

Read the following extract from Chapter 3 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, the Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge the Cratchit family's Christmas celebrations.

Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour.

5 Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing. At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted, and

10 considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel-full of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one; and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass. Two tumblers, and a custard-cup without a handle.

15 These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed: "A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!" Which all the family re-echoed.

20 "God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all. He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

Starting with this extract, explore how Dickens uses the Cratchit family to show the struggles of the poor.

Write about:

- how Dickens presents the Cratchit family in this extract
- how Dickens uses the Cratchit family to show the struggles of the poor in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Indicative content:

Examiners are encouraged to reward any valid interpretations. Answers might, however, include some of the following:

AO1

- The way the Cratchits make the best of their situation and show 'Christmas spirit'
- Tiny Tim and Bob's love for him
- the way that Scrooge treats Bob and Bob's character
- the way that Scrooge's treatment of the Cratchits at the end of the novel demonstrates his changed character.
- links between the Cratchits and the poorer working classes and their plight.

AO2

- The use of irony/narrative voice in showing the Cratchits' poverty
- the use of contrast (tumblers vs goblets)
- the focus on Bob and Tim and his 'withered' hand
- use of narrative voice and dialogue to present the Cratchits to the reader
- Mrs Cratchit's speech re Scrooge

AO3

- Issues in Victorian society which relate to the Cratchits, eg the conditions for the poor and the working class; wealth inequality; the workhouse and the poor law
- childhood illness and Victorian medicine.

Mark	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at a mark
Level 6 <i>Convincing, critical analysis and exploration</i> 26–30 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical, exploratory, conceptualised response to task and whole text • Judicious use of precise references to support interpretation(s) 	<p>At the top of the level, a candidate's response is likely to be a critical, exploratory, well-structured argument. It takes a conceptualised approach to the full task supported by a range of judicious references. There will be a fine-grained and insightful analysis of language and form and structure supported by judicious use of subject terminology. Convincing exploration of one or more ideas/perspectives/contextual factors/interpretations.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a candidate will have Level 5 and be starting to demonstrate elements of exploratory thought and/or analysis of writer's methods and /or contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of writer's methods with subject terminology used judiciously • Exploration of effects of writer's methods on reader 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by specific, detailed links between context/text/task 	
Level 5 <i>Thoughtful, developed consideration</i> 21–25 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughtful, developed response to task and whole text • Apt references integrated into interpretation(s) 	<p>At the top of the level, a candidate's response is likely to be thoughtful, detailed and developed. It takes a considered approach to the full task with references integrated into interpretation; there will be a detailed examination of the effects of language and/or structure and/or form supported by apt use of subject terminology. Examination of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors, possibly including alternative interpretations/deeper meanings.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a candidate will have Level 4 and be starting to demonstrate elements of thoughtful consideration and/or examination of writer's methods and/or contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of writer's methods with subject terminology used effectively to support consideration of methods • Examination of effects of writer's methods on reader 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughtful consideration of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by examination of detailed links between context/text/task 	
Level 4 <i>Clear understanding</i> 16–20 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, explained response to task and whole text • Effective use of references to support explanation 	<p>At the top of the level, a candidate's response is likely to be clear, sustained and consistent. It takes a focused response to the full task which demonstrates clear understanding. It uses a range of references effectively to illustrate and justify explanation; there will be clear explanation of the effects of a range of writer's methods supported by appropriate use of subject terminology. Clear understanding of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a candidate will have Level 3 and be starting to demonstrate elements of understanding and/or explanation of writer's methods and/or contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear explanation of writer's methods with appropriate use of relevant subject terminology • Understanding of effects of writer's methods on reader 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear understanding of ideas/perspectives/ contextual factors shown by specific links between context/text/task 	
Level 3 <i>Explained, structured comments</i> 11–15 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some explained response to task and whole text • References used to support a range of relevant comments 	<p>At the top of the level, a candidate's response is likely to be explanatory in parts. It focuses on the full task with a range of points exemplified by relevant references from the text; there will be identification of effects of a range of writer's methods supported by some relevant terminology. Explanation of some relevant contextual factors.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a candidate will have Level 2 and be starting to explain and/or make relevant comments on writer's methods and/or contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explained/relevant comments on writer's methods with some relevant use of subject terminology • Identification of effects of writer's methods on reader 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some understanding of implicit ideas/ perspectives/contextual factors shown by links between context/text/task 	

Level 2 <i>Supported, relevant comments</i> 6–10 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported response to task and text Comments on references 	<p>At the top of the level, a candidate's response is likely to be relevant and supported by some explanation. It will include some focus on the task with relevant comments and some supporting references from the text. There will be identification of effects of deliberate choices made by writer with some reference to subject terminology. Awareness of some contextual factors.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a candidate's response will have Level 1 and be starting to focus on the task and/or starting to show awareness of the writer making choices and/or awareness of contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of writers' methods Some reference to subject terminology 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some awareness of implicit ideas/contextual factors 	
Level 1 <i>Simple, explicit comments</i> 1–5 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple comments relevant to task and text Reference to relevant details 	<p>At the top of the level, a candidate's response is likely to be narrative and/or descriptive in approach. It may include awareness of the task and provide appropriate reference to text, there will be simple identification of method with possible reference to subject terminology. Simple comments/responses to context, usually explicit.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a candidate's response will show some familiarity with the text.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of writer making deliberate choices Possible reference to subject terminology 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple comment on explicit ideas/contextual factors 	
0 marks	Nothing worthy of credit/nothing written		

Response 1

Firstly in this extract Dickens presents the cratchit family as cheerful, the quote "Oh, a wonderful pudding" this shows that even though they are poor they are still cheerful, Dickens then presents the family as happy and blessed "A merry christmas to us all, my dears, god bless us" this shows that the family wish to be well in the future.

Secondly in this extract Dickens presents the cratchit family as down, the quote "Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him", this shows that even though they have been cheerful throughout this extract the mood set changed from good to bad fast, the thoughts going through the cratchits minds at this time must have been horrific for them, knowing that one christmas Tiny Tim may not be there to celerbrate with them, but for the time being they have to be cheerful for Tiny Tim to show how much love they have for him.

Firstly, at the start of the novel Dickens uses the Cratchit family to show the struggles of the poor throughout the whole novel, Bob cratchit the father of the cratchit family is a lower class man who's trying his hardest to earn money for his family to pay bills/taxes so they don't have to go into a work house, this shows the struggles of the poor because if they don't pay taxes they have to go into a work house, a work so hard.

Secondly, in the middle of the novel Dickens uses the cratchit family to show the struggles of the poor throughout the whole novel, a member of the upper class starts seeing these visions of the cratchit family about how things will turn out if he doesn't change his actions he sees a member of the cratchit family die in the things yet to come also he sees himself die.

Finally, at the end of the novel Dickens uses the cratchit family to show the struggles of the poor throughout the whole novel. At the end of the novel Tiny Tim lives and Scrooge changes for the good, the cratchit family are still as cheerful as they were at the start of the novel but even happier.

[COMMENT] [MARK]

Response 2

Dickens presents the Cratchit family in the extract as poor, Tiny Tim is not well and can't afford a doctor because they have not much money Tiny Tim says "God bless us every one". This shows he is happy and glad he can enjoy christmas.

Dickens uses the cratchit family as poor in the whole novel because they are spending time together at christmas. Bob cratchit wishes all his family by saying, "A Merry Christmas to us, all, my dears. God bless us." This suggests they are full of joy and happiness.

[COMMENT] [MARK]

Response 3

In this extract we see how the Cratchit family are happy despite their poverty. The novella was published in 1843, which was in the middle of the industrial revolution, so many people were moving into cities, leading them to become overcrowded and therefore poverty-stricken. This poverty is evident there in the quote "the family display of glass", which we then learn consists of "two tumblers" and a "custard-cup without a handle". The word "display" shows just how little they own, as they seem proud to showcase these small, dilapidated objects off, as this is all they have. However, they seem content as such trivial matters don't change how they feel towards each other. Dickens compares the cups to "golden goblets", which to me suggests that the Cratchits feel enriched simply by each others' company, which is worth more to them than anything materialistic.

Earlier in the same scene, we learn just how vibrant the scene is among this family when Dickens personifies even the potatoes, saying they were “knocking” to get out of their pan, as if the joyous atmosphere was so desirable to be amongst that even inanimate objects wanted to be part of the festivities. In the extract we are told that the chestnuts cracked “noisily”, which conveys the same idea, building a feeling of community despite the poverty in the scene.

The Ghost of Christmas Present first takes Scrooge to see the Cratchits' Christmas, which makes him realise the importance of family at this time, then continues this theme of company by showing him other scenes brought to life by Christmas spirit. For example, when the ghost takes him to a lighthouse, the poor workers there are described as having “horny hands”. This suggests that they have struggled through great hardships and have suffered more in their lives than Scrooge ever would, and yet their show of unison when they all sing together at Christmas let them disregard their struggles for a time. By comparing the Cratchits and these workers, Dickens shows how the poor could overcome their lack of materialistic value and settle for things of emotional value.

One member of the Cratchit family who strongly highlights the struggles of the poor is Tiny Tim. In this extract, his hand is described as a “withered little hand”, suggesting it has prematurely withered like a flower with no light. As the word “withered” has connotations of a flower, to me, this could perhaps be seen as a metaphor for how something beautiful has been hindered and killed by the tight-fistedness of the rich in society, which is something that Dickens was strongly trying to convey in this novella. Light is often a symbol of hope, so this flower could be shrivelled due to a lack of light, which is the lack of generosity from the upper classes. Dickens may have intended “withered little” as a juxtaposition, as we would normally associate “withered” with old age and “little” with childhood. This contrast highlights how wrong it is that an innocent child should be so shunned by society due to his wealth and status, and this demonstrates Dickens' frustration over the inequality.

Dickens uses a similar adjective to describe the hands of the children Ignorance and Want. The word “shrivelled” is used here, which compares these children, who are also victims of the struggles of poverty, to Tiny Tim. It creates a similar image of premature decay to highlight the neglect of lower classes in society. The boy in this scene represents ignorance, and the Ghost of Christmas Present tells Scrooge to “most of all beware the boy”. This strongly conveys Dickens' message about poverty and the poor, as he is trying to tell society that ignoring the struggles and problems of the poor will be their downfall.

This is demonstrated in stave 4 when Tiny Tim dies, and the Cratchits say that when Bob had Tiny Tim on his shoulders he walked “very fast indeed”. When we have a weight on our shoulders, the phrase normally implies a burden and a worry, however here I think that Tiny Tim represents the burden that the rich think the poor impose upon society. Here, Dickens could be saying that if we only realised the potential of the poor, they may actually prove helpful and contribute to society, however they are seen only as a dead weight on the shoulders of society due to the ignorance of the rich.

[COMMENT] [MARK]

Response 4

Dickens presents that the family is really happy, together, love and how nice is to each other, also Dickens use language devices when he said “that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs.” Also Dickens use short sentence when he said “Cratchit since their marriage” this shows that how the family love each other. However Dickens use repetition when he said “she had had her.” Everybody had something to say about it, but “nobody said or thought it was at all small pudding for a large family” this shows that they are forgiven also Dickens used explanation to show that how this family forgive, however this shows they all have some problem they don't have money but they want to be happy at this day, they don't want to make each other upset because they love their family. “The hearth swept and the fire made up” at this point Dickens given information to reader. Also Dickens represent that the family having a meal together when he said Jug being tasted and considered perfect apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel full of chestnuts on the fire.” Also Dickens shows that how warm is relationship between this family when he talked about “Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle. Meaning half a one.” Also this shows that the Dickens used explanation.

At this point Dickens wanted to show this family is poor when he talk about “as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily “also at this point Dickens used language device which is simile when he used as. also Dickens represents that the Bob family is religious and believe God, and also showing respect of family when Bob said “A merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!” “God bless us ever one” said Tiny Tim, the last of all.” Dickens shows the reader respect of family. At last part of this extract Dickens highlighting that how Bob love his son and worry about Tiny Tim because Tiny Tim will die, also the point show to Scrooge that if he help to a poor family may he save a life of a person or child.

The whole play of Christmas carol is about the Scrooge. Scrooge is a rich person and don't like Christmas and don't like poor people, so four ghosts come in the whole play to change Scrooge. The first ghost was Marley, Marley was same as Scrooge he died and he come and showed Scrooge how Scrooge going to be when he died if he don't change his way. The second ghost was the ghost of past he showed Scrooge back of his life when he were in school and showed him that he was alone and no friendly person. The next ghost was the ghost of Christmas presents and he showed the Scrooge how people is happy and enjoy the Christmas, and he took Scrooge to his cousins party and he was laughing and had jokes about Scrooge. However at last point he show Scrooge two really poor boy and girl to understanding Scrooge if he not help to poor people they become a bad people and may attack him. The ghost also shown him that the Tiny Tim will die because he get job and they have to money to do something for Tiny Tim. The last ghost called Spirit (illegible) this ghost come to show Scrooge future, and showed him he will die, but Scrooge promised him that he will change. At last part of whole play Scrooge been change completely and became a nice person.

[COMMENT] [MARK]

Response 5

Dickens present the Cratchit family as a family who appreciate everything no matter how big it is or how small it is this is shown when Dickens says "But nobody said or thought it was a small pudding..." this shows that they are happy that they get to eat on Christmas. Also he presents the Cratchits as a loving family because when Tiny Tim sat very close to his father "Bob Cratchit held his withered little hand" like he never wanted to let go and he is glad that he is with them on Christmas. Dickens use the Cratchit family to show the struggles of the poor in the novel because the Cratchits are a family who are poor and Dickens use them because Dickens was in the same situation when he was a young boy he was put in prison because of his father's debt that he didn't pay so you could say that the Cratchits are a mouth piece to Dickens because he has been through what they have. Also he use them because they have a son called Tiny Tim who is disabled and they don't have enough money to pay for the treatment he needs but when the Ghost of Christmas Present comes sees Scrooge he shows him the Cratchits celebrating Christmas and Scrooge ask if Tiny Tim will be alive and the ghost says "I see a wooden crutch with no owner" so this suggest that Tiny Tim has died the only way to prevent this is if Scrooge changes his ways but later in the play the ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge want and ignorance and throughout the rest of the play you don't hear about them so you don't know what has happened to them. Also the Ghost mimics Scrooge when he say is he ok the ghost repeats "Are there no prisons are there no work house..." Scrooge is shocked and in this part of the novel it shows the start of Scrooge's transformation from a villain who nobody likes to a nice person. At the end of the play it shows a full transformation because Scrooge wakes up and the first thing he does is gives a poor child money to buy him the biggest turkey and he gives Bob Cratchit a raise in money when he comes into work and at the end of the play Scrooge becomes a second father to Tiny Tim and Tiny Tim is alive because Scrooge changed his ways and give the Cratchits money so they could afford Tiny Tim's treatment.

[COMMENT] [MARK]