



OxBridge Centre
ENGLAND

Comprehension

Week 17

Name

Your score

/ 117 = %

Class average

%

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A Christmas Carol (1843), a short novel by the English nineteenth-century writer Charles Dickens, is one of the most popular books ever written about Christmas, and one of the most famous stories about a character showing 'Christmas spirit' by being kind and generous towards others after realising how mean he had been.

"Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?" asked Scrooge.

"I am."

The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.

"Who, and what are you?" Scrooge demanded.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past."

"Long Past?" inquired Scrooge: observant of its dwarfish stature.

"No. Your past."

It put out its strong hand as it spoke, and clasped him gently by the arm.

"Rise. And walk with me."

It would have been in vain for Scrooge to plead that the weather and the hour were not adapted to pedestrian purposes; that bed was warm, and the thermometer a long way below freezing; that he was clad but lightly in his slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap; and that he had a cold upon him at that time. The grasp, though gentle as a woman's hand, was not to be resisted. He rose: but finding that the Spirit made towards the window, clasped his robe in supplication.

"I am mortal," Scrooge remonstrated, "and liable to fall."

"Bear but a touch of my hand there," said the Spirit, laying it upon his heart, "and you shall be upheld in more than this."

As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground.

"Good Heaven!" said Scrooge, clasping his hands together, as he looked about him. "I was bred in this place. I was a boy here."

The Spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand odours floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long, forgotten.

"Your lip is trembling," said the Ghost. "And what is that upon your cheek?"

Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that it was a pimple; and begged the Ghost to lead him where he would.

"You recollect the way?" inquired the Spirit.

"Remember it!" cried Scrooge with fervour -- "I could walk it blindfold."

"Strange to have forgotten it for so many years," observed the Ghost. "Let us go on."

They walked along the road, Scrooge recognising every gate, and post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church, and winding river. Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting towards them with boys upon their backs, who called to other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by farmers. All these boys were in great spirits, and shouted to each other, until the broad fields were so full of merry music, that the crisp air laughed to hear it.

"These are but shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost. "They have no consciousness of us."

The jocund travellers came on; and as they came, Scrooge knew and named them every one. Why was he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them? Why did his cold eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past? Why was he filled with gladness when he heard them give each other Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and bye-ways, for their several homes? What was merry Christmas to Scrooge? Out upon merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

"The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with

a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were over-run with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat.

They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks.

At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.

Not a latent echo in the house, not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the panelling, not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind, not a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty store-house door, no, not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with a softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

The Spirit touched him on the arm, and pointed to his younger self, intent upon his reading. Suddenly a man, in foreign garments - wonderfully real and distinct to look at - stood outside the window, with an axe stuck in his belt, and leading by the bridle an ass laden with wood.

A Christmas Carol BY CHARLES DICKENS

1. What did Scrooge notice first about the ghost's appearance? [1 mark]

2. In your own words, describe what Scrooge felt it was 'in vain' to explain to the ghost. Make three points. [3 marks]

3. What is Scrooge afraid of when the ghost leads him towards the window? [1 mark]

4. Rewrite the following sentence into modern, correct English: 'Bear but a touch of my hand there and you shall be upheld.' [2 marks]

5. Scrooge says that he has a 'pimple' on his cheek; what do you think he has on his cheek and why is this unusual? [2 marks]

6. Describe the schoolhouse in your own words. [3 marks]

7. Why does the memory of the school evoke such strong emotions for Scrooge? Quote from the text to support your answer. [2 marks]

8. Briefly describe the clothes of the man who is seen at the end; and what is he leading? [2 marks]

Now decide which of the following root words from the word bank can be written with the prefix 'un' and which can have the prefix 're'. Add the correct prefix and write the new word in the sorting table. [15 marks]

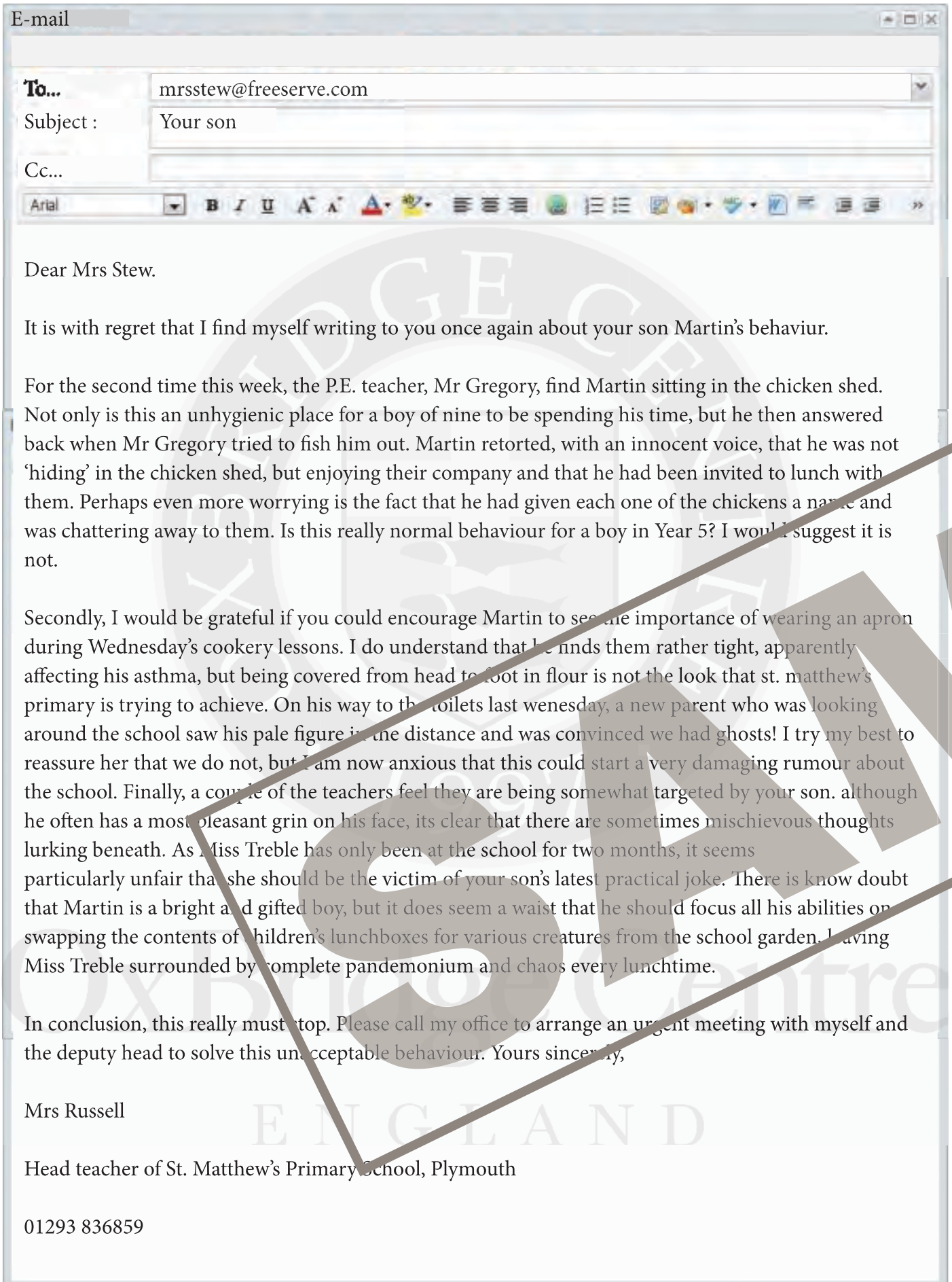
_____ certain	_____ build	_____ cycle	_____ clear
_____ comfortable	_____ shuffle	_____ fortunate	_____ even
_____ occur	_____ new	_____ happy	_____ necessary
_____ vision	_____ turn	_____ healthy	

Words with the prefix 'un'

Words with the prefix 're'

Now complete the following sentences using one of the new words you have created. [6 marks]

1. The student did not do enough _____, so he failed his exams.
2. Smoking is a very _____ habit.
3. The conjuror asked a member of the audience to _____ his pack of cards as part of his magic trick.
4. The result of the election is still _____ because there are still votes to be counted.
5. The doctor said that my chest infection would _____ if I stopped taking my medicine.
6. The meaning of the teacher's story was _____ to the children.



1. Find and copy down another word for: [5 marks]

Meaning	Word from text
answer back	
confusion	
dirty	
when something is important / needs to be done soon	
to cheer up or comfort	

2. Mrs Russell has made some mistakes. Highlight where the mistakes are before she sends her email.
Check for : [12 marks]

- Punctuation
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Paragraphs

[Hint: there are two mistakes for both 'grammar' and 'paragraphs' and four for both 'punctuation' and 'spelling'.] If you are an extension worker, write the corrections too.

3. What (untrue) gossip may start about the school due to something Martin has done? [1 mark]

4. In your own words, summarise the three things Martin has done that Mrs Russell is unhappy about.
[3 marks]

5. Martin does not always appear as a very naughty boy on the outside. How do we know? Find evidence to prove your answer. [2 marks]

6. What excuse does Martin give as to why he does not want to wear an apron? [1 mark]

7. What technique does the writer use to make the end of the second paragraph dramatic? [1 mark]

8. Is this the first time that Martin has behaved badly? How do you know? [2 marks]

9. Do you think that Martin is behaving badly because he finds the work at school too difficult? Explain your answer. [2 marks]

10. Look at the first paragraph. Explain how Martin describes and treats the chickens as though they are real people. [2 marks]

11. What does Martin replace the children's lunch with? [1 mark]

12. How does the headmistress feel about Martin's behaviour? Explain your answer with reference to the text. [3 marks]

13. Who can be contacted by phoning 01293 836859? [1 mark]

14. Using evidence from the first full paragraph write down what Mr Gregory might have said when he found Martin in the chicken shed. [1 mark]

15. Is Miss Treble a long-serving member of staff? How do you know? [2 marks]

16. Who will be present at the urgent meeting to discuss Martin's unacceptable behaviour? [1 mark]

17. Apart from the teachers, who else might be fed up with Martin's practical jokes and why? [2 marks]

18. Imagine you are the parent who saw Martin covered in flour. Describe what you thought you saw and what Mrs Russell said to you. [3 marks]

19. In her email, Mrs Russell uses three words beginning with the prefix 'un'. Find them and write them here: [3 marks]

Look carefully through this piece of writing. Can you spot the mistakes and correct them? Pay attention to the spelling, punctuation and grammar. Circle the mistakes carefully and correct them. [18 marks]

Mark sat quietly in the doorway. It was a cold evening. Most people would be pleased at such a nice night. But not mark. He was soked through and miserable. He felt so alone hardly anyone had looked at him all day. when had he started to be invisable? Why didn't anybody care about him any more? He scratched his head. His hair was greasy and full of horrible lice. His cloths was as thin as papper, hardly keeping out any cold or damp. He fort back to home. Mum Dad and Grandma. He wondered what his brothers, Tom and robert were doing. Where they thinking about him? He had never felt so lonely.

Match the words (1-14) with the definitions (A-N). [14 marks]

1. temporary

2. coal

3. disabled

4. turkey

5. clerk

6. generous

7. dark

8. nephew

9. frightening

10. partner

11. poor

12. punishment

13. office

14. mean (or
meanspirited)

A) something that is done to you because you did something bad.

B) A person who is _____ can't use a part of their body, either because of injury or disease.

C) Something that is _____ makes you feel afraid.

D) the opposite of rich.

E) a room or building where people work.

F) the son of your brother or sister (or the son of your husband's or wife's brother or sister).

G) lasting only for a limited period of time.

H) a solid black fuel that comes from the ground.

I) A person who is _____ gives a lot (e.g. of money, or time) to other people.

J) without much, or without any, light.

K) the opposite of generous.

L) a person whose job is to work with documents, for example in an office.

M) one of two or more people who own a company.

N) a large bird, similar to a chicken, that people often eat at Christmas.

/ 14

Total -

/ 117