



ABOUT YOU

Answer the questions and talk about your ideas.

- 1 When do people in your country have special meals with family and/or friends?
- 2 What do they eat on these occasions?
- 3 Do you enjoy occasions like these?
- 4 Which is more important – the people or the food?

The Cratchit family do not have much money, but they celebrate Christmas together with a special meal cooked by Mrs Cratchit. Bob and Mrs Cratchit have three children – Peter, Belinda and Tiny Tim. Tim is a child with a physical disability and he is very sick. In this extract, Mr Cratchit's employer – Mr Scrooge – can see the meal because he is shown the scene by a magical ghost.

- 1 Read the text. As you read, think about this question. What emotions do the Cratchit family feel as they share their meal?

A Christmas Carol (1843)

Charles Dickens

His little crutch was heard on the floor, and in came Tiny Tim led by his brother and sister to his seat beside the fire; while Bob, Master Peter, and the two young Cratchits (who seemed to be everywhere at once) went to get the

- 5 **goose**, which they soon returned with in high **procession**.

It seemed a goose was the greatest of all birds; a perfect **marvel** – and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs Cratchit made the hot **gravy**, Peter **mashed** the potatoes energetically; Belinda **sweetened** the apple-sauce; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody ...

- 10 At last the dishes were set. There was a **breathless** pause, as Mrs Cratchit took the **carving**-knife, prepared to cut the goose. Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife.

Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its **tenderness** and flavour, size, and cheapness were the themes of universal admiration. With apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the

- 20 whole family. But now, the plates being changed by Miss



Belinda, Mrs Cratchit left the room alone – too nervous to wait – to take up the pudding and bring it in.

What if there isn't enough! What if it breaks? What if somebody got over the wall of the back yard and stole it,

- 25 while they were happy with the goose?

GLOSSARY

goose	a large water bird similar to a duck, or the meat from this bird
procession	a line of people that moves forward slowly as part of a ceremony or public event
marvel	a wonderful or astonishing person or thing
gravy	a warm, brown sauce made from the fat and liquid that comes from meat when it is being cooked
mashed	food crushed until it is soft
sweetened	made sweeter, for example by adding more sugar
breathless	not able to breathe enough
carving	cutting a large piece of cooked meat into smaller pieces
tenderness	softness

2 Read the text again and answer the questions.

1 Why do you think the writer says *it seemed* the goose was the greatest bird?

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2 Who helps with the meal and how?

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3 What does the expression *high procession* tell us about how the goose was brought to the table?

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4 What happens just before Mrs Cratchit takes the carving knife? Why?

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5 Why do you think Mrs Cratchit is so worried about the pudding?

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VOCABULARY

3 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

1 My mum likes to her coffee with brown sugar. **(SWEETENED)**

2 The meat was very soft and **(TENDERNESS)**

3 When I was in Seville I saw some impressive religious **(PROCESS)**

4 She was the piece of meat very carefully. **(CARVE)**

5 After running up the hill I was **(BREATHE)**

4 Complete the text with the words in the box. There is one extra word you do not need to use.

carving goose gravy
mashed sweetened

When I was on holiday I ate ¹ in a restaurant. It was served with ² potatoes and tasted a bit like chicken, but not as nice, in my opinion. There was also a brown sauce – called ³ but I didn't like it very much. Afterwards we ate fruit, ⁴ with syrup.

WRITING

5 Work in a small group. You are going to write a menu for a restaurant of your choice. Working together, decide what kind of restaurant you want to have and divide your menu into three parts: first course, main course and dessert.

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SPEAKING

6 Each group from Activity 5 is now a table of friends in a restaurant. Someone from another group will come and take your order.