**Example Christmas Carol – Mood & Atmosphere in The Cratchit household**

The extract introduces us to the Cratchit family’s house and shows a sombre, sad mood and atmosphere. The Ghost of the Present has shown life without Tiny Tim, which is clearly recent and traumatic “Quiet. Very quiet.” Is repeated and uses short to the point questions meaning our sympathy is piqued as this juxtaposes the earlier revelry and joy as the family sat round the fire sharing a “mug” and joyfully celebrate the day together. The contrast here is stark and Tiny Tim’s death, although metaphorical, as it is during one of the ghostly visions is a dreadful event. Dickens may be symbolising the state of medical affairs at the time. The current ‘Welfare State’ system was not in place meaning poverty restricted access to health care for people like the Cratchit family and childhood mortality rates, as a result were very high. Here the mood and atmosphere is apt as it would no longer be appropriate to be jolly and happy and this event somehow jars when reflecting on the toast Bob had made “to the founder of the feast”, which is ironic as the feast was meagre and this continuous lack of food may have contributed to malnourishment in Tiny Tim making his death more likely.

As we proceed through the extract we see the mood and atmosphere continue as unhappy and flat. Mrs Cratchit is heard exclaiming “Ah, poor Tiny Tim!”, so even though she is suffering and feeling eye strain from the “weak by candle –light”, lack of light, her thoughts are still on Tiny Tim. This event may be a metaphor for the light of their life (Tiny Tim) being taken away. Death is a theme that creates a terrible effect of horror throughout the book. We feel horrified, but pleased as the mood of terror is juxtaposed with the recognition by Scrooge, in the scene with the Ghost of the Future that he needs to start listening. The ghost reveals to Scrooge that he will die, have worldly goods stolen from him and no-one will mourn for him. The effect of this death is pivotal in changing the mood and atmosphere of the whole book. The Grim Reaper presentation of the ghost is like an epiphany to Scrooge. Dickens may have presented the three ghosts as a candle to light the way (Past); a Father Christmas figure to spread joy and cheer (Present); and as a Grim Reaper to represent death and link to religion, as they could be symbolic of the Holy Trinity, which his audience may have seen as a warning to amend their ways and to adhere to Christianity.

Explore the extract above and highlight/underline and annotate with the number:

* 1 – Links to question (mood and atmosphere)
* 2 – Links to language and structure terminology
* 3 – quotes from extract
* 4 – analyses the meaning of the quote
* 5 – understands an overview of what is happening in the extract
* 6 – gives a whole text point
* 7 – quotes from the whole text point of view
* 8 – Explores context
* 9 – links context to the analysis
* 10 – Shows a clear knowledge of the NOVEL

What do you think is good?

What could be improved?

**OTHER FEEDBACK**

Make sure you explain what is happening in the extract – be specific e.g. “At this point we understand the sadness is due to Tiny Tim’s death, which is information that Dickens has withheld here. Perhaps, he withholds this to create a stronger effect of sorrow for the Cratchit family, as we are shown how upset they are and have to work out why.”

Don’t say *play* for A Christmas Carol it is a novel or novella

Link to the whole text – “In another stave, stave 2…”

Link to the context “This links contextually as…”

If you can’t remember a quote for the whole text give a specific moment in the novel where something happens – don’t just say “they are joyful and excitable earlier in the text” (this is too vague). Instead say “When we see them at the Christmas table sitting down to their meagre meal, they are joyful and excitable, also importantly they are all together celebrating Christmas as a family.”

When you link to context try to remember to explain how it is relevant to that part of the novel or that part of the extract e.g. “Tiny Tim’s death highlights the poor medical provision, because…”

Identify language and structure terminology and embed it in your answer “the **simile** “as still as statues” is a **juxtaposition** of how the young Cratchit children were presented…”

Keep an eye on timing