This version of Dickens's famous story about Ebenezer Scrooge comes with a twist: It's Eleanora Scrooge who wakes on Christmas Eve and encounters the ghost of her long-dead business partner, Gladys Marley. It's "A Christmas Carol" with a female lead—an opportunity for an engaging compare-and-contrast lesson with the original text. This is also a great story for studying characterization and motivation.

**Cast of Characters**

- **Narrator 1**
- **Narrator 2**
- **Bob Cratchit**: Scrooge's clerk
- **Ms. Eleanora Scrooge**: A rich and cranky old banker
- **Elizabeth**: Scrooge's cheerful niece
- **Old Lady Marley**: Scrooge's dead business partner
- **Ghost Chorus**: Ghostly sounds made by all the ghosts in unison
- **Ghost 1**: The Ghost of Christmas Past
- **Ghost 2**: The Ghost of Christmas Present
- **Ghost 3**: The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come (nonspeaking part)
- **Tiny Tina Cratchit**: Bob's crippled daughter
- **Mrs. Cratchit**: Bob's wife
- **Fezziwig**: Scrooge's first employer
- **Passerby 1**
- **Passerby 2**
- **Boy**
- **Other nonspeaking parts**: Buddy Lee, Young Scrooge

**Vocabulary**

- niece
- chamber
- dreary
- undigested
- wander
- charity
- massive
- toast
- mourner
- salary
Scene 1: Christmas Eve, London

NARRATOR 1: You wouldn't think Christmas Eve to be a time for ghost stories, but here in the offices of Eleanora Scrooge and her long-dead partner, Gladys Marley, our ghostly tale begins.

NARRATOR 2: Let me say again that Old Lady Marley is dead. This you must understand.

CRATCHIT: Ms. Scrooge, ma'am, might I add some coal to the fire?

SCROOGE: Absolutely not! Coal costs money. Doesn't your coat keep you warm?

CRATCHIT: Not really, ma'am.

SCROOGE: Then I suggest you get a new one.

CRATCHIT: But, ma'am...

SCROOGE: That's enough, Mr. Cratchit! Back to work. There's money to be earned.

NARRATOR 1: Just as she did every Christmas, Scrooge's niece came visiting.

NARRATOR 2: She hoped to spread some cheer.

ELIZABETH: Merry Christmas, Auntie!

SCROOGE: Bah, humbug!

ELIZABETH: Christmas a humbug? You don't mean it!

SCROOGE: I do! What reason have you to be merry? You're not rich!

ELIZABETH: Come, dear Auntie. What reason have you to be so gloomy? You, with all your money? Where is your spirit?

SCROOGE: Bah, humbug! Christmas is nothing but a time of wasting money on things you don't need. If I had my way, every idiot who goes about saying "Merry Christmas" would be boiled in her own pudding.

ELIZABETH: Auntie!

SCROOGE: Niece! You celebrate Christmas your way. Let me celebrate it my way.

ELIZABETH: But you don't celebrate it.

SCROOGE: Let me not celebrate it then. But take my advice, it has done you no good.

ELIZABETH: There are many things that do us good without making us rich. Though Christmas has never put a scrap of gold in my purse, I believe I am all the better for having celebrated it.
CRATCHIT: Yes, yes!
SCROOGE: Any more from you, Mr. Cratchit, and you'll celebrate Christmas by looking for a new job.
CRATCHIT: Yes, ma'am.
ELIZABETH: Don't be angry, Auntie. Have Christmas dinner with us tomorrow.
SCROOGE: Humbug!
ELIZABETH: But why not?
SCROOGE: That's enough! Good day, Niece.
ELIZABETH: So be it. But I shall keep my Christmas spirit till the end. Merry Christmas, Auntie! Merry Christmas, Mr. Cratchit!
CRATCHIT: Happy New Year, Elizabeth!
SCROOGE: Now there's a ridiculous notion: My clerk, with barely enough money to feed his family, and a crippled child too, talking about a happy new year. I must be mad!

Scene 2: Late That Same Evening

GHOST CHORUS: Owwoooooh!
NARRATOR 1: Darkness is cheap.
NARRATOR 2: It was while Scrooge sat by the fireplace in her dark and dreary house that she heard the door fly open...
NARRATOR 1: And the rattling of chains.
SCROOGE: It's humbug still! I won't believe it!
NARRATOR 2: Passing through the heavy door to Scrooge's chamber came a ghost with death-cold eyes.
NARRATOR 1: Its head was wrapped in bandages. It had chains locked around its body.
SCROOGE: Pooh pooh! I'm not a woman to be frightened by shadows.
MARLEY: You don't believe in me?
SCROOGE: I don't! You're just an undigested bit of beef or an underdone potato. You're probably just a little stomach gas.
NARRATOR 2: At this, the spirit raised a frightful cry and shook its chains with such an awful noise that Scrooge dropped to her knees and covered her face.
MARLEY: Owwoooooh!
SCROOGE: Mercy, dreadful spirit! What is it you want with me?

MARLEY: Much! In life I was your partner, Gladys Marley. I am doomed to forever drag this chain and wander through the world. Oh, woe is me!

SCROOGE: But why are you chained?

MARLEY: I drag the chain I made while living. Each link is a kind deed I didn’t do or a favor I left undone. This time of year, I suffer most. Oh, why did I walk through crowds of needy people but not show charity?!

SCROOGE: But you were always such a good businesswoman, Gladys.

NARRATOR 1: Again the ghost raised a cry and shook its chains.

MARLEY: Owwoooooh! Mankind should have been my business. I should have dealt in mercy and kindness! Do you know the weight of the chain you’re making, Eleanora? It was as long as mine seven Christmas Eves ago. Imagine how massive it is now!

SCROOGE: Gladys, what can be done?

MARLEY: Hear me, Scrooge! You have a chance to escape my fate. You will be haunted by three spirits. They are your only hope to change your future. Expect the first when the clock strikes 1.

GHOST CHORUS: Owwoooooh!

Scene 3: One O’Clock, Past Midnight

NARRATOR 1: As the clock struck 1, Scrooge awoke to find an eerie visitor.

GHOST 1: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past. Rise and walk with me.

NARRATOR 2: They passed magically into Scrooge’s past.

GHOST 1: Do you know this place?

SCROOGE: Know it? I held my first job here! Why, look, it’s old Fezziwig. Bless her heart!

NARRATOR 1: Ms. Fezziwig looked at the clock and clapped her hands.

FEZZIWIG: It’s Christmas Eve! Yo, ho, there, young Eleanora! Yo, ho, everyone! No more work tonight. Clear the floor for dancing and singing and celebrating Christmas!
NARRATOR 2: Food was brought in. The music began. Everyone started dancing—including young Scrooge.

GHOST 1: Such a waste of money, all this.

SCROOGE: A waste of money?

GHOST 1: Isn't it?

SCROOGE: Of course not! Look how happy everyone is. Fezziwig was a master at making people happy. She did little things mostly. It was the way she looked at you, or a pat on the back. And this dancing!

GHOST 1: Who are you dancing with?

SCROOGE: Ah, Buddy. It's young Buddy Lee.

GHOST 1: You loved him, but you didn't marry him.

SCROOGE: I first needed to seek my fortune.

GHOST 1: You mean, there was no profit in loving him!

SCROOGE: Spirit, why do you torture me? Show me no more. I don't wish to see it!

Scene 4: Two O’Clock, Past Midnight

GHOST CHORUS: Owwoooo!

GHOST 2: Wake up, lady! Wake up and know me better!

NARRATOR 1: The second spirit was as grand and joyful as the season.

NARRATOR 2: Its eyes were clear and kind, yet they frightened Scrooge.

GHOST 2: I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. I'll bet you've never seen anything like me before!

SCROOGE: Spirit, take me where you will. Let me learn from it.

GHOST 2: Off with us then! Touch my robe!

SCROOGE: Where are we?

GHOST 2: You don't know the house of your own clerk, Bob Cratchit?

SCROOGE: Is this his house? He does pretty well, considering how little I pay him.

GHOST 2: Is that so? Come inside. The family is just now sitting down for Christmas dinner.

TINY TINA: Mother, there never was such a grand goose as this!
CRATCHIT: Splendid, my dear. It's wonderful!

SCROOGE: So excited over a little goose! You'd think it was a prize turkey.

GHOST 2: It's all they can afford! They're poor!

SCROOGE: True, but they're happy. Look how pleased they are with one another—especially that Tiny Tina.

CRATCHIT: A toast! To Ms. Scrooge, the founder of our feast!

MRS. CRATCHIT (angrily): The founder of our feast, indeed! I wish she were here now. I'd give her a piece of my mind to feast upon!

CRATCHIT: My dear! It's Christmas. Let's not be angry.

MRS. CRATCHIT: I'll toast her health because it's Christmas, but that's all. Long life to her! Merry Christmas to that nasty, unfeeling, unkind founder of our feast, Ms. Scrooge.

ALL: Merry Christmas!

TINY TINA: And God bless us, everyone!

SCROOGE: Tiny Tina looks so frail! Tell me, Spirit, will she live?

GHOST 2: I see an empty seat at the table. I see a tiny crutch with no owner.

SCROOGE: Oh, no! Say she will be spared!

GHOST 2: If things remain the same, the child will die.

GHOST CHORUS: Owwoooh!

Scene 5: Three O'Clock, Past Midnight

NARRATOR 1: The third ghost was hidden inside a black robe. It left nothing visible save for one crooked hand.

SCROOGE: You are the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?

NARRATOR 2: The spirit didn't answer. It merely pointed its long, bony finger into a weed-infested churchyard.

SCROOGE: Whose funeral is this? Why is no one here to mourn? Tell me, Spirit, is there anyone in this town who cared for this person?

PASSEBY 1: When did she die?

PASSEBY 2: Last week.

PASSEBY 1: What was the matter with her?
PASSERBY 2: An empty heart, I suppose.
PASSERBY 1: Her money didn't do her much good, did it?
PASSERBY 2: Not a single person here to mourn her!
PASSERBY 1: But think of all the money she saved with such a cheap funeral!
PASSERBY 2: Ha, ha, ha!
NARRATOR 1: The ghost pointed Scrooge to a gravestone.
SCROOGE: Before I look, Spirit, tell me one thing. Can this future be changed?
NARRATOR 2: The Spirit gave no reply. Scrooge trembled. She looked upon the stone and read the words, ELEANORA SCROOGE.
GHOST CHORUS: Ouwowooh!
SCROOGE (sobbing): No, Spirit! Hear me! I am not the person I was! I will honor Christmas in my heart! I will celebrate it all year long. Please tell me I can still erase the name upon this stone!

Scene 6: Christmas Morning

NARRATOR 1: When Scrooge awoke, she was so happy to see daylight, she laughed out loud. For a woman who had been out of practice for so long, it was a wonderful laugh.
NARRATOR 2: She opened her window and called to a boy.
SCROOGE: What day is it, my fine fellow?
BOY: Today? Why, it's Christmas Day!
SCROOGE: I haven't missed it then! Listen, my young fellow. You know the prize turkey hanging in the butcher's window?
BOY: The one that's bigger than me?
SCROOGE: Yes, that one. I'll pay you to go and buy it and have it brought here. If you come back in less than five minutes, I'll pay you double!
BOY: Yes, ma'am! Merry Christmas, ma'am!
SCROOGE: I'll have it delivered to Bob Cratchit's. Then I must join my niece for dinner. Heaven be praised, I haven't missed it!
Scene 7: The Next Day

NARRATOR I: The next morning, Scrooge arrived at the office early. She wanted to catch Bob Cratchit reporting late!

SCROOGE: Mr. Cratchit, you're eighteen and a half minutes late!

CRATCHIT: It's only once a year, ma'am. We were making merry rather long last night. It won't happen again.

SCROOGE: I'll tell you what, Cratchit. I'm not going to stand for this any longer!

NARRATOR 2: Poor Bob Cratchit! He was certain he was about to be fired.

SCROOGE: And therefore, Mr. Cratchit... I'm doubling your salary!

NARRATOR 1: Cratchit was stunned!

SCROOGE: Merry Christmas, Bob! The merriest Christmas ever! And your salary is just a start. I'll help your struggling family any way I can. And Tina, whatever she needs, I'll buy it. Now, let's warm up this place. Buy some more coal, Bob Cratchit. Before you dot another i, buy more coal.

NARRATOR 2: Scrooge was better than her word. She became as good a person and as good a friend as the city knew.

NARRATOR 1: It was always said, if anyone knew how to celebrate Christmas, it was Eleanora Scrooge.

NARRATOR 2: May that be said of all of us.

TINY TINA: And God bless us, everyone!

MATILDA: I returned another exactly like it. It has taken us ten years to pay for it. You can understand how hard it's been for us to live in poverty for so long, but it is finally finished, and I am decently content.

FORESTIER: You say you bought a necklace to replace mine? My poor Matilda. Had you only come to me. My diamonds were false. They weren't worth but five hundred francs.

FLAUBERT (after a pause): Boy, that is a hard lesson.

MAUPASSANT: Indeed, Flaubert. Indeed. A lesson for all of us.
Literary Elements/Story Discussion

1. What is the title of the story?

2. Who is the author?

3. Setting: When and where does the story happen?

4. Main character: Who is the story about?

5. Conflict: What is the main character's problem?

6. Resolution: How does the main character fix the problem?

7. Theme: What is the universal idea behind the story?

8. Moral: What lesson are we supposed to learn from the story?

9. Realism: Is the story realistic or unrealistic? What evidence is there?

10. Plot: Retell or summarize the main events of the story in just a few sentences.
# Play Performance Scoring Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Grade Level:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play:</td>
<td>Part:</td>
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## Fluency

### Exceeds expectations
- * Reads without error
- * Intonation and expression consistently appropriate to character

### Meets expectations
- * Reads with minimal errors
- * Some intonation and expressiveness

### Does not yet meet expectations
- * Frequency or nature of errors suggests need for more practice
- * Frequent stumbles, flat intonation, or lack of expression

## Delivery

### Exceeds expectations
- * Consistently appropriate volume
- * Pacing as if speaking naturally

### Meets expectations
- * Appropriately loud volume
- * Consistent pacing

### Does not yet meet expectations
- * Too quiet
- * Choppv or rushed pacing

## Stage Presence

### Exceeds expectations
- * Projects toward audience
- * Memorizes lines
- * Acts and puts character in voice, speaks with accent, etc.
- * Recognizes cues without prompting
- * Demonstrates leadership when practicing/performing
- * May incorporate props where appropriate

### Meets expectations
- * Consistently faces audience
- * Holds script away from face
- * Attempts to act with voice characterization, etc.
- * Follows along, recognizes cues
- * Demonstrates cooperation when practicing

### Does not yet meet expectations
- * Tends to turn back to audience
- * Tends to speak into script
- * Does not add character—just reads lines
- * Loses place, misses cues
- * Tends to be unprepared or unfocused

## Comprehension

### Exceeds expectations
- * Able to identify and elaborate on literary elements and performance objectives during discussion and assessment activities

### Meets expectations
- * Able to identify most literary elements and performance objectives during assessment activities
- * Participates in discussions

### Does not yet meet expectations
- * Does not participate in discussions
- * Unable to identify most literary elements or performance objectives
Discussion Questions Answer Key

*A Christmas Carol* (page 30)

Page 31
*Ghost and dead* appear twice within the first two lines, establishing a dark mood.

Page 32 (top)
Scrooge's only goal seems to be that of accumulating money. Although apparently quite rich, she lives like a miser. Elizabeth, while apparently not rich, has a healthy, balanced life view. She is focused on relationships—even with nasty old Scrooge!

Page 32 (bottom)
The line shows how Scrooge, being miserly, has made her house so dark and scary that the appearance of ghosts makes sense. Would the story seem as plausible if Scrooge lived in a warm, bright, and cheerful place?

Page 33
Marley says each link in the chain represents a kind deed left undone, therefore the chain represents all the nastiness or sins of its owner. Scrooge's chain is apparently much longer and heavier than Marley's.

Page 34 (top)
The ghost is using something like reverse psychology to get Scrooge to admit she once enjoyed Christmas, which apparently she did before becoming consumed by money.

Page 34 (bottom)
Answers will vary. Isn't it considered prudent today for young women to complete their education and establish their careers before marrying? Had Scrooge married, would she have ultimately sacrificed the marriage in pursuit of wealth? Or would she have led a life more like that of Mrs. Cratchit?

Page 35 (top)
The ghost is reminiscent of Santa Claus.

Page 35 (bottom)
The fact that Scrooge cares what happens to Tiny Tina shows there is still some good in her.

Page 36
It could be realistic because Scrooge falls asleep and wakes in her own house, so it is possible she dreamt all the ghostly events. Note that everything that happens to everyone else is entirely realistic. Only Scrooge "sees" the ghosts.

Page 37
Scrooge has learned to value people and human relationships instead of just money. She has become compassionate. Whether she changed because she felt compassion for the Cratchits or because she feared dying alone is open to interpretation.