

Essay Prompt: Why did Charles Dickens write *A Christmas Carol*?

There are 3 main reasons Dickens wrote ACC. Each reason will be one prong of your thesis statement and one paragraph of your essay.

1st Prong: Financial Problems

2nd Prong: Child Labor

3rd Prong: Charity

What questions about each of these topics do you need to answer for your reader? (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)

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Draft a working thesis statement on the BACK of this page.

Double check it using the checklist to the right. Then, email it to your tutor.

Copy your tutor-approved thesis statement below.

Working Thesis Statement Checklist

- Only one complete sentence
- Gives direction and focus to your topic
- Shows the purpose is to inform
- Includes three prongs (controlling ideas)
- Narrows your topic, yet broad enough to write three full body paragraphs
- Contains strong verbs and expressive language
- No universals, superlatives, or hyperbole
- No "be" verbs
- No 1st or 2nd person pronouns
(No: I, me, my, you, your, our, etc.)
- Does not contain contractions
- Uses proper grammar and punctuation

Finally, begin your research. Read all three online articles and take research notes (see next page) as you read.

Directions for Taking Research Notes

When researching for an essay, it's not enough just to read the articles, books, or other sources. You must have an ordered system for keeping track of the quotes, facts, and other information that you might include in your essay.

Step 1:

Print the three research note sheets on the following pages.

Step 2:

Write all the reference information that you can find about the article at the top of page. This might include the name of an author, article title, name of a website, publication (or updated) date, and/or the full web link. Also, write the date that you personally accessed any website and took notes. Here's an example:

Author: Lucinda Hawksley

Article Title: "How Did *A Christmas Carol* Come To Be?"

Website: BBC

Publication Date: 22 Dec. 2017

URL: <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20171215-how-did-a-christmas-carol-come-to-be>

Website Accessed Date: 29 Nov. 2022

Step 3:

Read the article and look for quotes that directly support one of your three prongs. Think: "Which of these statements will inform my readers and answer any questions they may have?"

COPY EXACTLY (in quotation marks) any statement that might make good evidence for a prong.

Copying exact quotations will help you avoid plagiarism because you will always be able to look back and identify the precise words of the original writer.

Which statements should I copy?

- Any facts, examples, statistics, or interesting testimony *that directly and specifically support one of your prongs.*
- Copy more quotes than you think you need. It's easier to take abundant, quality notes up front than to go back later, while writing your essay, to locate more information.

Will I find evidence for all 3 prongs in every article?

Not necessarily. For example, you may find a lot of information about child labor and charity in one article but nothing about Dickens's own financial problems. That's ok. Simply collect as much information as you can for each prong. If you run out of room on the provided lines, use the back of the note sheet or attach additional paper.

