



# A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens



MACMILLAN READERS



MACMILLAN READERS  
ELEMENTARY LEVEL

CHARLES DICKENS

# A Christmas Carol

Retold by F. H. Cornish



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*Founding Editor: John Milne*

The Macmillan Readers provide a choice of enjoyable reading materials for learners of English. The series is published at six levels – Starter, Beginner, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate and Upper.

**Level control**

Information, structure and vocabulary are controlled to suit the students' ability at each level.

**The number of words at each level:**

|                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Starter          | about 300 basic words  |
| Beginner         | about 600 basic words  |
| Elementary       | about 1100 basic words |
| Pre-Intermediate | about 1400 basic words |
| Intermediate     | about 1600 basic words |
| Upper            | about 2200 basic words |

**Vocabulary**

Some difficult words and phrases in this book are important for understanding the story. Some of these words are explained in the story and some are shown in the pictures. From Pre-Intermediate level upwards, words are marked with a number like this: ...<sup>3</sup>. These words are explained in the Glossary at the end of the book.



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## A Note About the Author

Charles Dickens is one of the greatest English writers. He was born near Portsmouth, in the south of England, on 7th February 1812.

Charles Dickens' father worked in an office. John Dickens did not earn much money and the family was poor. John Dickens could not pay the bills. When Charles Dickens was 12 years old, John Dickens and most of his family went to prison. Charles did not go to prison. He went to work in a factory. He had to work many hours each day. Charles Dickens was very unhappy at this time. He never forgot about his life at the factory.

In 1827, Dickens was 15 years old. He went to work in an office. He was not paid much money but he had many friends.

In 1833, Charles Dickens started writing stories. He became rich and very famous. *A Christmas Carol* was published in 1843. Other famous books by Charles Dickens are: *Oliver Twist* (1838), *Bleak House* (1853), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1861) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864).

Dickens knew how the poor people lived in England. Many of his stories are about poor people. He wanted everyone to know how poor people lived. Many of the laws of England were changed after his books were published.

Charles Dickens died on 9th June 1870. He was 58 years old. Dickens is buried in the famous church, Westminster Abbey, in London.

## A Note About Life in England in the Nineteenth Century

A *Christmas Carol* takes place in London in the 1820s. At this time, Great Britain was a very rich country. London was the largest city in Europe.

Many rich people lived in London. They had expensive houses and they had the very best food and drink. They travelled in fine carriages pulled by horses. They wore beautiful and fashionable clothes.

Charles Dickens lived in London. He saw how the rich people lived. But he also saw that thousands of poor people lived in London. They lived in small, dirty houses. They did not have enough to eat.

Many poor people could not get work. Men, women and children often became criminals. They stole food and clothes. Sometimes they killed people to get money. If a family could not pay their bills, they had to go to prison. The prisons in Britain in the nineteenth century were the worst in Europe.

England is divided into counties. And each county is divided into parishes. In the nineteenth century, officials of the parish looked after poor people. A workhouse was built in every parish. Workhouses were places where poor people had to live. They were usually terrible places. The poor people who lived in workhouses were given food and a bed. But they had to work very hard and the food was very bad. Many people died in workhouses.