

# A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens

Retold by  
Sheila Lyne and Ken Methold

Level A2.2



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# Humbug!

## Preview Questions

1. What is Christmas season like in your country?
2. Have you ever heard of Ebenezer Scrooge before?
3. Do you know anybody who is really mean?

Marley was dead. There is no doubt whatever about that. The statement of his burial was signed by the necessary people. Even Scrooge signed it, and Scrooge's name was good for anything he put his hand to. Scrooge and Marley were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his only heir, his only friend, and the only person who was sorry to see him dead. And even Scrooge was not very saddened by his death, for he was a good businessman, and Marley's death had not hurt his business in anyway.

It is important to remember that Marley was dead, completely dead. If you forget that, the story I am going to tell won't have anything interesting about it. Scrooge never painted out Marley's name over the door of their offices. It stayed there for years after his death. The business was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people called him Scrooge, and sometimes they called him Marley; he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Scrooge was a mean man who made his employees work harder than most employers. He was as hard as a stone. He loved money and only money. He could not get enough

of it. And he never gave any of it away. He was the least **generous** of men. He was so mean that he would not spend any money to heat the office. It was ice cold in winter. There was even ice on his hair. And as a man, he was as cold inside as he was outside. Wherever he went, he took this coldness with him. There was no wind colder than Scrooge.

Nobody liked him. Nobody stopped him in the street and said, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? Well, I hope? You must come and visit me soon." No one even asked him the time. He was too mean to give anyone the time. When children saw him coming, they ran away. Even the dogs of the blind men pulled their masters out of his way. Scrooge did not care. He liked people to keep out of his way. He did not care that no one wanted to speak to him and that he had no friends. He cared only about his money.

Once upon a time of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve, old Scrooge was busy in his office. It was **cold, biting weather**. There was fog, and it was difficult to see in the streets. The time was only a little after three in the afternoon, but it was already dark outside, and there were candles burning in all the nearby offices. People walking in the streets were finding it difficult to keep warm. Scrooge kept open the door of his own office so that he could see what his clerk was doing. Scrooge had only a small fire in his office, but the fire in his clerk's office was even smaller. His clerk could not put more coal on it because Scrooge kept all the coal in his own room. The clerk's office was so cold that he had to try to warm himself by putting his hands around the candle on his desk. He tried to imagine



# N E W W O R D S

## Chapter 1

**generous** *adj.* giving

**cold, biting weather** *n.* weather that is so cold, it hurts

**imagination** *n.* the ability to think about unreal events

**humbug** *n.* nonsense

**pudding** *n.* a sweet, soft food

**sacred** *adj.* holy

**bless** *v.* to wish good things for someone

## Chapter 2

**prison** *n.* a place where bad people are sent

**workhouse** *n.* a place where poor people who had no homes went

**afraid** *adj.* scared

**carol** *n.* a Christmas song

**dismay** *v.* to become disappointed

**wage** *n.* pay for doing a job

## Chapter 3

**door knocker** *n.* the metal part of a door used to make a loud sound

**pooh** *int.* an interjection used to express an opinion that an idea or suggestion is silly or worthless

**servant** *n.* a person who does chores for another person

**drag** *v.* to pull something heavy along the ground

**affect** *v.* to change something

**tightly** *adv.* firmly or closely

## Chapter 4

**awake** *v.* to stop being asleep

**smooth** *adj.* not rough

**behaviour** *n.* the way we speak and do things

## Chapter 5

**warehouse** *n.* a place to store things

**fiddler** *n.* someone who plays a fiddle

**grateful** *adj.* pleased or thankful for someone's kindness

**fortune** *n.* a lot of money

**miserable** *adj.* very unhappy

## Chapter 6

**mistletoe** *n.* a plant with white berries used in Christmas decorations

**jolly** *adj.* happy

**torch** *n.* a fire on a stick used for light

**bare** *adj.* not covered

**icicle** *n.* a narrow piece of ice that hangs downwards

**curl** *n.* wavy or coiled hair; ringlet

**service** *n.* religious worship, usually in a church

## Chapter 7

**invisible** *adj.* cannot be seen

**suburb** *n.* a residential area on the outer limit of town

**fetch** *v.* to get



## A Christmas Carol

### Cast

Ebenezer Scrooge	Peter
Bob Cratchit	Martha
Old Gentleman	First Spirit
Scrooge's Nephew	Girl
Mrs. Cratchit	Second Spirit

**Scrooge is sitting in his office. Bob Cratchit enters.**

**Bob:** Please, Mr. Scrooge, may I leave half an hour early tonight?

**Scrooge:** Leave early! What for?

**Bob:** It's Christmas Eve, Mr. Scrooge. I need to spend time with my family.

**Scrooge:** I don't pay you to spend time with your family. If you go early, I will take away half a day's wages.

**Bob:** I can't afford to lose that money, Mr. Scrooge.

**Scrooge:** And I can't afford to pay you for work you don't do. I suppose you want a holiday tomorrow.

**Bob:** It is Christmas Day, Mr. Scrooge.

**Scrooge:** Christmas! Bah! Humbug!

**An old gentleman enters.**

**Scrooge:** What do you want?

**Old Gentleman:** Is this the business of Scrooge & Marley?

**Scrooge:** It is. But Jacob Marley is dead.

**Old Gentleman:** Then you must be Mr. Scrooge.

**Scrooge:** What if I am?

**Old Gentleman:** A merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge.

**Scrooge:** I'll ask you again. What do you want?

**Old Gentleman:** As you know, Mr. Scrooge, there are many poor people. They have nowhere to live and no money to buy food.

**Scrooge:** There are prisons and workhouses for the poor and lazy.

**Old Gentleman:** That is true, but they do not all deserve to be sent to such places. At this time of the year . . .

**Scrooge:** I'm not giving you any money. Make the poor work as I do. Good afternoon to you.

**Old Gentleman:** I'm sorry you think that way.

**Scrooge:** Go. I have work to do. I can't waste time arguing with you.

**Old Gentleman:** Very well. A merry Christmas to you.

**Scrooge:** Bah! Humbug.

**The old man goes out. Scrooge's nephew enters.**

**Scrooge:** What do you want? Money, I suppose.

**Nephew:** No, Uncle. I want to invite you to come to my house tomorrow to spend Christmas day with my wife and me.

**Scrooge:** I have work to do.

# Before You Read

I. You may have seen a movie based on Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. With a classmate, write as much as you know about each character.

**Ebenezer Scrooge**

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**The Spirit of  
Christmas Past**

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**Bob Cratchit**

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**The Spirit of  
Christmas Present**

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**Tiny Tim**

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**The Spirit of  
Christmas Future**

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## Before You Read

II. Look at the pictures. Tell what you think is happening in each. Who are the characters? What are they doing?



a. \_\_\_\_\_



b. \_\_\_\_\_



c. \_\_\_\_\_

III. Read the sentences. Decide if they describe past, present, or future events.

1. Scrooge and the spirit visit the Cratchits. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mr. Cratchit toasts Mr. Scrooge. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Scrooge lies in bed with no blanket. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The room is decorated for Christmas and is full of food. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Scrooge and Dick talk after a Christmas party. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Two women sell Scrooge's clothes. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Scrooge reads a book and imagines the characters. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Scrooge's nephew offers to help the Cratchits. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Scrooge visits the graveyard. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Scrooge's girlfriend leaves him. \_\_\_\_\_

## I. Put the sentences in order from 1 (first) to 5 (last).

- \_\_\_\_\_ Scrooge's clerk and the nephew wished each other a happy Christmas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Scrooge's nephew invited Scrooge over for Christmas dinner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Scrooge's clerk enjoyed the nephew's take on Christmas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Scrooge's clerk tried to keep warm using a candle.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Scrooge's nephew wished Scrooge a happy Christmas.

## II. Choose the best answer.

1. Which of the following was NOT mentioned as being true about Scrooge?
  - a. His nephew was a member of parliament.
  - b. He mistreated his employees.
  - c. He loved money.
  - d. He had no friends.
  
2. Why didn't people ask Scrooge the time?
  - a. Because he was so mean
  - b. Because he was so busy
  - c. Because he didn't have a watch
  - d. Because he didn't care about the time
  
3. What did Scrooge and his nephew argue about?
  - a. What kind of pudding to make
  - b. The bills Scrooge had to pay
  - c. The meaning of Christmas
  - d. Whether the nephew should get married
  
4. Why did Scrooge think that his clerk was a fool?
  - a. He complained about his wages.
  - b. He was happy even though he was poor.
  - c. He tried to get warm using a candle.
  - d. He enjoyed his nephew's speech.

III. Match the word or phrase with the meaning used in the chapter.

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. heir                 | • | • a. to wish good things for someone          |
| 2. generous             | • | • b. nonsense                                 |
| 3. cold, biting weather | • | • c. one who inherits property                |
| 4. clerk                | • | • d. a black rock used for fuel               |
| 5. coal                 | • | • e. an office worker                         |
| 6. imagination          | • | • f. the ability to think about unreal events |
| 7. humbug               | • | • g. willing to give                          |
| 8. pudding              | • | • h. holy                                     |
| 9. sacred               | • | • i. a sweet, soft food                       |
| 10. bless               | • | • j. weather that is so cold it hurts         |

IV. Complete the summary by writing the correct phrase in each blank.

- foolish for celebrating Christmas
- invite him to Christmas dinner
- warm his hands
- he was a cold man
- partner had died
- to spend money on coal

Scrooge was a business owner whose 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ who cared about nothing  
but money. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge was in his office, which was very  
cold because he did not want 3 \_\_\_\_\_. His  
clerk was trying to 4 \_\_\_\_\_ using a candle.  
Scrooge's nephew came to his office to wish him a happy Christmas and to  
5 \_\_\_\_\_. Scrooge said that he thought people  
were 6 \_\_\_\_\_ and refused the invitation.