



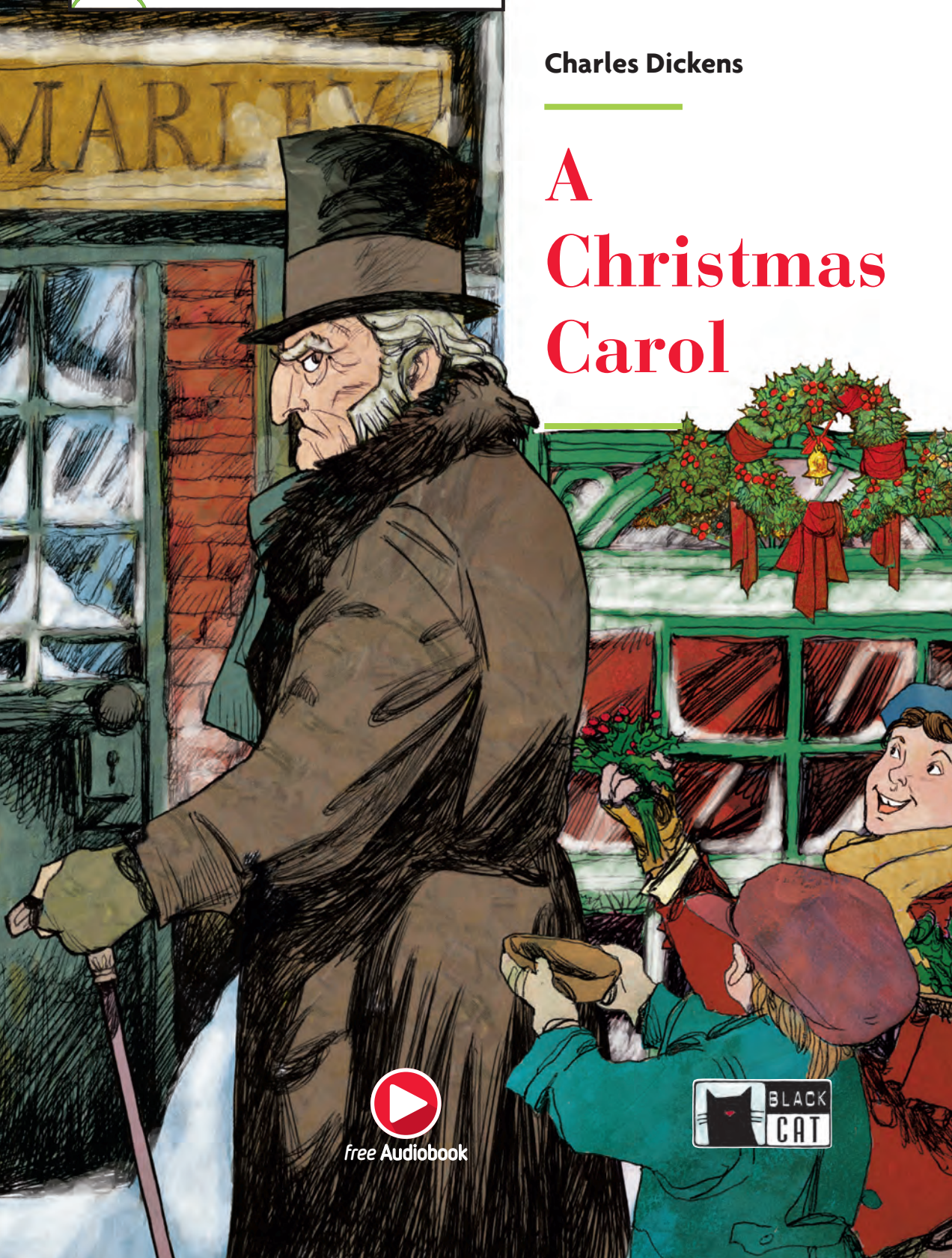
GREEN APPLE

LIFE SKILLS

Step 1 • A2

Charles Dickens

A Christmas Carol



free Audiobook



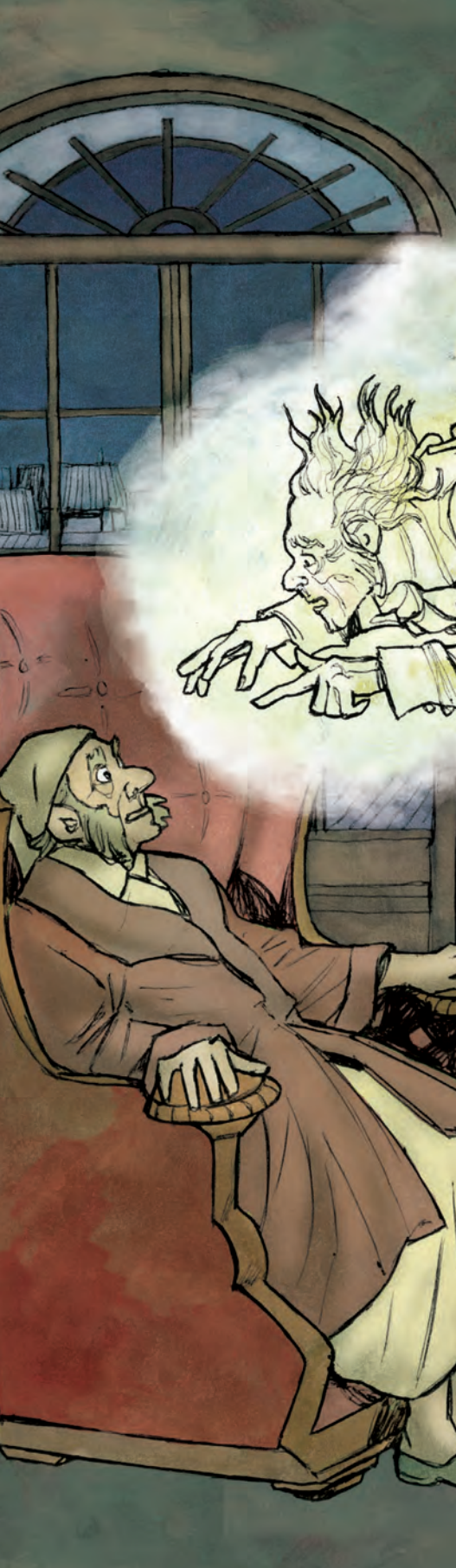


Charles Dickens

A Christmas Carol

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Member of CISQ Federation



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Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, England, on 7 February 1812. As a child he loved reading all kinds of books.



track 02

When Dickens was twelve years old, his father went to prison because he had money problems. Young Dickens had to leave school and go to work in a factory. He worked long hours and he never forgot this terrible time.

When Dickens was nineteen years old, he became a newspaper reporter for *The Mirror of Parliament*. He soon began to write short stories for magazines and people liked his stories. In Dickens's times novels were usually printed in parts in magazines. Every week or month a part of the story was printed in the magazine. This went on for months until the story was finished. People bought the magazines and enjoyed reading the story.

In 1836 Dickens published¹ his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, and it was very successful.

1. **publish** : when a company prints copies of a book.

Dickens married Catherine Hogarth in April 1836 and they had ten children. During his life Dickens met a lot of people – young, old, rich, poor, happy, sad, kind and unkind. He wrote about them in his wonderful novels. He is one of the most famous authors in the world.

Dickens lived during the Victorian Age² and his books often talk about poor people and the social problems of the time. Some of his most important novels are *Oliver Twist* (1837-38), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *David Copperfield* (1849-50), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (1860-61).

Dickens travelled to Switzerland, France, Italy and the United States. In the United States he read parts of his novels to the public, and Americans liked them very much.

He died in 1870 at the age of 58. He rests in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey in London.



2. **Victorian Age** : when Queen Victoria ruled Great Britain (1837-1901).

COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. Choose the right option.

1. Charles Dickens was born in *London* / *Portsmouth*.
2. Dickens's father had *money* / *health* problems.
3. Young Dickens left school and went to work *in a factory* / *on a farm*.
4. Dickens's stories were printed in *newspapers* / *magazines*.
5. Dickens's first novel was *Oliver Twist* / *The Pickwick Papers*.
6. Dickens read parts of his novels in *France* / *the United States*.



View Down Oxford Street, London, 19th Century.

London in Dickens's Time

Great Britain was a rich and important nation during the middle of the nineteenth century. London was one of the biggest cities in Europe, and it was an important business centre.



track 03

Merchants¹ and factory owners became rich in London. These people lived in beautiful houses with gardens. They wore expensive clothes, and they often went to parties and to the theatre. Their children had a good education.



Inside a dark room, Jerrold William Blanchard, 1872.

The people who worked in factories made very little money. They were poor and often hungry. Adults and children worked long hours in very bad conditions. These children didn't go to school and often did the most dangerous jobs. Factory workers and their families lived in small, dark houses that were unhealthy. Big families often

1. merchant : a person who buys and sells things.

lived in only one room. The streets were dirty and dangerous. The air was very bad too, because there was *smog* (smoke from the factories and fog).

Some people had no work and no home. They lived on the streets. Some of them became criminals and others became beggars². Others lived in a workhouse. It was a very sad place. The people in the workhouse did unpleasant jobs for a little food and a bed. They were usually hungry, cold and ill.

Poverty was a big problem during Dickens's time and he wrote about it in his great novels.

2. **beggar** : a very poor person who asks for money or food.



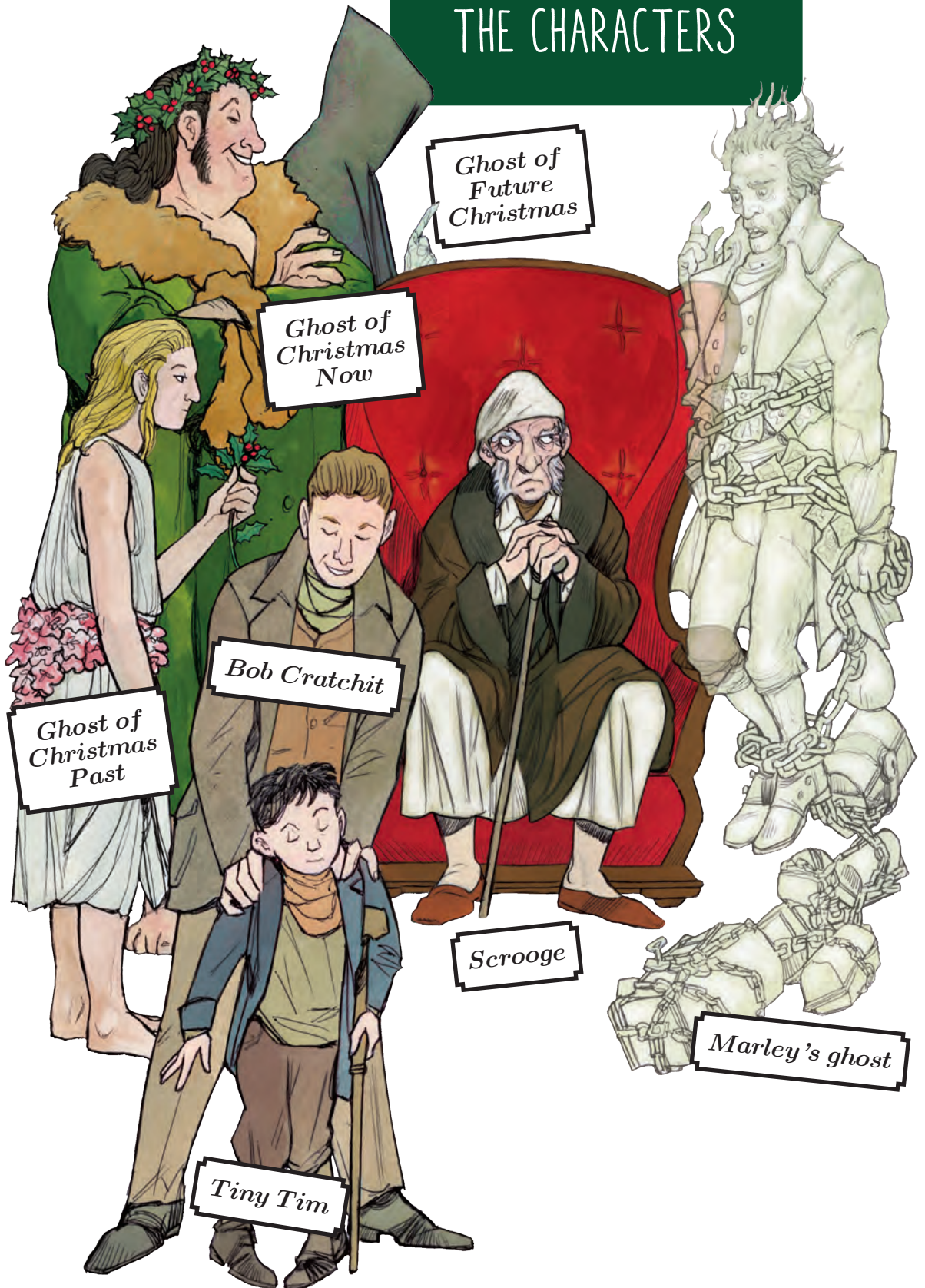
Inside Hedland Hall homeless shelter, Ratcliff, London, 1901.

COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. Answer these questions.

1. Describe London during the middle of the nineteenth century.
2. How did rich people live in London?
3. How did factory workers live in London?
4. Why didn't poor children go to school?
5. What did people do in a workhouse?
6. What did Dickens write about in his novels?

THE CHARACTERS



*Ghost of
Future
Christmas*

*Ghost of
Christmas
Now*

Bob Cratchit

*Ghost of
Christmas
Past*

Scrooge

Tiny Tim

Marley's ghost

BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words (1-12) with their meaning (a-l). Use the dictionary if necessary.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> miser | a become impossible to find |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> generous | b a religious ceremony for someone who is dead |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Eve | c very afraid |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> humbug | d a sweet Christmas food |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> workhouse | e a person who never spends any money |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> terrified | f a person you love |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> disappear | g a person who gives money and things to others |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> sweetheart | h the night before Christmas |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Pudding | i when you do something pleasant to remember a special day |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> funeral | j a sad place where very poor people work and live |
| 11. <input type="checkbox"/> clerk | k a person who works in an office |
| 12. <input type="checkbox"/> celebrate | l an old expression that means 'nonsense' |

2. Match the words with the correct picture.

prison • ghost • chain • holly • goose • grave



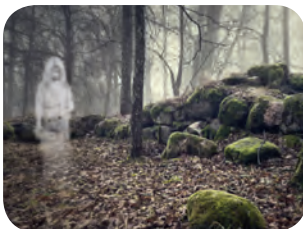
1



2



3



4



5



6



CHAPTER I

Scrooge



Marley was dead, but the names on the door of the office were Scrooge and Marley. That was the company's name. Scrooge was an old miser. He loved money. He never spent money and he never gave money to anyone. He was a cold man and he didn't have any friends. No one stopped Scrooge in the street and said, 'My dear Scrooge, how are you?' People stayed away from him. Children never spoke to him. Dogs knew him, too. They ran away from him. Scrooge was happy about all that. He liked it. He didn't want any friends and he was always alone.



track 04

It was Christmas Eve in London and Scrooge was busy in his office. It was very cold. It was only three o'clock in the afternoon, but it was already dark. There was a lot of fog outside.

Bob Cratchit was Scrooge's clerk. He worked in a small room near Scrooge. Bob had a very small fire in his room. It was much smaller than Scrooge's fire.

Suddenly a man came into the office. His name was Fred, and he was Scrooge's nephew.

'Merry Christmas, uncle,' said Fred, happily.

'Bah!' answered Scrooge. 'Humbug!'

'Christmas isn't a humbug, Uncle!' said Fred, looking at Scrooge.

'Yes, it is!' said Scrooge, angrily. 'Why are you happy? You're poor!'

'I'm poor but I'm happy,' said Fred. 'Don't be angry, uncle.'

'Angry?' said Scrooge. 'Of course I'm angry. Everyone is happy at Christmas, but I'm not. I don't make any money at Christmas. I don't like it!'

'But Christmas is a good time,' said Fred. 'It's a happy time. At Christmas people help each other. They become kind and generous.'

Bob Cratchit heard him and said, 'Yes, that's right!'

'If you say another word, you'll lose your job!' said Scrooge, looking at Bob Cratchit.

'Uncle, please come and have dinner with us tomorrow, on Christmas Day,' said Fred, smiling.



‘No! Go away!’ said Scrooge. ‘I’m busy. I have more important things to do than your Christmas dinner! Christmas is a humbug!’

‘Why can’t we be friends?’ asked Fred.

‘No!’ said Scrooge. ‘Good afternoon.’

Fred stopped at the door and said ‘Merry Christmas!’ to the clerk. Bob was cold, but he answered warmly, ‘Merry Christmas to you!’

At that moment two gentlemen came in. They were wearing expensive clothes. They had books and papers in their hands.

One of the gentlemen asked, ‘Are you Mr Scrooge or Mr Marley?’

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

‘Oh!’ said the first gentlemen, ‘I didn’t know that.’

‘At this happy time of year, we ask people to give some money to help the poor,’ said the second gentlemen. ‘There are thousands of people with nothing to eat at Christmas. A lot of them have no home and they’re cold and hungry.’



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

‘Yes, there are lots of them,’ said the second gentleman.

‘Aren’t there any workhouses for them?’ asked Scrooge.

‘Yes, there are,’ said the second gentleman, sadly.

‘Good! I’m glad to hear it,’ said Scrooge, coldly.

‘But prisons and workhouses can’t make people happy at Christmas time,’ said the first gentleman. ‘So we are asking people for money. We will give it to the poor for food and drink. How much money can you give us?’

‘Nothing!’ cried Scrooge, angrily. ‘I don’t give money to lazy people. I don’t care about them. Good afternoon, gentlemen.’

The two gentlemen looked at Scrooge’s cold, unhappy face and left the office quickly.

The night was cold and dark. It was very foggy. A boy came to sing a Christmas carol¹ outside Scrooge’s door. Scrooge stood up and said angrily, ‘Go away!’ The poor boy was afraid and ran away quickly.

1. **carol** : a religious song.



It was time to shut the office. Scrooge got up from his chair and asked Bob, 'Will you be at home all day tomorrow?'

'If it's alright with you, sir,' said Bob, softly. 'Christmas Day is a holiday.'

'It's not alright,' answered Scrooge, angrily. 'I must pay you for a holiday, but you don't work on a holiday.'

'It's only once a year on Christmas Day,' said Bob.

'Well, be here very early the next morning,' said Scrooge, loudly. 'Do you hear me?'

'Yes, sir,' said Bob. He left the office and ran home. He was happy at home and played with his children.



THINK!

1. Circle the words that describe Scrooge.

unfriendly • happy • cold • kind • unkind • rich • good •
generous • alone • angry • helpful • miser

2. The second gentleman says: *'There are thousands of people with nothing to eat at Christmas. A lot of them have no home and they're cold and hungry'*. Scrooge answers he doesn't care about them. Scrooge is a *selfish* man. He only cares about himself and his money. *Selfish* people only think about themselves. They don't think about other people, and they don't want to help them. How can you care about others? Choose one or more answers.

- a ☐ Listen to others.
- b ☐ Talk to others about their problems.
- c ☐ Help others with their problems.
- d ☐ Find out about other people's problems.

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