

Charles Dickens

A Christmas Carol



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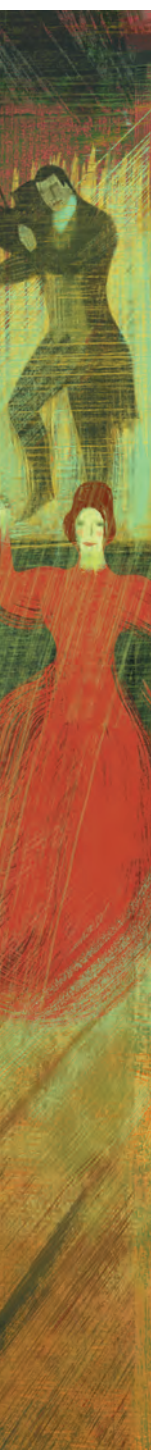


Charles Dickens

A Christmas Carol



Text adaptation, notes and
activities by **Peter Foreman**



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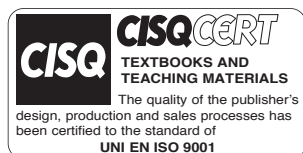
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ACTIVITIES 20, 32, 52, 72, 86, 102

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EXIT TEST 107

FCE First Certificate in English Examination-style exercises

T: GRADE 7 Trinity-style exercises (Grade 7)

This story is recorded in full.




These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the extracts linked to the listening activities.



Charles Dickens (1839) by Daniel Maclise.

Some information about Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens was born in Portsea in 1812, the son of John and Elizabeth Dickens. His father worked for the Navy Pay Office and for several years Charles enjoyed a happy childhood. These happy times did not last and when he was ten years old his family moved to London. His parents always had money problems and they sent Charles to work in a factory when he was twelve years old. He




never forgot this humiliation and much of his later writing deals with themes such as the poor and social injustice. Later, he was separated from his parents when they were sent to prison because they couldn't pay back the money which they had borrowed.

At nineteen, he became a newspaper reporter, working for the *Mirror of Parliament* newspaper where he reported on electoral reforms such as the Reform Bill and the Factory Act. He married Kate Hogarth, the daughter of the chief editor of the *Evening Chronicle*, and they went on to have ten children.

He began to write sketches – short stories and descriptions of English life – for magazines. *Sketches by Boz*, published in 1836, was very popular. In the same year his first novel *The Pickwick Papers* appeared in a magazine every month, and it soon became a great success. Dickens finished it a year later, when Victoria became queen, and it was the first of many best-selling novels, published in parts every week or month. They include *Oliver Twist* (1837-8), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1854), *David Copperfield* (1849-50), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Great Expectations* (1860-1).

But Dickens did lots of other things. In his lifetime he was a magazine editor, an amateur actor, a writer of plays, articles, and hundreds of letters. He also liked travelling, and he lived in Italy (1844-5), Switzerland (1846-7), and in Paris (1847). In 1842 he toured North America, and he returned there in 1867-8 to read his books in public. This was an enormous success, but it was very hard work and he became ill. He died in 1870 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.¹

1. **Westminster Abbey** : famous cathedral in central London.



Dickens's books were bestsellers and they are still popular. He always attacked the materialism of Victorian society and tried to show how it caused poverty and other social problems. *A Christmas Carol* is one example of Dickens's criticism of society and it is also the most famous Christmas story in the world.

1 Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F). Then correct the false ones.

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Dickens wasn't born in London but he lived there. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. In 1824 Dickens's parents sent him to work in a factory. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Later, Dickens went to prison with his parents. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. As a young man he worked for a newspaper. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. <i>Sketches by Boz</i> was his first novel. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Dickens's novels were published in parts every week or month. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Dickens had a very busy life and travelled a lot. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. The Americans did not like his books. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. People don't read Dickens's novels today. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j. In <i>A Christmas Carol</i> Dickens criticised Victorian society. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Filmography

A Christmas Carol has been filmed for the large and small screen over a hundred times. Here is a small selection from those titles.

A Christmas Carol directed by Edwin L. Marin, starring Reginald Owen, Gene Lockhart, Kathleen Lockhart (US, 1938)

Scrooge directed by Brian Desmond-Hurst, starring Alistair Sim, Michael Hordern, Kathleen Harrison (GB, 1951)

Scrooge directed by Ronald Neame, starring Albert Finney, Alec Guinness, Edith Evans (GB, 1970)



A scene from *Scrooge* (1951) featuring Glyn Dearman as Tiny Tim



A scene featuring Alistair Sim as Scrooge from *Scrooge* (1951)

Mickey's Christmas Carol directed by Burney Mattinson. Disney animated version (US, 1983)

A Christmas Carol directed by Clive Donner, starring George C. Scott, Frank Finlay, Angela Pleasance (GB, 1984)

Scrooged directed by Richard Donner, starring Bill Murray, Karen Allen, Robert Mitchum (US, 1988)

The Muppet Christmas Carol directed by Brian Henson, starring Michael Caine, Steven Mackintosh, Meridith Brown (US 1992)

A Christmas Carol directed by David Hugh Jones, starring Patrick Stewart, Richard E. Grant (US, 1999).

- FCE 1** Read this newspaper article about *A Christmas Carol* and choose the answer (A, B, C, or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

The Morning Gazette

DECEMBER 30, 1843

PRICE 1d

From the Editor

A nation's thanks at Christmas

Mr Charles Dickens has written another bestseller and everybody is talking about it!

They say that when Mr Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*, he was very angry about the social condition of our nation's poor people. And he wanted to show us that the materialism and love of money in our society cause a lot of crime and poverty.

Well, Mr Dickens, the British people have understood your message. The book has been an enormous success.

When it was published a few days before Christmas, it sold 6,000 copies in twenty-four hours! A factory manager in America read it and he decided to give his workers an extra day's holiday!

Yes, *A Christmas Carol* has changed all of us, Mr Dickens! The whole country has tried to celebrate this Christmas with all the love, happiness and generosity that your wonderful story teaches.

The British nation thanks you!

- Who wrote the article?
 - The British people.
 - A reader of *The Morning Gazette*.
 - The newspaper editor.
 - Charles Dickens.
- According to the article, Dickens wanted to
 - write another bestseller.
 - show people that he was angry.
 - show people the causes of crime and poverty.
 - make a lot of money.

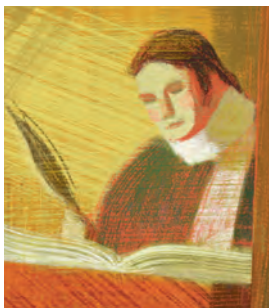
3. *A Christmas Carol* sold 6,000 copies
- A in America.
 - B in twenty-four hours.
 - C before it was published.
 - D before Christmas.
4. How many extra days' holiday did the factory workers have?
- A More than one.
 - B One.
 - C Seven.
 - D None.
5. The article thanks Dickens for
- A showing people the true meaning of Christmas.
 - B his wonderful teaching.
 - C celebrating Christmas with love.
 - D changing the meaning of Christmas.

Before you read

1 Match the words on the left to their definitions, like the example.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| a. the Christmas spirit | 1. bright, colourful objects we put in the house |
| b. a Christmas card | 2. a song about Christmas |
| c. Christmas Eve | 3. kind, generous feelings |
| d. a Christmas carol | 4. people say this at Christmas |
| e. Christmas decorations | 5. a piece of illustrated card with a message inside that we send to people |
| f. 'a Merry Christmas!' | 6. the day before Christmas Day |

2 You are going to meet these characters in Chapter One. While you read it write their names below the pictures, and then say who they are (a-d).



1.

a.



2.

b.



3.

c.

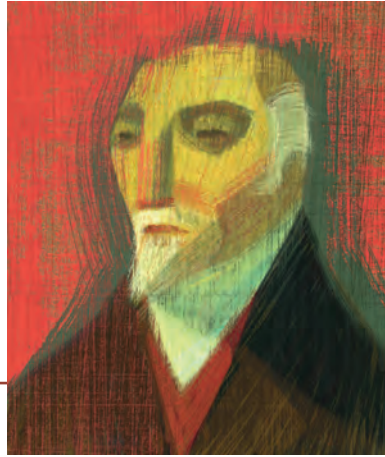


4.

d.

Bob Cratchit
Scrooge
Jacob Marley
Fred

Scrooge's nephew
a dead businessman
an office clerk
an old businessman



Scrooge



Marley was dead. That was certain because there were people at his funeral. Scrooge was there too. He and Marley were business partners, ¹ and he was Marley's only friend. But Scrooge looked very happy at the funeral because on that day he made some money. Scrooge was a clever businessman.

Yes, old Marley was certainly dead. But years later his name was still there above the office door. Scrooge and Marley. That was the company's name. Sometimes people called Scrooge 'Scrooge' and sometimes 'Marley'. He always answered. It was all the same to him.

Oh, but he was a mean man, ² Scrooge! He never spent any money and he never gave any away. He was an old miser. And he was a cold and solitary man. The cold was inside him. You could see it in his red eyes and on his blue nose and thin, white lips. You could hear it

1. **business** ['biznis] **partners** : together, Scrooge and Marley had a company for buying and selling things.
2. **mean man** : man who isn't generous.



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in his hard voice, and it made his office cold, especially at Christmas. Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, ‘My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come and see me?’ Children never spoke to him, and even dogs ran away from him. But Scrooge didn’t care. ¹ He liked it. That was what he wanted.

One Christmas Eve Scrooge was sitting in his office. It was only three o’clock in the afternoon but it was already dark. The weather was very cold and there was a lot of fog. It came into the office through the windows and doors. Bob Cratchit, Scrooge’s clerk, ² was copying letters in a dark little room, and the old man watched him carefully. Bob had a very very small fire in his room. It was even smaller than Scrooge’s, and he tried to warm his hands at the candle but he couldn’t do it.

END

‘A merry ³ Christmas, uncle!’ said a happy voice. And Scrooge’s nephew ⁴ Fred came in.

‘Bah!’ answered Scrooge. ‘Humbug!’ ⁵

His nephew looked warm. His face was red and his eyes were bright.

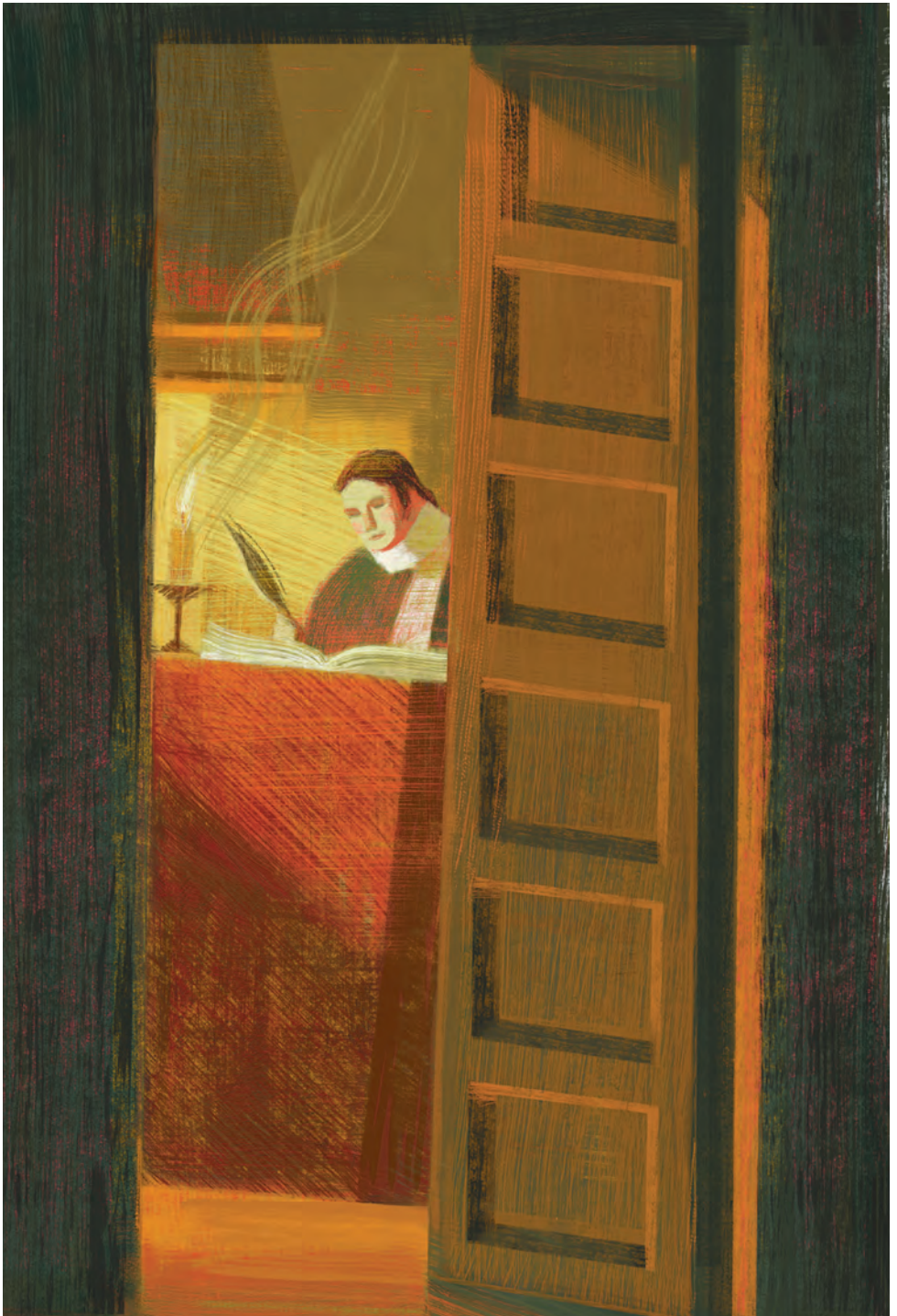
‘Christmas a humbug, uncle?’ he cried, surprised. ‘You don’t mean that, I’m sure.’

‘Yes, I do,’ said Scrooge. ‘Merry Christmas! Why are you merry? You’re a poor man, aren’t you?’

‘Well, why are *you* so unhappy? You’re rich.’

‘Bah! Humbug!’

1. **Scrooge didn’t care** : it wasn’t important to Scrooge.
2. **clerk** [kla:k] : person who works in an office or a bank.
3. **merry** : happy.
4. **nephew** [ˈnefju:] : (here) the son of Scrooge’s sister.
5. **Humbug!** : (here) Scrooge is saying ‘Don’t talk nonsense!’





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‘Don’t be angry, uncle,’ said Fred.

‘Why not? There are too many fools ¹ in this world. You say “Merry Christmas” when you’re a year older and poorer. That’s stupid!’

‘Uncle – please!’

‘Nephew! You have your own Christmas and I’ll have mine. Leave me alone.’

‘But you don’t celebrate Christmas, uncle.’

‘Because I never make any money at Christmas. I don’t like it. Leave me alone.’

‘But Christmas is a good time,’ said the nephew. ‘It’s the only time in the year when people open their hearts and help each other. They become kind and generous. I like Christmas and I say God bless it!’ ²

The clerk in his little room clapped his hands ³ happily and said, ‘Yes, that’s right!’

‘Another word from *you* and you’ll lose your job,’ Scrooge said to him.

‘Don’t be angry, uncle. Come and eat with us tomorrow,’ said his nephew.

‘No! Go away! I’m busy.’ ⁴

‘But why won’t you come?’

‘Why did you get married?’ Scrooge asked.

‘Because I fell in love.’

‘Because you fell in love! Bah! That’s more stupid than a merry Christmas. Good afternoon.’

‘But why don’t you ever come to see me, uncle?’

1. **fools** : stupid people.

2. **God bless it!** : ‘Thank God for Christmas!’

3. **clapped his hands** :



4. **busy** [bizi] : occupied.

Scrooge



‘Good afternoon,’ said Scrooge.

‘Can’t we be friends?’

‘Good afternoon,’ said Scrooge.

‘Well, I’m very sorry about this, but I wish you ¹ a merry Christmas with all my heart, uncle.’

‘Good afternoon,’ said Scrooge.

‘And a happy new Year!’

‘Good afternoon!’ said Scrooge.

So his nephew went to the door and opened it. But before he left, he said ‘Merry Christmas!’ to the clerk, who answered with a warm ‘Happy Christmas!’

‘Are you stupid too?’ Scrooge said.

At that moment two fat gentlemen came in.

‘Excuse me, is this Scrooge and Marley’s?’ said one of them. ‘May I ask if you are Mr Scrooge or Mr Marley?’

‘Mr Marley is dead. He died on Christmas Eve seven years ago.’

‘At this festive ² time of the year, Mr Scrooge,’ said the man, taking a pen from his pocket, ‘we ask people to give some money to help the poor. There are thousands of people with nothing to eat at Christmas.’

‘Aren’t there any prisons?’ asked Scrooge.

‘Yes, lots of them.’

‘And what about the workhouses? ³ Aren’t there still lots of them?’

‘Unfortunately, yes.’

‘Good. I’m happy to hear it.’

‘We don’t think the people in the workhouses or prisons are

1. **I wish you** : I hope that you have.

2. **festive** : time of celebration.

3. **workhouses** : terrible government institutions for poor people without homes.



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happy about it. They don't have much to eat or drink, and they're always cold. How much can you give us, sir?'

'Nothing!' Scrooge replied. 'Leave me alone. I don't celebrate Christmas and I don't give money to lazy people. ¹ I help to pay for the workhouses and prisons. That's enough.'

'But many people can't go there and they'll die in this cold weather.'

'Well, there are too many people in the world already, so that's a good thing. Good afternoon, gentlemen!'

So the two men went out and Scrooge continued his work. It became colder and foggier ² and darker. When a boy came to sing a Christmas carol ³ outside Scrooge's door, he stood up and shouted angrily, 'Go away!' The boy was frightened and ran away very quickly.

Finally, it was time to close the office and go home. Scrooge stopped his work and put down his pen. The clerk put on his hat to go.

'You want all day tomorrow, do you?' said Scrooge.

'If it's all right, sir – yes.'

'It's not all right,' Scrooge answered. 'I must pay you for a day's holiday.'

'It's only once a year, sir.'

'Bah! Every December 25th you get money for nothing! Well, arrive here extra early on the 26th – do you hear me?'

'Yes, sir,' said the clerk.

And when he left the office, he ran and danced all the way home because it was Christmas Eve.

1. **lazy people** : people who don't want to work.
2. **foggier** : (here) harder to see.
3. **carol** : Christmas song.



Understanding the text

1 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false ones, like the example.

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Scrooge didn't go to Marley's funeral. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Scrooge and Marley worked together years ago. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Scrooge always spent a lot of money. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. People liked Scrooge. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Bob Cratchit and Fred were rich. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Fred liked Christmas. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Scrooge never visited his nephew. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. The two fat gentlemen were collecting money for the poor. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Scrooge gave them some money. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j. Marley died on December 25th. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k. Scrooge didn't give any money to the carol singer. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l. Bob Cratchit was happy because the next day was Christmas Day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

a. *Scrooge went to Marley's funeral.*.....

Past Continuous

One Christmas Eve Scrooge was sitting in his office.

The verb **was sitting** is in the Past Continuous (Past Simple of **to be** + present participle) and describes the continuation of an action in the past. Look at these examples.

*Early that morning the birds **were singing** in the garden.*

*Our cat **was watching** them. (description)*

*Scrooge **was working** in his office when his nephew Fred came in. (the continuing action started before the simple past action and was interrupted by it.)*

2 Read the text and underline the appropriate words in italics.

It was Christmas Eve. Scrooge ¹ *was sitting/sat* in his office. The cold and fog ² *came/was coming* in through the door and windows. A small fire ³ *burnt/was burning* in the fireplace. Bob Cratchit ⁴ *was copying/copied* letters in his dark room when suddenly his very small fire ⁵ *was going/went* out. He ⁶ *tried/was trying* to warm his cold hands at the candle, but he couldn't. Scrooge ⁷ *watched/was watching* him carefully when the door ⁸ *was opening/opened* and Scrooge's nephew Fred ⁹ *came/was coming* in.

3 Match the sentences in A and B to make one sentence with *when*.**A**

- a. On Christmas Eve Scrooge was working in his office.
 b. A small fire was burning in the fireplace.
 c. Bob Cratchit was trying to warm his hands at the candle.
 d. Two fat gentlemen came in.
 e. The boy was singing a Christmas carol.

when...**B**

1. A voice said, 'A Merry Christmas!'
2. Scrooge was saying to Bob, 'Are you stupid too!'
3. His nephew Fred came in.
4. Scrooge shouted, 'Go away!'
5. It suddenly went out.

Listening

FCE 4 Listen to the beginning of this chapter and complete the sentences.

Marley was certainly dead because **1** at his funeral.

Years later Marley's name was still above **2**

'Scrooge and Marley' was **3**

You could hear Scrooge's coldness in his **4**

People never spoke to Scrooge, but he **5**

(2 possibilities)

On Christmas Eve it was already dark at only **6**
in the afternoon.

The fog came into the office through the **7**

Bob Cratchit worked as **8**

Bob's fire was even **9**

Bob tried to **10** at the candle.

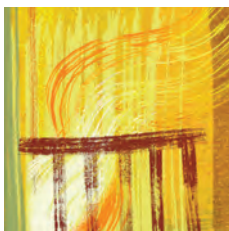
Now read the text and check your answers.



5 Listen again and tick (✓) the things that are mentioned.



a



c



e



b



d



f

T: GRADE 7

6 Topic – Celebrations

Is Christmas celebrated in your country? Find some information or a picture showing what you do to celebrate. What aspect of Christmas does your picture/information show? Tell the class about it using these questions to help you.

- Describe what the weather is usually like at Christmas where you live.
- What do you usually eat for Christmas lunch?
- Do you sometimes go on holiday for Christmas? Where?
- What do you like about Christmas? What don't you like?

Before you read

FCE 1 For questions 1-12, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each space. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Scrooge walked home (0) **C** the rooms where he lived. Years ago (1) partner Marley lived there. They were very old and dark and silent. The knocker on the door was large, but it was like hundreds of other (2) knockers. Scrooge (3) looked at it. And he wasn't thinking about Marley when he (4) his key in the door. So how did he see Marley's face in the knocker? Yes, Marley's face! There was a strange light around (5) It looked at Scrooge with its glasses up in its hair, like Marley (6) he was alive. The hair (7) moving slowly, the eyes were wide open, and the face was very white. Scrooge looked at it for a moment, and (8) it was a knocker again. He was surprised, (9) he went in and lit his candle. Then he looked at the knocker again. 'Pooh, pooh!' he said, and (10) the door.

The sound echoed around the house, but Scrooge wasn't frightened of echoes and he went slowly (11) the dark stairs. He liked darkness; it was cheap. He looked around his room: nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa, nobody under the bed, nobody in the cupboards. He locked the door and (12) on his dressing-gown, slippers and nightcap.

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 0. A by | B at | C to | D in |
| 1. A her | B your | C their | D his |
| 2. A doors | B door's | C door | D doors' |
| 3. A didn't | B ever | C never | D hasn't |
| 4. A put | B took | C pulled | D locked |
| 5. A them | B us | C you | D it |
| 6. A where | B when | C what | D why |
| 7. A were | B are | C was | D been |
| 8. A then | B so | C as | D after |
| 9. A because | B after | C so | D but |
| 10. A unlocked | B closed | C opened | D knocked |
| 11. A along | B up | C in | D around |
| 12. A take | B wear | C put | D carry |

Now read the beginning of Chapter Two and check your answers.