While visiting Canada, British author Charles Dickens has come to tell us his most famous Christmas tale. Accompanied by three singing musicians, he’ll tell you the fascinating story of Ebenezer Scrooge.

The story takes place in the big city of London, in England. Mr. Scrooge, a grumpy old man, hates everything about Christmas: family dinners, Christmas carols, even presents! Miserly and alone, he closes his heart to anyone who tries to get close to him.

On Christmas Eve, three ghosts visit Mr. Scrooge: they are the spirits of Christmas. Showing him visions of the past, present, and future, the spirits try to make Scrooge understand the true meaning of Christmas. But can Mr. Scrooge open his heart before it’s too late?
THE CHARACTERS
OF THE A CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

As you’ll see, there are many characters in the big A Christmas Carol family.

Here are a few of them:

CHARLES DICKENS

He is the author and the narrator of this tale. Since he comes from England, he has a British accent. Dickens loves to get disguised to portray the characters in his story.

EBENEZER SCROOGE

This grumpy old loner is the story’s hero. He hates everything about celebrating Christmas. In fact, there’s only one thing he really loves: his money!

BOB CRATCHIT

He is a clerk who works for Scrooge. Although he is underpaid, he nevertheless works very hard. He hopes to have a nice Christmas with his family, despite being poor.

TINY TINA

The youngest of Bob Cratchit’s children. Tiny Tina is very sick and she walks with crutches.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

This kind glowing spirit shows Scrooge sad and happy moments from his past.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Bearded, and wearing a Christmas bonnet, this spirit opens Scrooge’s eyes to the misery some people are forced to live in.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Without a doubt the most disturbing of the three spirits of Christmas. Mute and draped in a dark cape, he shows Scrooge the sad future he will face if he doesn’t change his attitude.

NOT TO MENTION

ALL THE OTHERS

Scrooge’s nephew; Jacob Marley, Scrooge’s former associate; Fanny, Scrooge’s sister; Bella, the love of Scrooge’s youth; Mrs. Cratchit, Bob’s wife; the carolers; etc.
1. STRINGED INSTRUMENTS THAT ARE PLUCKED

To play these instruments, musicians must pluck the strings with their fingers or nails. A small piece of plastic called a plectrum can also be used to pluck the strings.

The **guitar** has six strings. It first appeared in Spain before spreading all across Europe. Today, it is part of the musical culture of almost every country in the world. It is used both to accompany others and as a solo instrument.

The **lute** is an instrument that is 4,000 years old! It is the ancestor of the guitar.

The **bouzouki** is the national instrument of Greece. It has a metallic sound.

The **mandolin** is a type of small lute originally from Italy.

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**DRAW-A-SONG**

Play an unfamiliar Christmas song and listen closely to the words. Then, play the song again, while drawing whatever the song inspires you to draw.

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**A FEW FUN GAMES**
2. STRINGED INSTRUMENTS THAT ARE BOWED OR RUBBED

The baroque cello is part of the big violin family. To play this instrument, cellists use a bow: a long stick strung with horsehair. The friction between the horsehair and the cello’s strings produces sounds.

Unlike the cello, the strings on a hurdy gurdy are not rubbed using a bow, but with a wooden wheel hidden inside the instrument. A crank turns the wheel.

3. WIND INSTRUMENTS

The sounds wind instruments produce are created when musicians blow into them.

The rauschpfeife is an instrument from the Middle Ages that isn’t used very frequently these days. It is conical in shape and produces a very loud sound.

Everyone knows what a recorder is: a wooden or plastic instrument with 8 holes in it. But do you know it comes in different sizes and different ranges? During the concert, you will hear a soprano recorder and a bass recorder.

In the shape of a cylindrical tube, the chalumeau is the ancestor of the clarinet. It has a warm sound. This instrument also comes in several sizes and ranges. During the concert, you will hear a soprano chalumeau and an alto chalumeau.
4. PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS

The percussion family includes hundreds of different instruments—around 400, and maybe even more! It is therefore the largest and most varied family of musical instruments. To produce sounds, some must be shaken, others must be struck or scraped, and some must be banged together.

BODHRÁN  TAMBOURINE  CAJÓN

GLOCKENSPIEL  TUBULAR BELLS  JAW HARP

5. AND FINALLY... THE VOICE

It’s easy to forget that the voice is also an instrument. And yet, it is a musical instrument that every one possesses. Your voice isn’t just for talking, whispering, and shouting... it’s also for singing.
Here is a Christmas version of the traditional game of Snakes and Ladders.

Ideally, there shouldn’t be more than 4 players at a time. Use wrapped candies as game tokens; you can eat them when the game is over. You’ll also need a die. The goal of the game is to make your way through the course and get to the finish line.

Don’t forget: the ladders allow you to climb, while the snakes take you back down.
In England, Christmas choirs sing Christmas carols, just as we do here.

Carolers involve getting small groups of children or adults together and, beginning on December 21, going around from house to house to sing for people and collect money for charitable organizations. These singers are called carolers.

**HERE’S HOW YOU CAN BECOME LITTLE CAROLERS**

1. Choose two or three Christmas carols that you enjoy, and learn them well.
2. Dress up in capes and top hats.
3. Go from classroom to classroom or walk the streets singing your Christmas carols.
4. Don’t forget to bring along little containers to collect donations.

**A FEW FUN GAMES**

**OH CHRISTMAS TREE**

Play the song Oh Christmas Tree. Choose a student to portray the tree, someone who must remain standing and perfectly still. Decorate this living tree with garland, then take a photo and print it. Do it again, using a different student each time.
THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE’S DIY CRAFTS

Make your own Christmas cards

Christmas cards are another popular tradition in England.

It’s customary to send holiday greeting cards to family and friends. When people receive cards, they hang them above the fireplace mantle or around a big mirror and leave them up until January 6.

HERE IS AN ORIGINAL EXAMPLE OF A CARD MADE USING SALT DOUGH DESIGNS.

Make as many cards as you need to send to all your family members.

MATERIALS

- A sheet of card stock for the card
- Construction paper in contrasting colours
- Salt dough (see recipe below)
- Tree- and star-shaped cookie cutters
- Paint
- Scissors
- Liquid glue

To make salt dough: combine 1 cup of fine salt with 2 cups of flour. Slowly add 1 cup of water. Knead the dough thoroughly using your hands.

DIRECTIONS

1. Form two balls of dough and flatten them so they are about 1 cm thick.
2. Using the cookie cutters, cut the dough into tree and star shapes. Let the shapes air dry for a few hours: this will shorten the cooking time.
3. Cook the salt dough shapes in a 100°C oven for one to two hours.
4. Take the shapes out of the oven, let them cool down, and then paint them.
5. Fold the card stock in half to make the card.
6. Cut out rectangles of contrasting construction paper and glue them to the card.
7. Glue the tree and the star to the front of the card and let it dry.
8. Finish decorating the card however you like.
9. To finish the card, don’t forget to write your Christmas wishes on the inside.
LET’S TALK ABOUT
THE CONCERT

A FEW SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK STUDENTS AFTER THE CONCERT

- Did you enjoy attending the concert?
- What was your favourite part?
- Were there any parts that scared you? If yes, what were they?
- You heard several songs during the show. Is there one that was your favourite?
- Of the instruments you heard, which ones did you like? Is there one in particular you would like to learn how to play?
- What is your favourite activity at Christmas time?
- In the story, Scrooge learns how to be generous at Christmastime. In what way is he generous? What does he give Tiny Tina and her family for Christmas? What about you, do you give gifts to your parents and your friends, at Christmas or on their birthdays?
- Being generous also means knowing how to share. Is it easy or hard to share one’s toys? One’s snack?

When you attend a concert, you must remain silent. The story may make you laugh, or the musicians may ask you to make certain sounds, but the rest of the time, silence is required so that the artists can concentrate and put on a good show for you. How long can you stay completely silent, without laughing? Try it several times, trying to beat the previous record each time.

A FEW FUN GAMES
SILENT CHALLENGE

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