



# Study Guide

THEATER  
WORKS USA

**Expectations at the Theater:** The performance features live actors who will perform the play for a live audience. The experience of being an audience member for a live theater performance has some responsibilities because it is such a special privilege. Here are a few tips and tricks to help you and those around you get the most out of your experience.

1. Arrive early, use the restroom before the show starts, and stay seated. The only movement should be from the actors.
  2. No eating or drinking. The noise from crinkly candy and the chomping and sipping of snacks aren't part of the Sound Designer's plan for the show. Our shows are usually around one hour. Please wait for your snacks.
  3. Technology turned off. That means no cell phones or iPads. Even if they are silent, we only want to see the lights on stage, not from phones.
  4. Dress your best. Theater is special and putting on something that you consider special can add meaning to the experience.
  5. Laugh and Clap. If you think an action or joke is funny, feel free to laugh and clap. Performers want to have a reaction from their audience. The end of a song is usually an appropriate place to clap. Sometimes the actors may even pause for laughter. When the actors begins again, it's time to quiet down and listen.
- Quiet please. Don't call out or talk to the actors or your friends. The actors are in a pretend world on stage. Show them

## The Story:



The day before Christmas, Ebenezer Scrooge is as surly as on any other day of the year; refusing to see any significance to the holiday, he acts as he always does -- mistreating Bob Cratchit, his clerk, refusing to contribute to the local charity, and turning down his nephew's invitation to celebrate Christmas with his family. Ebenezer insists that Christmas is nothing but "humbug" -- he's even grateful that it only comes "but once a year." It is only that night when he is visited by a succession of spirits -- the ghost of Jacob Marley (his deceased partner) and the Ghosts of Christmases Past, Present, and Yet-to-Come -- that Scrooge learns the consequences of both his past and present actions and reconsiders his point of view. Grateful for a "second chance," Scrooge vows to help his fellow man -- including Bob Cratchit and his little son, Tiny Tim -- and is reunited with his family, finally accepting his nephew's offer to share his holiday celebration. Though it all may only have been a dream, Ebenezer Scrooge is a changed man.

## Before the Show...



### Discuss the 5 Elements of Theater

**Lighting:** Stage lighting can help communicate the time of day, tell the audience where to look, and can even be used to indicate weather.

**Sound:** Listen closely for sound effects that set the mood for scenes. Anything from chains to the sounds of crowded town chatter can help audiences feel the mood of a scene or character.

**Costumes:** What characters wear can indicate their power, class, what season it is and the time period.

**Sets/Scenery:** The painted backdrops and furniture pieces that tell us where a play is happening.

**Props:** Things that actors use with their hands. These pieces can have important details that tell us about the characters and the time period.

### Discuss the 3 Tools in the Actor's Toolbox

**Voice:** Speaking on different pitches (high/low), speeds (fast/slow) and textures (growly/squeaky) can help differentiate characters.

**Body:** Using different body positions and walks help the actors transform into various characters.

**Imagination:** Imagining how a character feels and where they are helps audience members see what isn't there.

## After the Show...



### Discuss the Themes

Love

Forgiveness

Acceptance

Responsibility

Greed

### How is the show different than reading a book?

The Musical you saw had 3 creators on a team to tell the story that Charles Dickens wrote in a book. Discuss the 3 creator titles and how they helped tell the story.

**Book Writer:** This creative person writes all the lines that the actors say.

**Composer:** This creative person writes all the music.

**Lyricist:** This creative person writes all the words that characters sing.