

Charles Dickens 200 Years

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Ex.1. Speaking

Discuss the following questions in pairs or groups of three.

1. What is the best thing to do at Christmas?
2. Do you enjoy spending money?
3. What should business partners be like?
4. What should an ideal boss be like?
5. What does it mean when someone says: "Don't be a Scrooge!"?

Ex.2. Vocabulary

Read the beginning of Chapter 1 from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens and decide which of the words in bold mean the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1. To react, to respond | 7. Office |
| 2. To refill | 8. The only |
| 3. Happy | 9. Person whose job it is to bury the dead |
| 4. Person present at a funeral | 10. Not much |
| 5. Mean | 11. Be proud of, brag about something |
| 6. Bad | 12. The day before Christmas |

Ex.3. Reading Comprehension

Read the statements below and decide if they are true or false.

1. Scrooge was an undertaker.
2. Scrooge was depressed after his business partner died.
3. Scrooge made his staff work on Christmas Eve.
4. Scrooge employed people who had imagination.
5. Scrooge's nephew is very similar to his uncle in behavior.

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MARLEY'S GHOST.

MARLEY was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the **undertaker**, and the chief **mourner**. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change for anything he chose to put his hand to.

Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his **sole** assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, his sole mourner.

Scrooge never painted out old Marley's name, however. There it yet stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door, -- Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley. He **answered** to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! But he was a **tight-fisted** hand at the grindstone, was Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! External heat and cold had **little** influence on him. No warmth could warm, no cold could chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. **Foul** weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain and snow and hail and sleet could **boast** of the advantage over him in only one respect, -- they often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blindmen's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!"

But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.

Once upon a time of all the good days in the year, upon a **Christmas eve** old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak biting,

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foggy weather; and the city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already.

The door of Scrooge's **counting-house** was open, that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who, in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't **replenish** it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! I God save you!" cried a **cheerful** voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation Scrooge had of his approach.