



A CHRISTMAS CAROL WRITING CONTEST GUIDELINES

Enter the 34th Annual
Great Lakes Theater
A Christmas Carol Writing Contest!

Your school will receive FREE TICKETS and transportation assistance to see Great Lakes Theater's annual holiday production of Charles Dickens' classic play *A Christmas Carol*.

Only CMSD students in grade levels **SIX, SEVEN, and EIGHT** are eligible.

SEE INSIDE FOR A WRITING WORKSHOP OFFER!

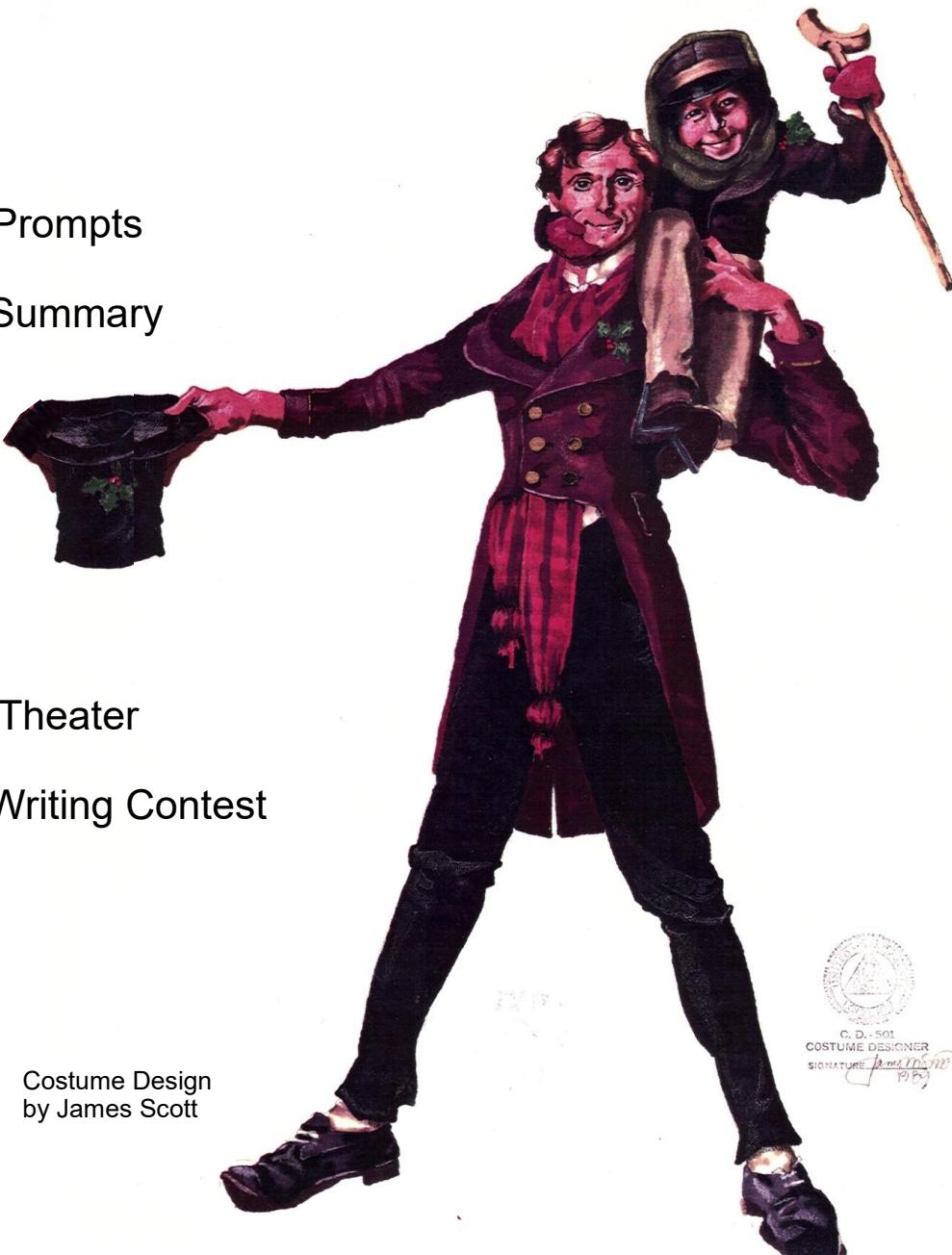
Generous Support Provided By:



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Costume Design
by James Scott



C. D. - 501
COSTUME DESIGNER
SIGNATURE *James Scott*
1983



A Special Offer to CMSD Teachers for the 34th Annual Great Lakes Theater “A Christmas Carol” Writing Contest

Every year since 1989, Great Lakes Theater has partnered with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to produce the annual “A Christmas Carol Writing Contest.”

In that time, there have been over two hundred students writers of Grand Prize-Winning contest entries, inspired by the universal themes in Charles Dickens’ timeless classic — and more than 43,000 CMSD middle school students have attended a special matinee performance of Great Lakes Theater’s production of “A Christmas Carol” in the Mimi Ohio Theatre.

Regretfully, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for the past two seasons we were unable to provide these matinee performances to your students. **However, in 2022 we are committed to resuming this important tradition, and this guidebook includes instructions for how to qualify for free tickets for your students to attend “A Christmas Carol” this holiday season!**

And this year GLT is offering a free, one-hour writing workshop to inspire your students' motivation in this program. David Hansen, GLT Education Outreach Associate, will come to your school to provide a guided creativity workshop for your students. If you are interested, please reach out to David at dhansen@greatlakestheater.org as soon as possible to make your reservation. Opportunity is limited!

Sponsoring this contest is one of our great joys of the holiday season and an important legacy of this production. We look forward to receiving and reading your students’ written entries for this important, language-based contest!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hansen".

David Hansen
Education Outreach Associate
dhansen@greatlakestheater.org



A CHRISTMAS CAROL WRITING CONTEST



David Hansen with the 2019 CMSD Grand Prize Winners

Launched in 1989, our annual *A Christmas Carol* Writing Contest is a literacy program open to all Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) students in grade six, seven and eight. Every year, students participate by writing original stories, songs and poems inspired by the timeless themes in Dickens' classic tale. Almost 2,000 students from over 50 CMSD schools submit entries to the contest each season!

Each CMSD school that participates will receive free student matinee tickets and transportation assistance to see Great Lakes Theater's annual holiday production of Charles Dickens' classic play *A Christmas Carol*.



Great Lakes Theater's production of *A Christmas Carol* is performed in the Mimi Ohio Theatre at Playhouse Square.

KIND OF ACTIVITY	KIND OF LEARNING	STANDARDS
Creative Writing Exercises	Communicating in writing Synthesizing and applying knowledge Critical thinking Reasoning	-English-Language Arts Standards-College and Career Readiness-Anchor Standards for Reading CCSS ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.7-8 (Integration of Knowledge and Ideas) -English-Language Arts Standards-College and Career Readiness-Anchor Standards for Writing CCSS ELA-Literacy CCRA W.1-6 (Text Types and Purposes and Production and Distribution of Writing) -Ohio Drama/Theatre Standards: Responding/Reflecting (RE)

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

- 1. WRITE!** Have your students write original stories, poems or lyrics inspired by Charles Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol*. Read the book or see a film version!
- 2. ENTER!** Choose ONE winning entry *per grade level* that will represent your school, to compete in the District-wide contest. ***We cannot accept more than ONE ENTRY PER GRADE LEVEL from any school.***
- 3. WIN!** Email each grade-level winning entry, *along with the cover sheet on page 20 of this booklet*, to David Hansen, Great Lakes Theater Education Outreach Associate (dhansen@greatlakestheater.org) by the contest deadline: **Friday, October 28, 2022 at 12:00 pm**. *Winning entries may also be sent via USPS, but they must arrive no later than the contest deadline.*
- 4. ATTEND!** Great Lakes Theater will then judge all entries, and notify you of the number of tickets your school will receive, and which date you will be attending the play.

PLEASE NOTE: An allotment of tickets will be offered to each participating school. Great Lakes Theater reserves the right to determine how many tickets each school receives.

A FEW DETAILS...

- Each school may select a maximum of **ONE (1) WINNER PER GRADE LEVEL for grades 6, 7, and 8 only**. Some schools may choose to select a grade level winner for just one of the three eligible grades, other schools may decide to submit one winner for all three eligible grades. This is entirely up to your school. **However, we cannot accept more than ONE ENTRY PER GRADE LEVEL from any individual school.**
- Each school's English Language Arts department should develop its own system for nurturing the students' writing and selecting the grade level winner. This guide includes discussion questions, classroom activities and suggested writing prompts designed in alignment with Scope/Sequence objectives.
- **Only one school winner per grade level** should be submitted to Great Lakes Theater, and only for the eligible grades of sixth, seventh, and eighth. Each entry should be the work of one student, collaboratively written entries will not be considered.
- ELA departments **MUST include the cover sheet** provided on page 20 with each grade level winner (if you teach more than one grade level, please remember to submit a copy of this cover sheet for *each* entry you submit.)
- Great Lakes Theater will review the school-winning entries and will select two Grand Prize-Winning entries for each eligible grade.

AWARDS

School Award: Two Special Matinees Performance of *A Christmas Carol*

TWO special Cleveland Metropolitan School District matinee performances of Great Lakes' production of *A Christmas Carol* will be presented on **Tuesday, November 22, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. – and – Tuesday, November 29, 2022 at 11:00 a.m.**

Your school will be assigned ONE of the two performance dates by the end of the second week of November and be notified via email confirmation. The play will be performed in the Mimi Ohio Theatre at Playhouse Square. School winners will be recognized onstage immediately following the performances. The program will conclude about 1:30 p.m.

Each CMSD school that submits a school-winning entry will receive free tickets and transportation assistance to help pay for some of the cost of a bus (or buses) to attend EITHER student matinee (but not both).

If you know in advance that your school is unable to attend one of those dates but can attend the other, please contact Education Outreach Associate, David Hansen immediately (216-453-4444). The exact number of tickets to be received will depend upon the total number of entries submitted District-wide. Schools must submit a school-winning entry in order to receive tickets. Transportation will be coordinated with each individual school shortly after the contest deadline on **Friday, October 28, 2022**.

STUDENT AWARDS

- Each student writing a school-winning essay will receive an exclusive contest winners **T-shirt from GLT**.
- School winners will be **recognized before their peers** at the *A Christmas Carol* matinee performance on stage after the play.
- Before Thanksgiving, GLT will announce **TWO grand prize winning essays PER GRADE** for grades six, seven and eight, for a total of **SIX Grand Prize-Winners**.

GRAND PRIZE STUDENT AWARDS

Grand Prize-Winning students will receive **free tickets** with their parents or guardians (**limit 4**) and teacher plus one to the **Opening Night Performance of A Christmas Carol** on the evening of **Friday, November 25, 2022**, which includes an invitation to the Opening Night cast party, immediately following the performance.

Grand Prize-Winning students will also receive a **fine hardcover edition** of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, a **gift card**, and a **plaque** engraved with each award-winning writer's name.



GUIDELINES

→ This contest is open to sixth, seventh and eighth grade Cleveland Metropolitan School District students.

→ Entries may take the form of a short story, narrative essay, poem, play script or movie screenplay, blog entry, news article, dialogue, song lyrics or any other genre chosen by the student.

→ The entry must be written legibly in ink or typed, must be double-spaced, and include a cover sheet (see page 20 of this packet) with the student's full name, school, grade level and teacher's name and email address. Illegible entries will not be considered.

→ Criteria for selecting winning entries:

- *Winning entries will convey a sense of completeness or wholeness through both the information they reveal and the structure used.*
- *The writing will be clearly focused on the topic and it will be arranged effectively.*
- *The writing will contain ample, rich supporting details, images, ideas or examples.*
- *Vocabulary, both in breadth and precision, will be chosen carefully to achieve the writer's purpose.*
- *Misspellings will be rare, even in sophisticated and mature vocabulary.*
- *Sentences will be complete except where fragments are used purposefully.*
- *Subject/verb agreement and verb and noun forms will be consistently correct.*
- *With rare exceptions, the writing will follow conventions of punctuation.*
- *All student writing must be original with quotations properly attributed.*

→ EACH individual grade level winner must include the cover sheet provided on page 20.



Questions? Contact David Hansen at 216-453-4444
or via email at dhansen@greatlakestheater.org

SUGGESTED WRITING PROMPTS

We offer here a wide range of possible writing prompts; of course, some topics will be more suited to particular grade levels than others. Please choose the topics that best suit the needs and abilities of your class, and please feel free to create original prompts inspired by themes found in *A Christmas Carol*.

1. Have you ever received a gift from someone for whom giving the gift was very challenging or difficult? Have you ever done something very special for someone (which is a kind of gift) which was very challenging or difficult? Tell a story, real or imagined about these gifts or moments. (Theme: Sacrifice)
2. Do you see any modern-day Ebenezer Scrooges in the world, at your own school or in your own family? Who are they? Create an original narrative of this contemporary person, showing his or her change of heart. (Theme: Compassion)
3. How would your favorite writer have told a story with themes present in *A Christmas Carol*? Can you write in the style of a familiar author, retain their style, and in doing so put a unique spin on *A Christmas Carol*? Examples: Suzanne Collins, John Green, Stephen King, George R.R. Martin, Stephenie Meyer, Toni Morrison, Shonda Rhimes, Rick Riordan, J.K. Rowling, Maurice Sendak, William Shakespeare, J.R.R. Tolkien, Colson Whitehead. (Theme: Adaptation)
4. Write poetry or song lyrics in which you are one of the children hidden under the Ghost of Christmas Present's robe – *This boy is Ignorance, the girl is Want*. What might each of them have to say to Scrooge or to the world? (Theme: Isolation)
5. Imagine yourself as one of the characters in *A Christmas Carol*. Write several diary entries, blog posts, status updates or tweets from the P.O.V. of this character. (Theme: Empathy)
6. Explore the theme of redemption, focusing on a person who comes face to face with the emptiness or shallowness of his or her own life. (Theme: Redemption)
7. Each moment in time that Ebenezer Scrooge visits from his own life – past, present and future – is one of transition or change. Tell a story of three life-changing points in your own life, real or imagined, which transformed you and made you the person you are today. (Theme: Transformation)
8. Write a story in which a character similar to Ebenezer Scrooge comes from a different culture than that of 19th-century England. Begin by asking: If someone with the characteristics of Scrooge came from a different culture or heritage, how might he or she change, or how might the story be different? For example: Certain Native American cultures believe that spirits are guides and friends that all people have in their lives; in many African cultures the entire village is responsible for a child's rearing. What kind of advice might the spirits in these or other cultures have given someone like Scrooge?

Other examples of alternate settings: Colonial America, Imperial Japan, Soviet-era Russia, Pre-Columbian South America, Pre-Colonial Africa, Bible-era Middle East, modern-day Cleveland.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL SUMMARY

A*Christmas Carol* is not merely a holiday tale; it is a retelling of the very human dilemma that many of us face. We often think of Scrooge as a stereotype: as just the mean old man who says, “Bah, humbug!” The character of Ebenezer Scrooge, however, is much more than that – he is a symbol of all people who close their eyes to the ignorance and poverty in the world. In the story, Scrooge is a strong supporter of, and active participant in, a corrupt and cruel system. He goes through life thinking only of himself. In his own words, “It’s enough for a man to understand his own business and not to interfere with other peoples’.”

It is Christmas Eve and Ebenezer Scrooge is busy in his counting house. His clerk, Bob Cratchit, works in the next room with the smallest of fires to keep warm. Scrooge’s nephew, Fred, arrives to invite his uncle to Christmas dinner. Scrooge adamantly refuses, exclaiming, “Bah, humbug!” Fred tries to persuade him to change him mind, but to no avail. As Fred leaves, two gentlemen arrive and request a donation for

poor. Scrooge refuses, citing that taking care of the poor is the job of the prisons and workhouses. Scrooge grudgingly gives Bob Cratchit Christmas day off and they both leave for the day.

As Scrooge returns home on Christmas Eve, he is startled by the appearance of his doorknocker, which suddenly takes the form of his deceased partner's face. It turns into a regular knocker again and Scrooge goes about his business, getting ready for bed. Scrooge is just settling down to a bowl of gruel when he is suddenly frightened by a loud ringing of many bells and the appearance of the ghost of his old business partner, Jacob Marley. Marley, doomed to wear heavy chains and wander the earth witnessing misery, cautions Scrooge to change his ways. Marley shows Scrooge hundreds of ghosts, many of whom Scrooge knew when they were alive, suffering the same fate. He explains that their misery is caused by their powerlessness to interfere for the good in human affairs. In life, these people had been blind to the suffering around them, only to see, in death, what good they could have done. Marley warns Scrooge that his own chains are just as long and heavy, but that there is a chance of escaping his own horrific fate.

Marley tells Scrooge he will be visited by three ghosts, the first at one o'clock. Marley departs and

Scrooge convinces himself that the entire incident was only a dream. At the stroke of one, however, the Ghost of Christmas Past appears and takes Scrooge on a journey through his own life. During this visit to his past, Scrooge experiences a great deal of regret. He sees himself as a lonely young boy, a carefree young man and, finally, as a hardened adult. The ghost also shows Scrooge the woman he once loved. Scrooge begins to realize that the love of money became more important to him than the love of other people.

Scrooge is next visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present. In the course of this visit, Scrooge sees his clerk, Bob Cratchit, and his large family. The Cratchits are poor, but happy and grateful for one another. Scrooge is struck with a foreign emotion – compassion – when he sees Bob's youngest son, Tiny Tim, who is in poor health and disabled. Scrooge and the Ghost then travel throughout the land, observing gatherings and party goers, miners on a distant moor and sailors in a ship at sea – all celebrating Christmas in their own way.

Almost immediately Scrooge and the Ghost find themselves at Scrooge's nephew Fred's home. Scrooge overhears Fred and his party guests discussing his ill-temper and solitary nature.





Fred tells the gathered guests that he means to continue asking his uncle to Christmas dinner, despite his rude refusals. Scrooge begins to realize he is only cheating himself out of happy experiences by not visiting. The Ghost and Scrooge continue to view Christmases throughout the world – from homes to hospitals to jails. Scrooge witnesses that each person visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present feels a greater sense of joy and hope.

Finally, Scrooge notices two children clinging to the Ghost's robes. Scrooge asks if they belong to the Ghost, who replies:

"They are man's. And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance, the girl is Want. Beware of them both, and all of their degree. But most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased."

The bell strikes twelve and Scrooge is visited by the third and final spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come. The Ghost, tall, shrouded in black and totally silent, shows Scrooge various people discussing the death of a man who was obviously disliked. A group of businessmen laugh at what a small funeral he was likely to have. Another group does nothing but mention his death casually. Scrooge then witnesses several servants selling the man's stolen belongings. Scrooge realizes that "the case of this unhappy man might be my own." Almost at once the scene changes and Scrooge is terrified to see the body of the plundered and uncared for man.

Scrooge, overcome, requests to see some emotion connected with the man's death. The Ghost shows him a poor, young couple overcome with relief that their relentless creditor has died. To purge the previous scenes from his mind, Scrooge then demands



to see some tenderness related to a death. The spirit conducts him to Bob Cratchit's house. Scrooge realizes the quiet family is in mourning for the death of poor Tiny Tim. Scrooge, suspecting the end of the spirit's visit, begs the Ghost to tell him the identity of the unfortunate deceased man. Without speaking a word, the Ghost takes Scrooge to a graveyard, where Scrooge sees the neglected grave – his own. In anguish he cries out to the Ghost for mercy,

swearing to change the course of the future.

Suddenly, Scrooge finds himself back in his own room and immediately sets out to make good on his promise. Bubbling with joy, he anonymously sends a large turkey to the Cratchit family, flags down the previous day's charity solicitor and promises a large sum, goes to church and spends the afternoon with Fred's family – much to their surprise and

delight. The following day, catching Bob Cratchit coming in late to work, Scrooge surprises him by proposing to raise his salary and assist his struggling family.



VOCABULARY

STAVE 1

ironmongery
simile
unhallowed
residuary
Ramparts
entreaty
trifle
phantoms
intimation
morde
impropriety
resolute
homage
ominous
facetious
brazier
solitude
misanthropic
garret
congenial
phenomenon
irresolution
balustrades
transparent
waistcoat
caustic
waggish
spectre
remorse
benevolence
supernatural
apparition
dirge

STAVE 2

opaque
preposterous
perplexed
endeavoured
recumbent
extinguisher
fluctuated
supplication
vestige
extraordinary
condescension
celestial
terrestrial
decanter
chaise
agitation
avarice
supposition
tumultuous
uproarious
brigands
boisterous
onslaught
despoil
irrepressible
haggard
irresistible

STAVE 3

apprehensive
spontaneous
combustion
consolation
predicament
transformation
petrification
capacious
artifice
scabbard
compulsion
diffuse
jovial
parapets
facetious
apoplectic
opulence
demurely
conspicuous
filberts
officious
zeal
livid
heresy
penitence
rebuke
odious
stingy
plaintive
scanty
desolation
cultivate
contortions
credulity
execrable
confidential
prostrate
perversion

STAVE 4

shroud
pendulous
excrescence
skaiter
latent
resolutions
slipshod
cesspool
offal
defiance
obscene
repress
successor
foreshadow
Intercourse

STAVE 5

extravagance
illustrious
courage
array
feign
alteration
malady
knowledge

ADAPTATIONS FOR THE SCREEN



Dickens himself performed *A Christmas Carol* from a lectern, acting out each of the many characters with true dramatic intensity. His classic story was adapted for performance shortly after its initial publication, December 19, 1943, and adapted for film with the birth of that medium. New versions appear on stage, film and television every Christmas season. Although not comprehensive by any means, this list will give the reader a glimpse of the tremendous impact this wondrous story has had upon the world.

Scrooge, or Marley's Ghost (1901) Considered to be the first film adaptation, this is a British short film.

A Christmas Carol (1908) Silent film starring Thomas Ricketts as Scrooge.

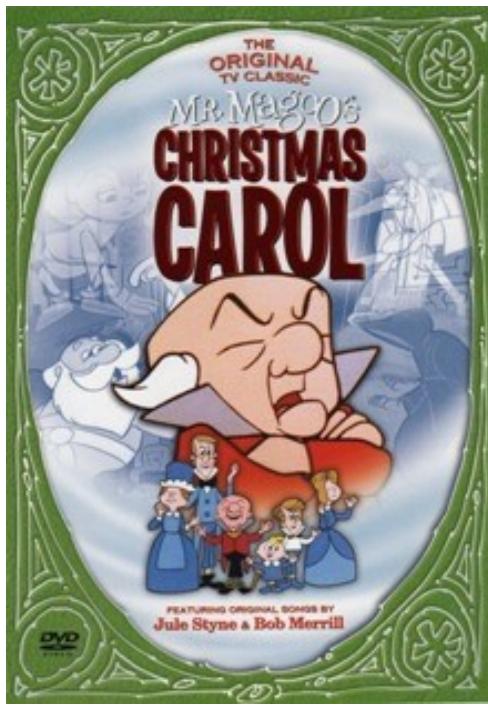
A Christmas Carol (1910) Produced by Edison Manufacturing Company, this silent film starred Marc McDermott as Scrooge.

Scrooge (1913) This British silent film was adapted for the screen by the stage actor who also plays Scrooge, Seymour Hicks. He reprised his role in the 1935 film.

Scrooge (1935) Considered by many to be the definitive version, this classic was televised annually for many years. Seymour Hicks, Donald Calthrop, Robert Cochran, Mary Glynne, the Lockhart family.

A Christmas Carol (1949, TV) Narrator Vincent Price, with Taylor Holmes as Scrooge.

Scrooge (1951) Alastair Sim plays Scrooge in what is widely regarded as the best film version of the Dickens classic.



Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol (1962) Classic animated musical version with Jim Backus, Jack Cassidy, Royal Dano and Jane Kean.

Scrooge (1970) Musical film with Albert Finney, Alec Guinness and Edith Evans.

A Christmas Carol (1971, TV) Alastair Sim reprises his role as Scrooge in this PBS animated film, done with Victorian-style artwork. This is considered by many to be the best of the many animated versions.

Rich Little's Christmas Carol (1978) Rich Little impersonates famous people playing the characters: W.C. Fields as Scrooge, Paul Lynde as Bob Cratchit, Richard Nixon as Jacob Marley, and many more.

An American Christmas Carol (1979) Henry Winkler, Dorian Harewood. This story is re-imagined to occur during early 20th century America.

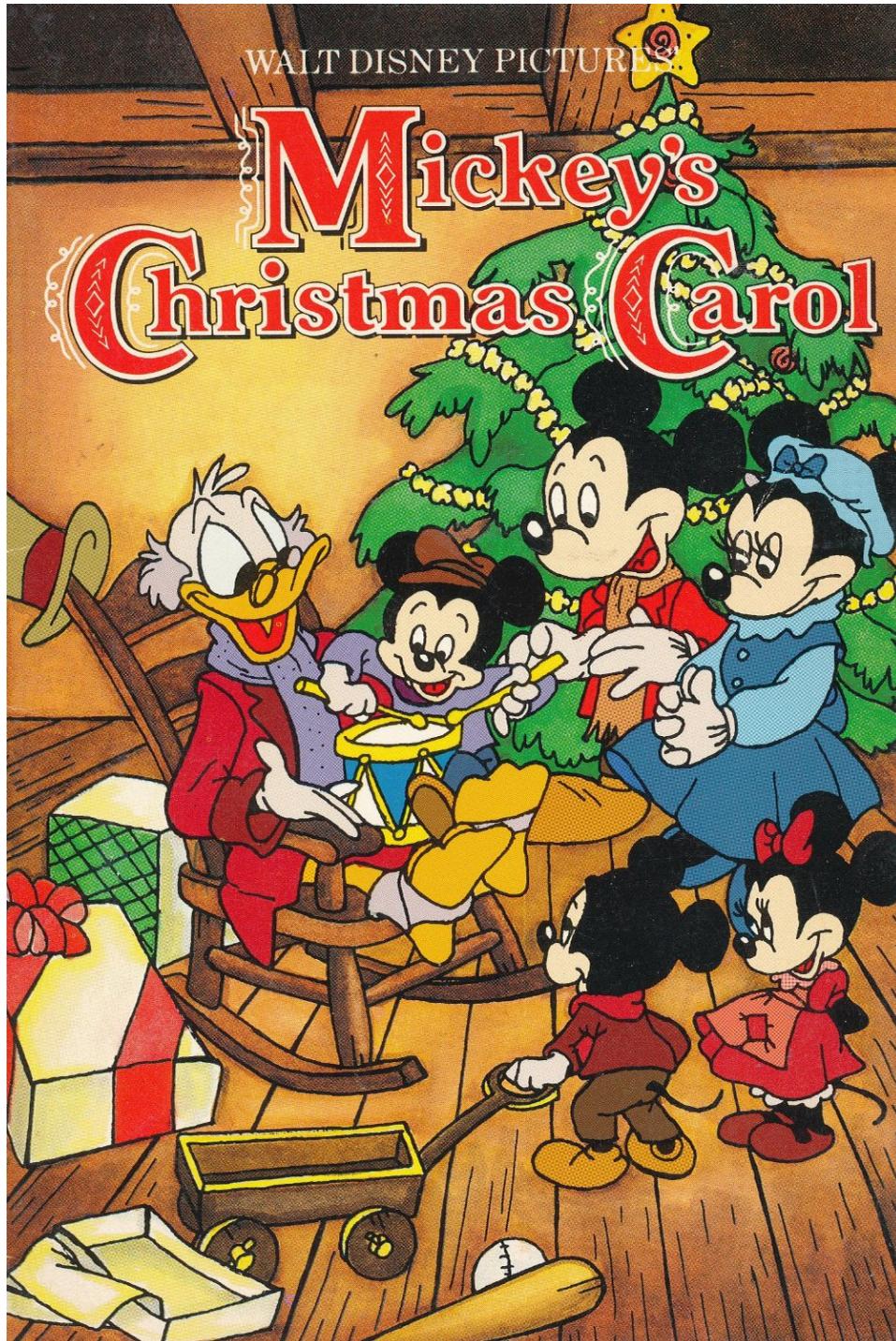
Mickey's Christmas Carol (1983) Alan Young gives voice to Scrooge McDuck in this Walt Disney animated film. Mickey plays the role of Bob Cratchit.

A Christmas Carol (1984, TV) Landing George C. Scott an Emmy nomination, many hold this television version in high regard.

Scrooged (1988) A modern day Scrooge is played by Bill Murray, with Karen Allen, John Forsythe, Carol Kane, Robert Mitchum, Robert Goulet and a host of other stars.

The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) Michael Caine, David Goelz, Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy and the rest of the Muppet characters.

A Flintstones Christmas Carol (1994, TV) Fred Flintstone is cast as Scrooge in the bedrock Community Players production of the play.





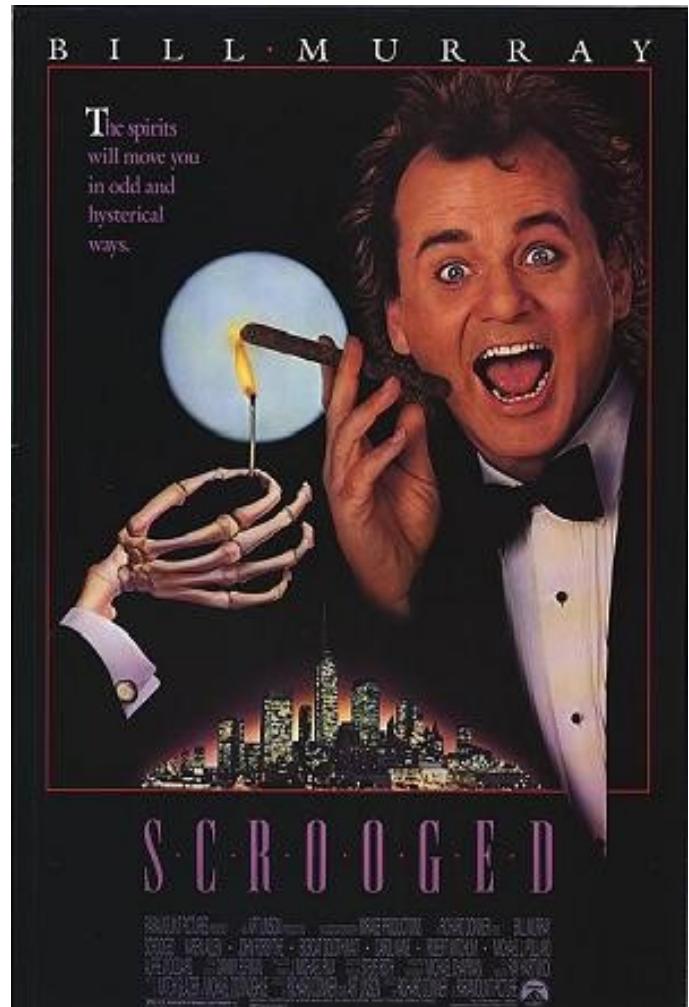
Ms. Scrooge (1997, TV) Cicely Tyson as Ms. Ebenita Scrooge, Katherine Helmond as Maude Marley. A retelling, but with a female version of Scrooge.

A Christmas Carol (1999, TV) Popular TV version with Patrick Stewart as Scrooge. Although the screenplay was adapted by British playwright Peter Barnes, it is in essence Stewart's one-man show brought to life with a full cast. Filmed entirely in England, it was nominated for an Emmy award for outstanding cinematography.

A Christmas Carol: The Musical (2004, TV) Kelsey Grammer, Jason Alexander, Jennifer Love Hewitt.

A Sesame Street Christmas Carol (TV, 2006) Narrated by Tim Curry, with all the favorite Sesame Street characters.

A Christmas Carol (2009) Directed by Robert Zemeckis, a computer animated adaptation with Jim Carrey, Gary Oldman, Colin Firth, Robin Wright Penn, Cary Elwes and Bob Hoskins.



GENEROUS SUPPORT



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The Shubert Foundation
The Stocker Foundation
The Kelvin & Eleanor Smith Foundation
U.S. Bank

And hundreds of generous
Great Lakes Theater individual donors!



ABOUT GREAT LAKES THEATER



Charles Fee, Producing Artistic Director

The mission of Great Lakes Theater, through its main stage productions and its education programs, is to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience.

Since the company's inception in 1962, programming has been rooted in Shakespeare, but the company's commitment to great plays spans the breadth of all cultures, forms of theater and time periods including the 20th century, and provides for the occasional mounting of new works that complement the classical repertoire.

Classic theater holds the capacity to illuminate truth and enduring values, celebrate and challenge human nature and actions, revel in eloquent language, preserve the traditions of diverse cultures and generate communal spirit. On its mainstage and through its education program, the company seeks to create visceral, immediate experiences for participants, asserting theater's historic role as a vehicle for advancing the common good, and helping people make the most joyful and meaningful connections between classic plays and their own lives. This Cleveland theater company wishes to share such vibrant experiences with people across all age groups, creeds, racial and ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The company's commitment to classic theater is magnified in the educational programs (for both adults and students) that surround its productions. Great Lakes Theater has a strong presence in area schools, offering an annual series of student matinees and, for almost 40 years, an acclaimed school residency program led by teams of specially trained actor-teachers.

1501 Euclid Avenue, Suite 300 • Cleveland, Ohio 44115 • Tel. (216) 241-5490

greatlakestheater.org

A CHRISTMAS CAROL WRITING CONTEST COVER PAGE

This is a cover page for **EACH** A *Christmas Carol* Writing Contest entry. Please copy this form for each grade level participant and attach to each writing project submitted to Great Lakes Theater. **We cannot accept more than ONE ENTRY PER GRADE LEVEL from any school.**

Note: Before you send the entry, please make a copy of each winning writing project for your own records.

Please print legibly.

Student's Name: _____

School Name: _____ **Grade:** _____

Teacher's Name (first & last): _____

Teacher cellphone number (not office no.): _____

Teacher's email address: _____

Total number of student entries written by your class: _____

Number of matinee tickets requested*: _____

**We will do our best accommodate all ticket requests, pending availability. Every school that participates will receive an allotment of no fewer than thirty (30) tickets to attend "A Christmas Carol" for their students and all chaperones.*

Circle Preferred Performance Date (not guaranteed): [Tue., Nov. 22] [Tue., Nov. 29] [Either]

Contest Deadline is 12 NOON on: Friday, October 28, 2022.

Email entries (.doc, .docx or .pdf) ***with this cover page*** to dhansen@greatlakestheater.org

-OR-

Mail entries to: David Hansen, Education Outreach Associate
Great Lakes Theater, 1501 Euclid Ave., Suite 300, Cleveland, Ohio 44115