

The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)

About the film

The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) is a puppet adaptation of the story by Charles Dickens, in which an uncharitable, penny-pincher called Scrooge is visited by three ghosts who teach him the meaning of Christmas. As the ghosts confront Scrooge with his own lack of kindness and charity, and the mistakes he has made in his life, he must think about how others around him live their lives with more joy and generosity, and whether he should change before it is too late.

Made by the Jim Henson stable *The Muppet Christmas Carol* is filmed in their well-known and inimitable style, including characters played by puppets, frequent comic relief, a knowing narrator who speaks directly to the audience, and several musical numbers. There are some live actors in the film, and Michael Cane plays Scrooge straight, despite the muppet mayhem around him.



This film is very accessible to young children and includes a series of characters they may well be familiar with. The musical numbers, and comic sequences, and light relief even in the scariest moments, offer an upbeat take on the well-known element story.

The BBFC Age Rating

We rated *The Muppet Christmas Carol* a U, which stands for Universal. U means anyone can watch, and that we think it is suitable for children aged four and up. But every child is different so it is always worth checking the ratings info for a specific film if you are considering showing it to your class.

U films should usually have a positive overall tone, especially if they are aimed at children. We think carefully about what very young children might already know what might scare, confuse or upset them, and the lasting impression the film might give. If there is any violence or threat in a U film it should be over quickly and reassure children that everything will be ok. U films should also make clear the difference between right and wrong.

More information about the U category, and the classification issues which you may find in a U film, is available on our website bbfc.co.uk, our Parents Guide to Age Ratings and our children's website cbbfc.co.uk



BBFC ratings info for *The Muppet Christmas Carol*

We provide information to accompany all our classification decisions. We gave *The Muppet Christmas Carol* a U for mild scary scenes.

These mild scary scenes occur when Scrooge is visited by spirits, including his door knocker turning into the disembodied head of an old business partner and a tall, silent, hooded and faceless ghost who directs Scrooge to a vision of his own grave.

In another scene tension builds as Scrooge sits alone, becoming frightened by strange noises, before two ghosts appear hovering before him. However, none of these spirits mean any harm to Scrooge, rather their intention is to help him. Their appearance is also accompanied by comic moments involving either the ghosts or other characters. There is a mildly intense chase sequence too.

Occasional sad moments include a vision of the future in which a kind young boy has died, upsetting his family. In terms of strength, the film is very similar to other Muppet films with a U rating, which you and your class may have seen, for example *Muppets Most Wanted* (2014).

Some questions you could explore with your class:

- 1. Who would you say is the key audience for *The Muppet Christmas Carol*? Did you enjoy it?**
- 2. *The Muppet Christmas Carol* is an adaptation of a Charles Dickens novella, can you tell it based on a book? How?**
- 3. *The Muppet Christmas Carol* is a U. Do you agree with that age rating? What do you think the key classification issues are in this film? What should teachers, parents and older brothers and sisters be aware of when showing younger children this film?**
- 4. There are some scary scenes in the film. How do the filmmakers make sure very young viewers are unlikely to be too scared? Does it help that the film has a narrator?**
- 5. What social issues does the film raise? Does it tell us anything about issues in our own society today?**
- 6. What would you say are the most important themes in the film? Does the film seem to be telling us what Charles Dickens thinks about poverty, charity, caring for people, being kind and generous?**
- 7. How do you feel about the character of Scrooge? What do you learn about him? Do you feel sorry for him?**
- 8. How does it affect the film that some of the characters are muppets and some of them are played by actors? Does the mixture of puppets and actors make it less realistic? Are the actors playing their characters seriously or in a comic way?**
- 9. What type of film would you say this is? A comedy? A musical? A drama? A mixture? Have you seen any other films or TV series, or read any books, based on the same Charles Dickens story? How does this compare?**

