**Dickens uses warmth to symbolise comfort, generosity and human connection**

**Stave One**

‘The cold within him froze his old features’

‘He carried his own low temperature always about with him’

‘No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him’

‘It was cold, bleak, biting weather’

**‘Scrooge had a very small fire’**

‘The clerk’s fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal’

‘Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter and tried to warm himself at the candle’

**Stave Two**

‘Fuel was heaped upon the fire’

‘The warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ballroom as you would desire to see’

**Stave Three**

‘There was a cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire’

**‘Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth in what Bob Cratchit called a circle’**

‘Here, the flickering of the blaze showed preparations for a cosy dinner’

‘Through the wall of mud and stone, they found a cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire’

**Stave Four**

‘For in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery’

‘Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death’

Warmth symbolises comfort, generosity and human connection. The Cratchits’ relatively small fire still draws the family together, symbolising how love and friendship create emotional warmth even amidst impoverished circumstances. In contrast, Scrooge’s own ‘very small fire’ reflects his miserliness and isolation: he deprives himself and others of emotional warmth. Remember that fires and hearths were central to Victorian family life, especially at Christmas, when people gathered around them for food, games and storytelling. This is key understanding one of the big ideas of the novel: that happiness is found in human connection, not material wealth.

**Dickens uses darkness to symbolise fear, selfishness and isolation**

**Stave One**

‘The houses opposite were mere phantoms’

**‘Darkness is cheap and Scrooge liked it’**

‘The brightness of the shops […] made pale faces ruddy as they passed’

**Stave Two**

‘From the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light’

‘Scrooge’s former self grew larger at the words, and the room became a little darker and more dirty’

**‘A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig’s calves’**

‘They shone in every part of the dance like moons’

‘A fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light’

**Stave Three**

‘There sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see, who bore a glowing torch’

‘The brightness of the roaring fires in kitchens, parlours, and all sorts of rooms, was wonderful’

‘What a solemn thing it was to move on through the lonely darkness over an unknown abyss’

**Stave Four**

‘In the very air through which this Spirit moved, it seemed to scatter gloom, and mystery’

‘It was shrouded in a deep black garment’

**Stave Five**

‘No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; cold, piping for the blood to dance to’

**‘Golden sunlight; heavenly sky; sweet fresh air’**

Darkness symbolises fear, selfishness and isolation. The foggy streets and Scrooge’s dingy counting house reflect the absence of companionship and generosity. In contrast, glowing light, particularly at Fezziwig’s ball, reflects generosity and communal celebration. Fezziwig himself seems to radiate light whilst he is dancing, reinforcing the idea that moral goodness and emotional warmth are life-affirming and visible. In the final stave, the bright sunshine and clear skies on Christmas morning are a sign of Scrooge’s moral awakening and mark the final stage of his transformation.