**CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR**

**Task 1 – Reading comprehension**

1. **Read the summary of** **A CHRISTMAS CAROL written by** **Charles Dickens and answer the questions below.**

**Charles Dickens:** **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

(Adapted from: <https://www.shmoop.com/christmas-carol/summary>.)

Seven years after the death of his business partner Jacob Marley, a miserable old man named Ebenezer Scrooge is working in his office. He hates happiness, love, family, **generosity** and Christmas. When his nephew Fred invites him over to Christmas dinner, Scrooge yells at him and refuses. Scrooge then tells off the people collecting charity donations, and **grumbles** and complains that the fact that his clerk Bob Cratchit gets a paid day off for Christmas is theft.

That night, he is haunted by Marley's ghost, which warns Scrooge that the dead who led bad lives are forced to **roam** around and not be at peace. The ghost also claims that three other ghosts are going to appear to Scrooge, and leaves after telling Scrooge to change his life before it's too late.

Scrooge shakes all this off as indigestion, but sure enough he soon gets a visit from the Ghost of Christmas Past. This spirit takes him on a tour of his childhood memories and Scrooge quickly starts crying when he remembers himself as a neglected boy. The past also features scenes from Scrooge's young adulthood, when he transforms into the greedy **miser** that he ends up being after rejecting his fiancée and not learning the lessons of hospitality taught by Fezziwig, the man he was apprenticed to.

Now it's time for the Ghost of Christmas Present, which flies him around the country to show how pretty much every other human is making the most of the season by getting together with friends and family. The **flyby** includes a stop at Fred's house, where a bunch of friends are living it up with dancing and games. Scrooge also gets to check out the dirt-poor but loving Christmas dinner preparations of the Cratchit family. The youngest son is Tiny Tim, a sick, saintly boy.

Next, Scrooge is **squired** around by a phantom—the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come leads Scrooge through a sequence of mysterious scenes relating to an unnamed man's recent death. Scrooge sees businessmen discussing the dead man's riches, some **vagabonds** trading his personal effects for cash, and a poor couple expressing relief at the death of their unforgiving creditor. Scrooge, anxious to learn the lesson of his latest visitor, begs to know the name of the dead man. After pleading with the ghost, Scrooge finds himself in a churchyard, the spirit pointing to a grave. Scrooge looks at the headstone and is shocked to read his own name. He desperately **implores** the spirit to **alter** his fate, promising to **renounce** his insensitive, **avaricious** ways and to honour Christmas with all his heart. Whoosh! He suddenly finds himself safely tucked in his bed.

Overwhelmed with joy by the chance to **redeem** himself and grateful that he has been returned to Christmas Day, Scrooge rushes out onto the street hoping to share his newfound Christmas spirit. He sends a giant Christmas turkey to the Cratchit house and attends Fred's party, to the **stifled** surprise of the other guests. As the years go by, he holds true to his promise and honours Christmas with all his heart: he treats Tiny Tim as if he were his own child, provides **lavish** gifts for the poor, and treats his fellow human beings with kindness, generosity, and warmth.

1. Who is Ebenezer Scrooge? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Why is he haunted by ghosts? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What did the Ghost of Christmas Past show to Scrooge? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What did Scrooge learn from the Ghost of Christmas Present? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What did Scrooge promise to the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. How does Ebenezer Scrooge change throughout the story? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What is the moral of the story? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Match the words in bold to their definitions.**
2. having or showing an extreme greed for wealth or material gain = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. to beg someone earnestly or desperately to do something = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. someone who has a strong wish to have money and hates to spend it = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. to travel without a clear idea of what you are going to do = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. a person who has no home and travels from place to place = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. a flight, especially in a spacecraft, past a particular point in space = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. the quality or condition of being generous = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. to complain about someone or something in an annoyed way = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
10. large, impressive, or expensive = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
11. to cause to be unable to breathe because you have no air = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
12. to accompany someone; to escort = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
13. to change something = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
14. to say formally or publicly that you no longer own, support, believe in, or have a connection with something = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
15. to compensate for the faults; to make something or someone seem less bad = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Task 2 – Speaking skills**

**Describe the photo and explain how people in your country celebrate Christmas.**



(Source: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink>)

**Task 3 – Listening comprehension**

1. **Listen to the song and complete the gaps with the missing words.**

**We Are the World by U.S.A. for Africa:**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5b6mlunq60&list=RDi5b6mlunq60&start\_radio=1&t=275**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5b6mlunq60&list=RDi5b6mlunq60&start_radio=1&t=275)

**We Are the World**

There comes a time  
When we heed a certain \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When the world must come together as one  
There are people dying  
Oh, and it's time to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a hand to life  
The greatest gift of all

We can't go on  
Pretending day-by-day  
That someone, somewhere soon make a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
We're all a part of God's great big family  
And the truth, you know, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is all we need

We are the world  
We are the children  
We are the ones who make a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ day, so let's start giving  
There's a choice we're making  
We're saving our own \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
It's true we'll make a better day, just you and me

Oh, send them your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
So they know that someone cares  
And their lives will be stronger and free  
As God has shown us by turning stones to bread  
And so we all must lend a helping \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

We are the world  
We are…

1. **What is the message of the song?**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Task 4 – Reading comprehension**

1. **Complete the text with the words from the box:**

**spirits symbols wear traditionally represent**

**customary greet predict prosperity gather**

**NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD**

(Adapted from: <https://worldstrides.com/blog/2016/12/9-new-years-traditions-cultures-around-world>.)

Around the world, cultures welcome the change of the calendar with unique New Year’s traditions of their own. Here is a list of some of the most interesting New Year’s traditions around the world:

**Spain** – In [Spain](https://worldstrides.com/collections/spanish-perspectives/?src=worldstrides&wsmedium=BLG), it is [1] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to eat 12 grapes – one at each stroke of the clock at midnight on New Year’s Eve. Each grape represents good luck for one month of the coming year. In bigger cities like Madrid and Barcelona, people [2] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in main squares to eat their grapes together and pass around bottles of cava.

**Colombia** – In hopes of a travel-filled new year, residents of [Colombia](https://worldstrides.com/explore/#/all-travelers/all-interests/south-america,colombia) carry empty suitcases around the block.

**Denmark** – Residents of [Denmark](https://worldstrides.com/explore/#/all-travelers/all-interests/europe,denmark) [3] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the New Year by throwing old plates and glasses against the doors of family and friends to banish bad [4]\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. They also stand on chairs and jump off of them together at midnight to “leap” into January in hopes of good luck.

**Finland** – In [Finland](https://worldstrides.com/explore/#/all-travelers/all-interests/europe,finland), people [5] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the coming year by casting molten tin into a container of water, then interpreting the shape the metal takes after hardening. A heart or ring means a wedding, while a ship predicts travel and a pig declares there will be plenty of food.

**Panama** – To drive off evil spirits for a fresh New Year’s start, it is tradition to burn effigies of well-known people such as television characters and political figures in [Panama](https://worldstrides.com/itineraries/panama-exploring-the-tropics/?src=worldstrides&wsmedium=BLG). The effigies are meant to [6] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the old year.

**Scotland** – During [Scotland’s](https://worldstrides.com/explore/#/all-travelers/all-interests/europe,scotland) New Year’s Eve celebration of Hogmanay, “first-footing” is practiced across the country. The first person who crosses a threshold of a home in the New Year should carry a gift for luck. Scots also hold bonfire ceremonies where people parade while swinging giant fireballs on poles, supposedly [7] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the sun, to purify the coming year.

**Philippines** – You’ll find round shapes all over the [Philippines](https://worldstrides.com/explore/#/all-travelers/all-interests/asia,philippines) on New Year’s Eve as representatives of coins to symbolize [8] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the coming year. Many families display piles of fruit on their dining tables and some eat exactly 12 round fruits (grapes being the most common) at midnight. Many also wear polka dots for luck.

**Brazil** – In [Brazil](https://worldstrides.com/explore/#/all-travelers/all-interests/south-america,brazil), as well as other Central and South America countries like Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela, it is thought to be lucky to [9] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ special underwear on New Year’s Eve. The most popular colours are red, thought to bring love in the New Year, and yellow, thought to bring money.

**Greece** – An onion is [10] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hung on the front door of homes on New Year’s Even in [Greece](https://worldstrides.com/explore/#/all-travelers/all-interests/europe,greece) as a symbol of rebirth in the New Year. On New Year’s Day, parents wake their children by tapping them on the head with the onion.

1. **Which of the New Year’s traditions do you find the most interesting and which one is the most unusual for you? Explain why.**

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1. **How do you celebrate the New Year’s Eve?**

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1. **Every year, people usually make** **New Year’s resolutions, hoping to spark positive change. What kind of changes would you like to achieve in the coming New Year? Make a list of your** **New Year’s resolutions.**

**Some ideas:**



***MY NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS***

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Source: <https://www.pinterest.com)>

**Task 5 – Writing an argumentative essay**

**Choose ONE essay title:**

* **FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE THE TRUE GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS**
* **WE SHOULD LEAVE OUR MISTAKES IN THE PAST YEAR AND TURN THEM INTO VALUABLE LIFE LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE**

**How far do you agree or disagree with the statement? Support your opinion in 220–250 words.**

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(an argumentative essay)

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