

## A Christmas Carol- Social Justice

Pre-Show Activity, Grades 9-12 (with adjustments, Grades 6-8)

### Objectives

- Students will explore how literature and drama can be a catalyst for social change.
- Students will analyze Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol as a case study of social justice themes.
- Students will engage in reflection, group discussion, and personal response activities to deepen understanding.

*NOTE: This activity has been aligned with TEKS and [Universal Design for Learning](#). TEKS can be found at the end of this document.*

### Materials Needed

- Summary of A Christmas Carol
- Social Justice Discussion Prompts
- Optional: Teacher-Led Discussion Prompts (attached)
- Writing materials or digital devices for responses

### Introduction

- Provide students with a brief background on Charles Dickens and the social context of A Christmas Carol.
- Emphasize Dickens' use of storytelling to highlight social problems during the Industrial Revolution, focusing on poverty and kindness.

### Background Reflection

- Read the following summary:  
"Charles Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol to highlight social problems caused by the Industrial Revolution, especially the struggles of poor and vulnerable people. Through storytelling, he encouraged people to think about kindness, responsibility, and change."
- Answer these questions:
  - What social problems did Dickens want to address in his story?
  - Why do you think stories and books can be powerful tools for social change?

*Notes for UDL alignment: To provide multiple ways of expressing understanding, consider letting students act or physicalize their responses. You can also utilize Think-Pair-Share to provide additional solo and partner processing time.*

### Group Discussion Preparation

- In small groups, have students discuss the following questions. Encourage them to write down key ideas from their conversation.

- What are some social justice issues that exist today?
- How might a story or a book today raise awareness about these issues?
- Can you think of any modern authors, movies, or songs that have inspired social change? What makes them effective?

## Class Discussion

- After students have discussed in their small groups, facilitate a class-wide conversation addressing the questions.
- Some other questions to consider are:
  - How can literature and art influence people's hearts and minds?
  - What responsibilities do writers and artists have when addressing social issues?
  - How can you use your own voice to make a difference?

## Individual Reflection

- Have students reflect individually and respond to the following questions. You can have them answer aloud or on paper.
  - If you were to write a story to inspire social justice today, what issue would you focus on and why?
  - What message would you want your story to share?
  - Besides writing, what other ways can you help bring attention to social justice causes?

*Notes for UDL alignment: Encourage students to share in pairs, small groups, or through written reflection to offer varied ways of participating.*

## TEKS

### Theatre- High School Levels I-IV

4(A) relate, analyze, and evaluate historical and cultural influences on theatre (Level I- 4(B))

5 (B) recognize, analyze, and defend theatre as an art form and evaluate self as a creative being;

Level II-IV 4 (B) analyze ways in which theatre, television, and film play a role in our daily lives and influence our values and behaviors

### English Language Arts and Reading, English I-IV

4 (E) make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society;

8 (A) analyze and evaluate the author's purpose, audience, and message within a text;

English I & II- 1 (A) engage in meaningful and respectful discourse by listening actively, responding appropriately, and adjusting communication to audiences and purposes



## Teacher-Led Discussion Prompts

If you want to lead your class in a discussion without the small groups, or if you just want to more specifically guide the conversation, here are some more tailored prompts to facilitate that.

### 1. Understanding Impact:

- a. How did Charles Dickens use *A Christmas Carol* to influence people's attitudes about poverty and kindness?
- b. Why might a story be more effective than a report or essay at reaching a wide audience?

### 2. Connecting Past and Present:

- a. What social justice issues from Dickens' time still exist today, and how have they changed?
- b. Can you think of modern examples where books, movies, or music have sparked social awareness or action?

### 3. Role of the Artist/Writer:

- a. What responsibilities do writers and artists have when they address social problems?
- b. Should art always have a message or purpose, or can it just be for entertainment?

### 4. Personal Reflection and Action:

- a. How can you use your own talents or interests to raise awareness about issues you care about?
- b. What are some challenges people might face when trying to create social change through art or writing?

### 5. Empathy and Understanding:

- a. How does reading stories about others' experiences help build empathy?
- b. Why is empathy important for creating a fairer society?

### 6. Critical Thinking:

- a. How can we critically evaluate whether a piece of art or literature is effectively promoting social justice?
- b. What should we do if we disagree with the message or methods used by an artist?