan an investigation to provide evidence that the change in an object's motion depends on the sum of the forces on the object and the mass of the object.

NGSS: ENGINEERING

- **K-2-ETS1-2:** Develop models (drawings/replicas) to show how objects help solve problems.
- **K-2-ETS1-3:** Test two solutions and compare performance.
- **3-5-ETS1-1:** Define a design problem with criteria and constraints (materials, cost, time).
- **3-5-ETS1-2:** Generate and compare multiple solutions based on criteria.
- **3-5-ETS1-3:** Plan & conduct controlled tests, identify failure points, improve designs.
- **MS-ETS1-1:** Define problems with precise criteria & constraints in larger contexts.
- **MS-ETS1-2:** Evaluate competing solutions, combine beneficial elements.
- **MS-ETS1-4:** Build models to iteratively optimize designs.
- **HS-ETS1-1:** Analyze complex real-world problems—break into smaller ones to design solutions.
- **HS-ETS1-2:** Design solutions for complex problems with consideration of trade-offs.
- **HS-ETS1-3:** Evaluate solutions based on evidence, prioritize among criteria like cost, safety, reliability, aesthetics and consider impacts.
- **HS-ETS1-4:** Use simulations or tests to refine solutions and optimize performance.

CCSS: MATH

- **CCSS.Math.Content.6.RP.A.1:** Understand the concept of a ratio and use ratio language to describe a ratio relationship between two quantities.
- **CCSS.Math.Content.7.G.A.1:** Solve problems involving scale drawings of geometric figures, including computing actual lengths and areas from a scale drawing and reproducing a scale drawing at a different scale.
- **CCSS.Math.Content.HSG-GMD.B:** Visualize relationships between two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects.
- **CCSS.Math.Content.HSG-MG.A:** Apply geometric concepts in modeling situations.
- **CCSS.Math.Content.HSG-MG.A.1:** Use geometric shapes, their measures and their properties to describe objects.

SHARE THE JOY: SERVICE LEARNING IN A CHRISTMAS CAROL

BY TYRA BULLOCK,
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

The Goodman is committed to using theater in service of social change. In *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens uses the story of Ebenezer Scrooge's transformation to critique the social inequalities of Victorian England and advocate for social change. In this activity, students will collaborate with their peers to investigate social inequities in their community and practice acts of service to address those needs.

BEFORE CLASS: SET UP

1. Print out 'Charles Dickens: The Man Behind the Carol' on pp. 5-8 (1 copy per student).

STEP 1: DEFINE SOCIAL CHANGE (10 MINUTES)

1. As a class, define **social change**. Social change is the transformation of a society's structures, behaviors, cultures and values. This is usually informed by an inequity brought to the surface by a group of peoples in an effort to improve conditions surrounding a specific issue. Some examples of social change throughout history include the Civil Rights Movement, Women's Suffrage Movement and LGBTQ+ rights movement.
2. Ask students to provide some additional examples.

STEP 2: READ (10 MINUTES)

1. As a class or in small groups read the "Charles Dickens: The Man Behind the Carol" article located on pp. 5-8 of this guide.
2. Let students know that there will be some discussion questions to follow.

STEP 3: DISCUSS (10 MINUTES)

1. Use a board, large sheet of paper or projector to collect and display students' responses to these discussion questions:

TIME: 70-80 MINUTES

VOCABULARY

- Social Change

MATERIALS

- Board, projector or large sheet of paper
- 'Charles Dickens: The Man Behind the Carol' found on pp. 5-8 of this guide (1 copy per student)

OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

- Participate in projects that address community needs and contribute to the well-being of their communities.
- Advocate for personal responsibility for public spaces.
- Reflect on how local policy impacts social issues in their community.

- a. What social issues did Charles Dickens highlight in *A Christmas Carol*? Are any of these problems present in your community?
- b. How did Dickens' actions lead to social change during the Victorian Era? In what ways did the period, geographic location and/or structural factors influence the Industrial Revolution?
- c. What are some social issues you've noticed in your community? Like Dickens, what can you do to advocate for social change?

STEP 4: PRACTICE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (30 MINUTES)

1. Place students into small groups. Then, ask each group to choose one of the social issues identified in Step 3 to conduct research on, analyzing the cause and effect of this issue on their community. Students must cite at least three credible sources with multiple perspectives on the issue.
2. Instruct students to identify opportunities for practicing community engagement in response to their group's social issue. See "Extension Ideas to Practice Service Learning in the Classroom" (located on the next page) for some examples.
3. Invite each group to share their findings with the class.

LEARNING STANDARDS

ILLINOIS SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS

- **SS.3.H.2.** Explain how the diverse perspectives of people and events develop and shape communities and/or regions.
- **SS.4.H.3.** Explain probable causes and effects of events and developments in Illinois history.
- **SS.3-5.IS.10.** Engage in reflective conversations to draw conclusions on inquiry findings and create action steps that consider multiple viewpoints.
- **SS.6-8.IS.3.LC.** Appropriately cite all the sources that are used.
- **SS.9-12.IS.14.** Take measurable action to effect changes that bring about equity, inclusion and the community and civic good.
- **SS.9-12.H.1.** Evaluate the context of time and place as well as structural factors that influence historical developments.

EXTENSION IDEAS TO PRACTICE SERVICE LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM

Below is a list of recommended activities for teachers to practice community engagement with their students. Each activity will vary in length, ranging from short-term to long-term projects. If applicable, try to allow your students' responses from Step 4 to influence your selection.



HOLIDAY CARD

Write and design holiday cards for a group of people currently facing an injustice or social inequity. Encourage students to be mindful of their messaging and to get as creative as they'd like!



FOOD INSECURITY PROJECT

Find a food pantry or food bank near you and learn what you can do to address food insecurity in your community. Consider hosting a food drive at your school and delivering these goods to a site-specific location.



FUNDRAISER

Host a school or classroom fundraiser to raise money for a specific cause. Some examples include a school play, talent show, holiday caroling, baked goods sale, book sale, holiday party, etc.



CLOTHING DRIVE

Organize a clothing drive and donate items to a local community organization that sponsors unhoused or disadvantaged families.



BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

Research a local beautification project and take a field trip to that location. Some suggestions include cleaning up trash at a park, planting flowers or trees at a community garden, repurposing a vacant space or lot, designing a mural, etc.



STORY TIME HOUR

Share an original or established story with a specific demographic. Invite students to consider the intentionality behind the story and its impact on the intended audience.



WELLNESS KIT

Put together wellness kits for your local emergency housing or women's shelter.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BY ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN, SCHOOL PROGRAMS MANAGER

BEFORE OR AFTER WATCHING

- What holidays do you celebrate? How do you celebrate them? What traditions do you have?
- Describe a time you helped someone or someone helped you. How did it make you feel? How did it make the other person feel? What responsibility do we have to help others?
- Are you the same person you were three years ago? What is one way you or someone you know has ever changed? What causes people to change? What makes it hard for people to change?
- What role does money play in your life? Your family's life? Your neighborhood? Your city?
- Have you ever seen a version of *A Christmas Carol* before? What was it like?

AFTER WATCHING

- What stood out to you? What characters, moments, language, design elements and takeaways are sticking with you?
- Describe the music, choreography and design (costumes, sound, lighting, set, props, etc.). What did they communicate? How did they help tell the story?
- Compare and contrast *A Christmas Carol* at The Goodman to other adaptations of the story you've seen. What was similar? What was different? How did the differences influence how you interpreted the story?
- The Ghost of Christmas Past warns Scrooge to "most of all beware Ignorance." How did Scrooge show ignorance? What are the consequences of ignorance?
- Which characters did you relate to the most? Which characters did you relate to the least? Why?

GLOSSARY

BY ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN,
SCHOOL PROGRAMS MANAGER

APPRENTICED

Trained under a professional to learn a skill or trade.

BAH

Expression of disdain and disagreement.

COUNTINGHOUSE

Office or building used by a business for handling finances.

DEAD AS A DOORNAIL

Expression that means something is completely dead. Doornails were used to secure medieval doors. After being hammered in, their ends were bent, making them impossible to reuse.

DOWRY

The money or goods traditionally given to the groom's family from the bride's family upon marriage.

FARTHING

Smallest unit of currency. Equivalent to 1/4 of a penny or 1/960 of a pound.

FRIVOLITY

Lacking seriousness.

HALF-A-CROWN

Unit of currency. Equivalent to 1/8 of a pound.

HUMBUG

Nonsense or deceiving hoax.

HYPOCRITE

Someone who claims to have certain beliefs but doesn't act according to them.

KING MIDAS

Figure in Greek mythology known for his ability to turn everything he touched into gold.

LEDGER

A book where financial transactions are recorded.

MOURN

To express deep sadness or grief.

PAWNBROKERS

Business that offers loans in exchange for personal items.

POULTERER

Person who sells poultry, such as chickens, ducks, turkeys and geese.

POUND

Unit of currency. 1 pound was equivalent to 20 shillings, 240 pence or 960 farthings. 10 pounds in 1843 London would be worth approximately \$2,000 today.

RECLAMATION

The process of recovering or restoring.

SCUTTLE

Metal pail used for carrying coal.

SHILLING

Unit of currency. 1 shilling was equivalent to 12 pence or 48 farthings.

SURPLUS

Excess amount.

TUPPENCE

Coin worth two pence.

UNDERTAKER

Person responsible for managing funerals.



2026/2027 TEEN STUDIO SERIES AT THE GOODMAN. YOUR THEATER. YOUR WORLD.

Discover your creativity, build new skills and connect with other young artists through The Goodman's Teen Studio—a free series of hands-on theater workshops led by some of Chicago's most exciting theater professionals.

Each workshop explores a different aspect of theater-making, from acting and story-telling to movement, design, playwriting and more. Whether you're already passionate about theater or simply curious to try something new, Teen Studio is a welcoming space to experiment, collaborate and grow alongside peers from across the city!

No experience is necessary—just bring your curiosity.

Join us and discover where your story can take you.

SAVE THE DATES

Saturday, November 14 | 12:00-1:30pm

Saturday, December 12 | 12:00-1:30pm

Saturday, January 9 | 12:00-1:30pm

Saturday, February 13 | 12:00-1:30pm

All workshops are free of charge. Registration is required.



Want to be notified when registration opens?

Email Education@GoodmanTheatre.org.

For more details, visit GoodmanTheatre.org/Education or scan the QR code.



2026/2027 STAGE CHEMISTRY WORKSHOPS. SCIENCE MEETS STAGECRAFT.

Bring your students to The Goodman for an immersive Stage Chemistry workshop!

The Goodman's Stage Chemistry program brings Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) to life through the magic of theater. These hands-on, Next Generation Science Standards-aligned workshops explore how lighting, sound, costumes, scenic design and other technical elements transform the stage.

All workshops take place at The Goodman from 10am-1pm and are available for students in grades 6-12.

Each workshop includes:

- A backstage tour of the theater.
- A Q&A with a special guest highlighting career pathways in theater production.

A hands-on workshop exploring how theater professionals use STEAM principles to bring productions to life.



Interested in scheduling a Stage Chemistry experience for your students? Email Education@GoodmanTheatre.org.

For more details, visit GoodmanTheatre.org/Education or scan the QR code.

2026/2027 SCHOOL MATINEE SERIES



DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA

BY PHANÉSIA PHAREL | DIRECTED BY MELIA BENSUSSEN

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14 | 10:30AM

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20 | 10:30AM

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 | 10:30AM

Detective skills: unverified. Determination: unmatched.

FACT: Maria was last seen at her Quinceañera. FACT: The party ended early due to an unknown emergency. FACT: Maria has not responded to any messages in 19 hours. Now, her three best friends—armed with confidence, questionable clues and zero adult supervision—are on the case, racing against the clock to find out what happened. The pressures of Latine girlhood punctuate this joy ride through the power and pleasure of adolescent friendships—a comic thriller of secrets, sisterhood and solving crime.



JOHN PROCTOR IS THE VILLAIN

BY KIMBERLY BELFLOWER | DIRECTED BY MARTI LYONS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 | 10:30AM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9 | 10:30AM

The kids are not only all right, they're on fire.

Fueled by pop music, optimism and fury, five young women are about to light up some of the darkest secrets of their one-stoplight town. The Chicago premiere of the Tony Award nominated Broadway smash sensation—hailed as “the new era of cool-girl theater” (*BrooklynRail.org*) “igniting its own cultural moment” (*Variety*)—pulses with humor and energy. Heroes, villains and who gets blamed when the hysteria starts are up for debate in this “vital, hilarious, thrilling and urgently necessary” (*The New York Times*) unflinching perspective of a generation staking its claim.



THE XIXTH (THE NINETEENTH)

BY KEMP POWERS | DIRECTED BY CARL COFIELD

TUESDAY, MAY 4 | 10:30AM

TUESDAY, MAY 11 | 10:30AM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5 | 10:30AM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12 | 10:30AM

“Visual pop, fleet pacing, muscular energy, welcome humor” (*San Diego Union Tribune*).

In Mexico City, 1968, courage comes with a price. When two Black American sprinters deliver a protest seen around the world, what followed was more complex—and far more dangerous. With a blend of sharp wit and searing emotion, Academy Award-nominee Kemp Powers explores what it truly costs to speak out when everyone is watching in this gripping Chicago-premiere production.



THIS SUMMER JUST GOT A LOT MORE **DRAMATIC.**

2026 SUMMER TEEN THEATER INTENSIVES

APPLICATIONS OPEN NOVEMBER 16

PLAYBUILD YOUTH INTENSIVE | JUNE 21 – JULY 26, 2027

Bring your story to life on the Goodman stage! In this immersive five-week program, you'll write, rehearse and perform a brand-new piece of theater while learning from some of Chicago's most exciting theater makers.

GoodmanTheatre.org/PlayBuild

MUSICAL THEATER INTENSIVE | JULY 5 – AUGUST 9, 2027

Become a triple threat! In this dynamic five-week program, you'll refine your singing, dancing and musical theater performance skills while discovering the tools and techniques needed for a future on the stage.

GoodmanTheatre.org/MTI



Both programs are FREE and open to 14-18-year-olds in the Chicagoland area and culminates with a showcase performance on The Goodman's stage.

Scan the QR code to learn more about summer opportunities at the Goodman! Questions or concerns? Email summerprograms@goodmantheatre.org.

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