Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* Setting Practice

Once upon a time -- of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve -- old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already -- it had not been light all day -- and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

--Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*

*withal*: In addition; as a further factor or consideration: "useful but ornamental withal".

*ruddy*: Having a healthy red color.

*palpable*: So intense as to be almost touched or felt.

*chink*: A narrow opening or crack, typically one that admits light.

*phantom*: A ghost.

1. What does series of adjectives in the second line emphasize?

2. What effect does the use of wheezing, beating and stamping have on the description of the people outside Scrooge’s office?

3. What image does the description of the candles create?
4. What effect does the use of the word phantom have?