

# A Christmas Carol

Below is a scene from Charles Dickens's famous novella, 'A Christmas Carol', which is set during the Victorian era. This scene takes place late at night on Christmas Eve. The main character, Ebenezer Scrooge, has just dressed for bed in his dressing gown and slippers. He is an unpleasant, friendless man and he hates Christmas.

## Cast

**Ebenezer Scrooge:** A miser, moneylender and businessman.

**Jacob Marley:** A ghost, formerly Scrooge's business partner.



## Act I Scene 4

**(Scrooge's bedroom. He is all alone, sitting in a high-backed armchair and facing a marble fireplace. Opposite him is another empty armchair.)**

**(Suddenly, a slow and steady clanking sound begins offstage — getting louder over time. It sounds as if someone is walking slowly up a flight of stairs, dragging something heavy behind them.)**

**Scrooge: (slouches down into his chair)** It's humbug. I'm not really hearing it!

**(Slowly, Marley's ghost enters dressed in: a waistcoat, breeches and boots.)**

**Tied around his waist is a heavy chain, with old, rusted cash boxes, keys and padlocks attached to it.**

**Scrooge: (stands and stamps his foot indignantly)** What do you want?

**Marley: (raises his chains)** I want a lot from you Scrooge.

**Scrooge:** Who are you?

**Marley:** Ask me who I used to be.

**Scrooge: (impatiently)** Alright. Who were you then?

**Marley:** I was Jacob Marley. I've been gone seven years now.

**Scrooge:** Humbug! I don't believe it. You are a bad case of indigestion: some bad dream brought on by some rich, saucy food.

**(Marley screams eerily and shakes his chains at Scrooge, causing him to fall back against his chair, shaking with fear.)**

**Scrooge:** Mercy! Why are you bothering me?

**(Marley stops and sits down in the armchair opposite Scrooge.)**

**Marley:** Do you believe me now?

**Scrooge: (nods fervently)** Yes, I do. But, Jacob, why are you here? Why do you have to wear such a horrible, hefty burden?

**Marley:** Tell me, Scrooge. Did we ever visit a place other than our precious counting house? No! Nor were we kind and generous to others. I forged this hateful load every time I refused to show any charity to one of our customers. We evicted people from their homes when they couldn't pay their rent, even on Christmas Eve!

**Scrooge:** I'm confused. You were an excellent businessman...

**Marley: (Throws his arms up)** I should have been an excellent human being!  
**(Holds his chains up to Scrooge)** Mind you, Scrooge, your chains are going to be thicker and heavier than mine. You've had seven more years.

**Scrooge:** You mean I'm going to have my own horrendous chains too? Oh, help me. Mercy! **(Falls to his knees)**

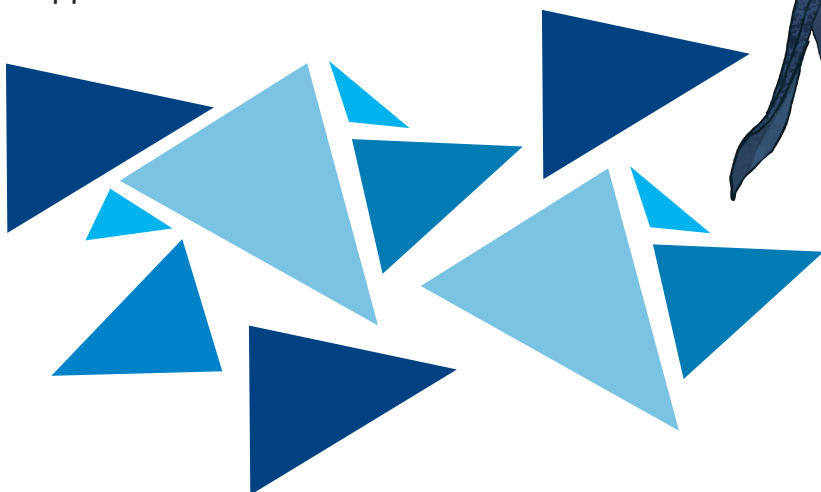
**Marley:** There is a chance for you yet, Scrooge, if you change your wicked ways. Tonight, you will be visited by three different apparitions.

**Scrooge:** I don't think I'd like to see any more ghosts, Jacob. Isn't there some other way?

**Marley: (raises his voice)** Hear me Scrooge! Without their visits, you have no hope. Expect the first spirit when the clock strikes one. Goodbye, Scrooge.

**(Marley walks backwards and exits, his chains trailing noisily behind him.)**

**Scrooge: (waves)** Goodbye, Jacob.



# Questions

1. When does this story take place? Tick one.

- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- Christmas morning

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- The ghost of Marley appears to Scrooge.
- Scrooge refuses to believe it is Marley.
- Marley walks backwards, his chain trailing noisily.
- Scrooge hears something coming up the stairs.

3. Fill in the missing words.

Mind you, Scrooge, your chains are going to be \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ than mine.

4. Look at the end of the scene between Marley and Scrooge.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'ghost'.

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5. How many ghosts will be visiting Scrooge?

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6. Explain why you think Jacob Marley is visiting Ebenezer Scrooge.

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7. What kind of person was Marley in life? Explain your answer.

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8. What do you think Scrooge will say next now that Marley is gone? Explain your answer.

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# Answers

1. When does this story take place? Tick one.

**Christmas Eve**

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

**2** The ghost of Marley appears to Scrooge.

**3** Scrooge refuses to believe it is Marley.

**4** Marley walks backwards, his chain trailing noisily.

**1** Scrooge hears something coming up the stairs.

3. Fill in the missing words.

Mind you, Scrooge, your chains are going to be **thicker** and **heavier** than mine.

4. Look at the end of the scene between Marley and Scrooge.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'ghost'.

**Accept either of the following: apparition; spirit**

5. How many ghosts will be visiting Scrooge?

**Three ghosts will be visiting Scrooge.**

6. Explain why you think Jacob Marley is visiting Ebenezer Scrooge.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Jacob Marley is visiting Scrooge because he has come to warn Scrooge about his own chains since they were friends and business partners before he became a ghost.**

7. What kind of person was Marley in life? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Marley wasn't a very kind person in life. He threw people out of their homes on Christmas Eve. He didn't visit anywhere but worked all the time in the counting house.**

8. What do you think Scrooge will say next now that Marley is gone? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think he will say, 'Humbug!' because he didn't want to believe it was Marley in the first place. Now that he is gone, it is easier to believe it was all a dream.**



# A Christmas Carol

Below is a scene from the beginning of Charles Dickens's famous novella, 'A Christmas Carol', which is set during the Victorian era. This scene takes place at night on Christmas Eve. The main character, Ebenezer Scrooge, has just dressed for bed in his dressing gown and slippers. He is an unpleasant, friendless man and he hates Christmas.

## Cast

**Ebenezer Scrooge:** A miser, moneylender and businessman.

**Jacob Marley:** A ghost, formerly Scrooge's business partner.



## Act I Scene 4

(Scrooge's bedroom. He is all alone, sitting in a high-backed armchair and facing a marble fireplace. Opposite him is another, empty armchair. Suddenly, every bell within his house starts ringing simultaneously and then they all stop. Scrooge stands up and looks about.)

**Scrooge: (annoyed)** Rubbish!

(He sits down roughly. As he sits, a slow and steady clanking sound begins offstage – getting louder over time. It sounds as if someone is walking slowly up a flight of stairs, dragging something heavy behind them.)

**Scrooge: (slouches down into his chair)** It's humbug still; I'm not really hearing it!

(Slowly, Marley's ghost enters dressed in: a waistcoat, breeches and boots. Tied around his waist is a heavy chain, with old, rusted cash boxes, keys and padlocks attached to it.)

**Scrooge: (stands and stamps his foot indignantly)** What do you want?

**Marley: (raises his chains strenuously)** I want a lot from you Scrooge.

**Scrooge:** Who are you?

**Marley:** Ask me who I used to be.

**Scrooge: (impatiently)** Alright. Who were you then?

**Marley:** I was Jacob Marley. I've been gone seven years now.

**Scrooge:** Humbug! I don't believe it. You are a bad case of indigestion: some hallucination brought on by some rich, saucy food. What I do believe is that you are more gravy than grave!

**(Marley screams: eerily, like a strong wind forcing itself through a small window. He angrily shakes his chains at Scrooge, causing him to fall back against his chair, shaking with fear.)**

**Scrooge:** Mercy! Why are you bothering me?

**(Marley stops and sits down in the armchair opposite Scrooge.)**

**Marley:** Do you believe me now? I am the ghost of Jacob Marley.

**Scrooge: (nods fervently)** Yes, I do. But, Jacob, why are you here?

**Marley:** If a man does not explore the world in his lifetime, he is expected to do it once his life is done. I walk everywhere, carrying this heavy chain behind me.

**(Marley moans and rattles his chains again.)**

**Scrooge: (wrings his hands)** Why do you have to wear such a horrible, hefty burden?

**Marley:** Tell me, Scrooge. Did we ever visit a place other than our precious counting house? No! Nor were we kind and generous to others. I forged this abysmal load every time I refused to show any charity to our customers. We evicted people from their homes when they couldn't pay their rent, even on Christmas Eve!

**Scrooge:** I'm confused. You were an excellent businessman...

**Marley: (Throws his arms up)** I should have been an excellent human being! **(Holds his chains up)** Mind you, Scrooge, your chains are going to be thicker and heavier than mine. You've had seven more years.

**Scrooge:** You mean I'm going to have my own horrendous chains too? Oh, mercy!  
**(Falls to his knees)**

**Marley:** There is a chance for you yet, Scrooge, if you change your wicked ways. Tonight, you will be visited by three apparitions.

**Scrooge:** I don't think I'd like to see anymore ghosts, Jacob. Isn't there some other way?

**Marley: (raises his voice)** Hear me, Scrooge! Without their visits, you have no hope. Expect the first spirit when the clock strikes one. Goodbye, Scrooge.

**(Marley walks backwards and exits, his chains trailing noisily behind him.)**

**Scrooge: (waves)** Goodbye, Jacob.



# Questions

1. Who was Jacob Marley before he was a ghost? Tick one.

- Scrooge's customer
- Scrooge's brother
- Scrooge's business partner
- Scrooge's son

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Scrooge is scared to hear he is going to have heavier chains.
- Marley leaves Scrooge by himself.
- Marley tells Scrooge he is going to be visited by three more ghosts.
- Marley explains that he earned his chains by not being kind.

3. Look towards the beginning of the playscript. Find one word that means the same as 'rubbish'.

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4. Fill in the missing words.

You are a bad case of \_\_\_\_\_: some \_\_\_\_\_ brought on by some rich, saucy food.

5. How long has Marley been gone?

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6. Explain why you think Ebenezer Scrooge refuses to believe that it is Jacob Marley.

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7. Were Marley and Scrooge good friends? Explain your answer.

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8. Do you think Scrooge takes Marley's warning about the chains seriously? Explain your answer.

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9. What do you think the spirits will do to Scrooge when they visit? Explain your answer.

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# Answers

- Who was Jacob Marley before he was a ghost? Tick one.  
 **Scrooge's business partner**
- Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.
  - Scrooge is scared to hear he is going to have heavier chains.
  - Marley leaves Scrooge by himself.
  - Marley tells Scrooge he is going to be visited by three more ghosts.
  - Marley explains that he earned his chains by not being kind.
- Look towards the beginning of the playscript. Find one word that means the same as 'rubbish'.  
**humbug**
- Fill in the missing words.  
 You are a bad case of **indigestion**: some **hallucination** brought on by some rich, saucy food.
- How long has Marley been gone?  
**Marley has been gone for seven years.**
- Explain why you think Ebenezer Scrooge refuses to believe that it is Jacob Marley.  
**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Scrooge doesn't want to believe it because ghosts are scary and maybe he is worried that Marley has come to haunt him.**
- Were Marley and Scrooge good friends? Explain your answer.  
**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think they were good friends because Scrooge refers to him as 'Jacob' and Marley comes to warn him about his own chains. That is something a friend would do.**
- Do you think Scrooge takes Marley's warning about the chains seriously? Explain your answer.  
**Pupils' own responses, such as: I don't think Scrooge takes Marley's warning seriously. I think he is quite set in his ways and that as soon as Marley goes away, he thinks it was all a dream. He seemed quite happy to believe that at the beginning.**
- What do you think the spirits will do to Scrooge when they visit? Explain your answer.  
**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think when the spirits visit, they will try and convince Scrooge to be kinder to people by either scaring him or showing him poor people who need help.**

# A Christmas Carol

Below is a scene from the beginning of Charles Dickens's famous novella, 'A Christmas Carol', which is set during the Victorian era. This scene takes place late at night on Christmas Eve. The main character, Ebenezer Scrooge, has just dressed for bed in his dressing gown and slippers. He is an unpleasant, friendless man and he hates Christmas.

## Cast

**Ebenezer Scrooge:** A miser, moneylender and businessman.

**Jacob Marley:** A ghost, formerly Scrooge's business partner.



## Act I Scene 4

**(Scrooge's grand bedroom. He is all alone, sitting in a high-backed armchair and facing a marble fireplace. Opposite him is another, empty armchair. Suddenly, every bell within his house starts ringing at once for about 30 seconds and then they all stop. The strange, sudden silence makes Scrooge stand up and look about.)**

**Scrooge: (annoyed)** Rubbish!

**(He turns back to the fire and sits down. As he sits, a slow and steady clanking sound begins offstage — getting louder over time. It sounds as if someone is walking slowly up a flight of stairs, dragging something extremely heavy behind them.)**

**Scrooge: (slouches down into his chair)** It's humbug still; I'm not really hearing it!

**(Slowly, Marley's ghost enters onstage dressed in: a waistcoat, breeches and boots. Tied around his waist is a heavy, metal chain, with old, rusted cash boxes, ancient keys and iron padlocks attached to it.)**

**Scrooge: (stands and stamps his foot indignantly)** What do you want?

**Marley: (raises his chains strenuously)** I want a lot from you Scrooge.

**Scrooge:** Who are you?

**Marley:** Ask me who I used to be.

**Scrooge: (impatiently)** Alright. Who were you then?

**Marley:** I was Jacob Marley. I've been gone seven years now.

**Scrooge:** Humbug! I don't believe it. You are a bad case of indigestion: some hallucination brought on by too much cheese or some other rich, saucy food. What I do believe is that you are more gravy than grave!

**(Marley opens his mouth and screams: eerily, like a strong wind forcing itself through a small window. He angrily shakes his chains at Scrooge, causing him to fall back against his chair, shaking with fear.)**

**Scrooge:** Mercy! Why are you bothering me, you wretched spirit?

**(Marley stops and sits down wearily in the armchair opposite Scrooge.)**

**Marley:** Do you believe me now? I am the mournful ghost of Jacob Marley, your friend.

**Scrooge: (nods fervently)** Yes, I do. But, Jacob, why are you here, visiting me on Christmas Eve?

**Marley:** If a man does not explore the world in his lifetime, he is expected to do it later, once his life is done. I walk to lands far and wide, continuously carrying this heavy chain behind me.

**(Marley moans and rattles his chains violently again.)**

**Scrooge: (wrings his hands)** Why, Marley? Why do you have to wear such a horrible, hefty burden?

**Marley:** Tell me, Scrooge. Did we ever travel anywhere or visit a place other than our precious counting house? No! Nor were we kind and generous to our fellow men and women of this world. I forged this abysmal load every time I refused to show a shred of charity or forgiveness to one of our poor clients. We evicted people from their homes when they couldn't pay their rent, even on Christmas Eve!

**Scrooge:** I don't understand. You were an excellent businessman...

**Marley: (Throws his arms up)** I should have been an excellent human being!

**(Holds his chains up to Scrooge)** Mind you, Scrooge, your chains are going to be thicker and more burdensome than mine. You've had seven more years to forge them with your selfish actions.

**Scrooge:** My chains? You mean I'm going to have my own horrendous chains too? Oh, help me, Jacob. Show me mercy. **(Falls to his knees in front of Marley.)**

**Marley:** There is a chance for you yet, Scrooge, if you irreversibly change your wicked ways. Tonight, you will be visited by three different apparitions.

**Scrooge:** I don't think I'd like to see anymore ghosts, Jacob. Isn't there some other way?

**Marley: (raises his voice anxiously)** Hear me Scrooge! Without their visits, you have no hope whatsoever. Expect the first spirit when the clock strikes one. Goodbye, Scrooge. Remember what we have spoken about.

**(Marley walks slowly backwards and exits offstage, his chains trailing noisily behind him.)**

**Scrooge: (waves)** Goodbye, Jacob.





# Questions

1. What items are attached to Marley's chain? Tick one.

- bells, keys and padlocks  
 cash boxes, keys and padlocks  
 cash boxes, doorknobs and keys  
 padlocks, doorknobs and bells

2. Draw **four** lines to match each character to their description.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Jacob Marley     | • They will arrive at one o'clock.       |
| The first spirit | • A miser who hates Christmas.           |
| Ebenezer Scrooge | • The author of 'A Christmas Carol'.     |
| Charles Dickens  | • A ghost with a chain around his waist. |

3. In what era does this story take place?

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4. Fill in the missing words.

I forged this \_\_\_\_\_ load every time I refused to show a shred of \_\_\_\_\_ or forgiveness to one of our poor clients.

5. Look at the part where Marley enters and first speaks to Scrooge. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'with great effort'.

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6. Is Scrooge scared of the ghost of Marley at first? Explain how you know.

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7. Explain why you think Scrooge is going to be visited by three more ghosts.

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8. What do you think the spirits will say to Scrooge?

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9. Explain how Scrooge will have to change to ensure he doesn't have to wear chains as a ghost.

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10. Do you think changing his ways will be easy for Scrooge? Explain your answer.

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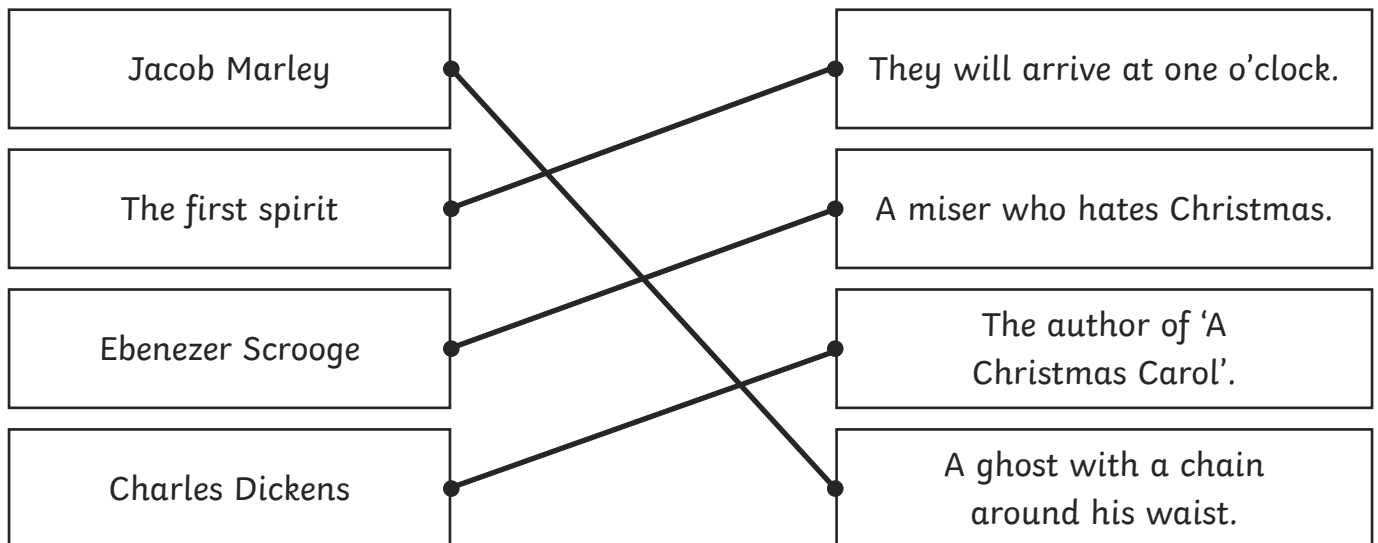
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# Answers

1. What items are attached to Marley's chain? Tick one.

**cash boxes, keys and padlocks**

2. Draw **four** lines to match each character to their description.



3. In what era does this story take place?

**This story takes place in the Victorian era.**

4. Fill in the missing words.

I forged this **abysmal** load every time I refused to show a shred of **charity** or forgiveness to one of our poor clients.

5. Look at the part where Marley enters and first speaks to Scrooge. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'with great effort'.

**strenuously**

6. Is Scrooge scared of the ghost of Marley at first? Explain how you know.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: No, I don't think Scrooge is scared of the ghost at first because he talks to him angrily and stamps his foot at him. He also says he is a hallucination caused by 'rich' food.**

7. Explain why you think Scrooge is going to be visited by three more ghosts.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think he is going to be visited by three more ghosts to convince him to change his ways. I think that Scrooge is stubborn. He showed that when he refused to believe Marley was a ghost.**

8. What do you think the spirits will say to Scrooge?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the spirits are going to scare Scrooge and say if he doesn't change his ways or do something different he is going to end up carrying chains as a ghost too.**

9. Explain how Scrooge will have to change to ensure he doesn't have to wear chains as a ghost.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Scrooge will have to be kind to people and give them a chance to pay their rent. He has to not throw people out of their homes at Christmas. He may even have to learn to like Christmas.**

10. Do you think changing his ways will be easy for Scrooge? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: No, I think it won't be easy because he is stubborn and will not want to change. He has a marble fireplace and a big bedroom so he must be rich. There isn't a lot he can see in it for him to be kind.**