

Christmas Activities for Teenagers/Adults



Activity 1

Christmas

a. Look at these photos. What does each one show?

1.



2.



3.



4.



b. Match the questions on the left with the answers on the right to complete the jokes.

1. What's an ig?

a. a penguin

2. What animal can write?

b. snow

3. What falls in winter
but doesn't get hurt?

c. an Eskimo house
without a loo

c. You are going to read four texts about Christmas. Look at the titles and try to guess what each text is about.

1. Being good
2. Kids' play
3. Stuffing yourself!
4. What's on?

d. Match the titles from the previous exercise to the texts below.

A. **Film 5** 

15.30 **The Snowman** [1982]. Animated children's story by Raymond Briggs about a boy who makes friends with a snowman.

16.30 **White Christmas** [1954]. Get into the festive mood with this classic featuring Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye.

18.00 **Home Alone** [1990]. Comedy starring Macaulay Culkin about an eight-year old boy who is accidentally left at home at Christmas.

B. 
Dear parents,
It's with great pleasure that we invite you to come and watch your Year 3 child perform in a recreation of the Christmas nativity. The performance will take place on Thursday 13th December at 2pm in the main hall. The children have been rehearsing very hard and can barely contain their excitement! So, please come along and support them and join us for a mince pie and a cup of tea afterwards.
Yours truly,
Susan Hardy-Jones (Head of Year 3)

C. **Fairy83**
26th December 2011 2:04PM
I love Christmas! It's definitely the best time of year. I get to relax, spend time with my family and eat delicious food without feeling guilty ☺ For those of you who don't know what a traditional Christmas dinner in the UK is like, you can usually feast your eyes on some of the following: roast turkey with chestnut stuffing and all the trimmings like sprouts, roast potatoes, parsnips, cranberry sauce, bread sauce and gravy. Then for dessert a lovely rich Christmas pudding – I found the silver coin again this year and nearly broke a tooth! The only problem is that we'll be eating cold turkey for the next four days. Yuck!

D. **Dear Santa**
My name is Luke and I'm a very good boy. My mum says I can't ask you for lots of presents this year. I want a skateboard – like the one Jimmy Makin has – it's cool, but can I have a red and black one cos I don't like yellow? Also, can I have a new games console? I dropped my old one and it doesn't play games now ☹ I will leave some milk and cookies for you (on the kitchen table) and a carrot for Rudolph.
Luke, 7 3/4

e. Read the texts again and answer the questions below.

1. What kind of film is The Snowman?
2. Which film is meant to be funny?
3. Who takes part in the nativity play?
4. What can the parents do after the play?
5. Who does Fairy83 eat Christmas dinner with?

6. What did Fairy83 find in the Christmas pudding?
7. What is Luke planning to give Santa and Rudolf?

WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

f. Complete the text with the words from the box. Be careful! There are two extra words.

them you me your us her we their

It's with great pleasure that (1) _____ invite (2) _____ to come and watch (3) _____ Year 3 child perform in a recreation of the Christmas nativity. The performance will take place on Thursday 13th December at 2pm in the main hall. The children have been rehearsing very hard and can barely contain (4) _____ excitement. So, please come along and support (5) _____ and join (6) _____ for a mince pie and a cup of tea afterwards.

WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

g. Find words or phrases in the texts that match the definitions below.

1. a film that is a cartoon or that is made using a series of drawings
2. the way that someone is feeling
3. making something exist again
4. used for saying that something is almost not possible
5. to take great pleasure in looking at something, especially food
6. extra parts added to a meal to make it more traditional or interesting
7. an informal way of saying something is fashionable or attractive to a certain group of people
8. used in informal speech as a short form of because.

Collocations

h. Complete these sentences using the words from the box.

stuffing silver roast mince classic

1. This _____ turkey is absolutely delicious.
2. My gran loves watching the _____ films they show at Christmas.
3. My gran has made over a hundred _____ pies this year!
4. It's traditional to put a _____ sixpence in the Christmas pudding.
5. My mum always uses chestnut _____ for the turkey.

SPEAKING

i. Discuss the questions below in groups.

1. How does your family celebrate Christmas?
2. What do you eat for Christmas dinner?
3. Do you give each other presents? If yes, what kind of presents do you give?
4. What's the best Christmas present you've ever had?
5. Is there any other festival that is important in your country? How do you celebrate it?

Activity 2

Christmas – Live from London Podcast

1. The following are some typical Christmas traditions in Britain. Read the information. Then listen and tick the number of times you hear people talk about them.

_____ Hanging Christmas stockings – the Christmas stocking is a sock, or sock-shaped bag that children hang on December 24 so that Santa Claus can fill it with presents.

_____ Eating roast turkey with all the trimmings – on December 25th the traditional meal is a roast turkey. “All the trimmings” refers to other food served with the turkey, for example bacon or sausages.

_____ Going to midnight mass at church – many people go to church on December 24, and there is a special service at midnight.

_____ Watching Christmas television. Many popular television shows in Britain have a Christmas special episode. Popular movies are also shown every year at Christmas.

_____ Listening to the Queen. Every year on December 25 the Queen of England gives a Royal Christmas message. The message is on television and radio at 3pm.

2. Listen again and answer the questions.

Speaker 1

The man says he has dinner up in the Midlands. Where is this in relation to London?

Speaker 2

How long does it take the woman speaker to open her presents on Christmas day?

Speaker 3

Where is the man’s family from?

Speaker 4

What are the people doing around the table at this woman’s Christmas?

Speaker 5

What is happening in the room where the kids (children) aren’t allowed?

Speaker 6

This man mentions having stubbies (beers) on the beach at Christmas. What English-speaking country might he be from?

Speaker 7

What does the woman and her family have for breakfast on Christmas day? What instruments do they play later on?

3. Work in pairs. Choose five questions from the list and ask a partner. Then swap roles and repeat.



Fifteen Questions for Christmas

- What do you usually do on December 24?
- What do you usually do on December 25?
- Have you bought any presents yet this year? Who for?
- What would you most like to receive this Christmas?
- What is the earliest Christmas memory you have?
- What was your favourite present as a child?
- Do you like any Christmas films? Which ones?
- Do you think Christmas has become too commercial?
- If you could go anywhere for Christmas this year, where would you go?
- What do you like most about Christmas?
- What do you dislike most about Christmas?
- Who would you most like to spend Christmas with?
- Are there any sales after Christmas? Do you buy anything in the sales?
- Have you ever spent Christmas in another country? Where? What was it like?
- What three words do you associate most with Christmas? Explain your associations.

Activity 3

The Christmas Cracker Quiz



Christmas crackers are a traditional feature of a British Christmas meal. Two people hold each end of a cracker and pull. When the cracker breaks open, the person who is left with the biggest part wins whatever is inside. The commonly accepted history of the Christmas cracker is that it was an invention of Tom Smith, the owner of a London sweet shop. In 1847, he started selling sugar-almonds wrapped in paper with a twist at either end. There was a lot of competition so he made the packaging bigger, added a "love motto" and replaced the sugar-almond with a small present. But the biggest change was in 1860, when he added a piece of paper with gunpowder that created the exploding 'crack' and gave the cracker its name.

In the Christmas cracker quiz, we test your knowledge of Christmas! Working in a group, read through the questions and choose the right answers.

1. In many countries, people eat turkey on Christmas Day. Do you know where turkeys come from?
 - a. Turkey. The birds are named after the country.
 - b. North America. Sailor William Strickland brought turkeys to Europe in the 16th century.
 - c. Hungary. A famous chef started the fashion for eating turkeys at Christmas when he was feeling Hungary in 1764.
2. After finishing the turkey, the British eat a special pudding. The pudding, which was originally created by the Celts to honour the god Dagda, traditionally has a special ingredient. What is it?
 - a. Money! Yes, eating Christmas pudding is dangerous. You can break a tooth or swallow a pound coin.

- b. A prediction! Yes, it's true. On a piece of paper you can read what will happen to you in the next 365 days.
 - c. A crown! The person who finds the wise man's crown in their portion of pudding will be lucky.
3. A lot of people think that Christmas has become too commercial and that the religious aspects of Christmas have been forgotten. Why do we celebrate December the 25th?
- a. It's the day on which Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
 - b. Pope Julius I decided it was a good day to celebrate Jesus' birth – people already celebrated pagan festivals around this time.
 - c. The shops are closed and there's usually a good film on TV.
4. At Christmas, lots of men dress up in red outfits and white beards and say, 'Ho ho ho.' Where did Father Christmas (also known as Santa Claus) originally come from?
- a. The Vikings used to dress a man as 'Winter'. They invited the bearded man into their homes and were nice to him in order to please the gods.
 - b. Father Christmas is based on Nicholas, a bishop who became very popular after his death. Children were told that if they left food for his horse on the anniversary of his death then Nicholas would leave them sweets.
 - c. The Santa Claus that we all know today was created by Coca-Cola in 1931 for the company's winter advertising campaign. The artist, Haddon Sundblom, decided to make Santa's clothes the same colour as the famous Coca-Cola red.
5. Why does Santa Claus always come down the chimney instead of using the front door?
- a. Santa is from Lapland. People in Lapland used to live in houses under the snow, where a hole in the roof was used both as a chimney and a front door.
 - b. Because doors and windows are locked at night to stop burglars entering. So the chimney is the only way for him to get into the house.
 - c. Because he travels through the air, and lands on the roof. The chimney is nearer than the front door.
6. The average person in Britain sends 50 Christmas cards each year. Christmas cards were invented by Sir Henry Cole in 1843. Why did he invent them?
- a. Because he realised that people would pay for cards with pictures of snowmen on them, so he could make money from his idea.
 - b. Because he worked at the post office, and it was his job to make people buy more stamps.
 - c. Because he had lots of friends and couldn't be bothered writing letters to all of them. He thought sending a card would be much quicker.
7. What is a Christmas cracker?
- a. It's a triangular object that people place under the Christmas tree. On Christmas Eve they crack it open and eat the sweets inside.
 - b. It's a square box-like object with a figure inside. When you open the box, the figure jumps out. The figure is called Cracker Jack.

- c. It's a cylindrical object that two people pull. It breaks open and the person with the biggest portion wins a paper hat.
8. What was special about Christmas in 1644 in England?
 - a. 5,000 people died in the Great Christmas Pudding Plague.
 - b. It was fashionable to be a vegetarian, so no one ate turkey for Christmas dinner.
 - c. An act of parliament abolished the celebration of Christmas and people had to go to work as usual.
 9. Christmas Eve is the night before Christmas Day. Who said on Christmas Eve: 'If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart'?
 - a. The Queen of England in last year's royal message.
 - b. Scrooge in the novel A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.
 - c. Sting in the pop song 'Fight Christmas'.
 10. Christmas is a time to think of other people and the environment. Imagine that you have to travel somewhere to see a friend at Christmas. Environmentally, what is the best way to travel?
 - a. By bus.
 - b. By train.
 - c. By car.
 11. The circus is very popular at Christmas, and the circus ring is where the performance takes place. Which of the following, built in 329 BC, is said to have been the first circus?
 - a. Piccadilly Circus
 - b. Circus Maximus
 - c. Moscow State Circus
 12. Robins are often the subject of pictures on Christmas cards. What is a robin?
 - a. A figure of a man made of snow.
 - b. A person who takes money from the rich to give to the poor.
 - c. A little bird with a red breast.
 13. New Year's Eve is a time for celebration, especially in Scotland. However, New Year's Eve isn't called New Year's Eve in Scotland. What is it called?
 - a. Old Night
 - b. Hogmanay
 - c. Saint Sylvester's Eve
 14. Carols are songs celebrating the birth of Jesus. In Bavaria in 1818, Franz Gruber and Joseph Mohr, a priest, wrote one of the most popular Christmas songs of all time, which was first performed on a guitar. Which song?
 - a. 'Do They Know it's Christmas?'
 - b. 'Silent Night'
 - c. 'White Christmas'

15. The British send around 125 million Christmas cards each year. Santa Claus received 600,000 cards and letters last year from children asking for presents. Santa has his own postcode, according to the Royal Mail. What is it?
 - a. XMAS1
 - b. WC1 XA
 - c. XM4 5HQ
16. Many people have their birthday on Christmas Day. Which of these people was not born on December 25?
 - a. Singer Annie Lennox
 - b. Actor Charlie Chaplin
 - c. Canadian politician Justin Trudeau
17. Christmas can be hard work, so most people relax the next day. The day after Christmas is called Boxing Day. Why?
 - a. This is the day when people gave presents (Christmas boxes) to servants, postmen and rubbish collectors.
 - b. There used to be boxing matches in the streets on this day.
 - c. It is traditional for people to throw old things out of their houses, to be ready for the new year. These are put into boxes and given to charity.
18. What happened on Christmas Day in 1914, during World War One?
 - a. A temporary truce was called, and some British and German soldiers sang carols together and played football.
 - b. The war ended, and everyone ate turkey together and pulled crackers.
 - c. Nothing – Christmas was cancelled because of the fighting.
19. What do children do with their socks on the night before Christmas?
 - a. Wash them so that their feet will be clean on Christmas Day.
 - b. Hang them on the Christmas tree for decoration.
 - c. Leave them at the end of their beds for Santa to put presents in.
20. Christmas is celebrated in countries around the world. In Germany people say, 'Fröhliche Weihnachten.' What does it mean?
 - a. Merry Christmas.
 - b. God bless you and your family.
 - c. Come to our traditional wine drinking festival tomorrow at eight o'clock and bring a friend.
21. What do people do under the mistletoe?
 - a. Pray for happiness in the year to come.
 - b. Kiss each other.
 - c. Leave a glass of whisky for Santa Claus.
22. Christmas is often referred to as Xmas by many people. Why?
 - a. Xmas is used by people who don't have time to write the full word.
 - b. The X represents the Greek letter 'chi' which is the first letter of 'Christos' (Christ). Xmas has the exact same meaning as Christmas.

- c. The X represents the cross.
23. How does Santa Claus travel on Christmas Eve?
- a. On a magic sleigh, pulled by ten flying reindeers.
 - b. By private plane, or sometimes helicopter.
 - c. Santa isn't real – he's actually your mum or dad – so he doesn't travel anywhere.
24. The three wise men followed the star to Bethlehem. What presents did they take for Jesus?
- a. Gold, a sheep and a crown.
 - b. Gold, frankincense and myrrh.
 - c. A paper hat, a DVD and a skateboard.

Activity 4

Christmas



1. Warmer

a. Read the well-known saying below – do you agree?

‘Giving is better than receiving.’

b. Look at the diagram and write definitions for the noun compounds with Christmas.



2. Video

a. Watch the video and choose the correct option to complete the sentences.

1. Lydia's family goes to church / walk the dog at Christmas.
2. Kamilla's family eats a ham / duck at Christmas.
3. Patrick's family eat Christmas lunch from 3pm / 11ish.
4. Lydia's favourite thing about Christmas is spending time with family / the food.
5. Kayleigh's least favourite thing about Christmas is the washing up / feeling too full.
6. Natasha doesn't like / likes the fact that shops are open on Christmas day.
7. Patrick prefers to do his Christmas shopping as early as possible / at the last minute.
8. Kamilla often feels stressed / excited about buying presents for people.

b. Watch the video again and complete what the people say with the correct words.

1. 'In Guyana, Christmas is a _____ – lights, presents, food ...'
2. 'A traditional Christmas for me is a massive _____, lots of friends and family ...'
3. 'We also dance around the Christmas tree, because that's a Danish _____.'
4. 'OK, so usually it _____ with breakfast about 11ish.'
5. 'There's a traditional breakfast which _____ of like ham ...'
6. 'We normally have a goose, a roast goose, and Christmas pudding and all _____.'
7. 'Feeling all fat and full and hot at the end of the day, that's the _____.'
8. 'I don't like the fact that Christmas is started so _____.'

c. These are the people from the video. Whose Christmas celebrations would you most enjoy? Why?



Lydia



Natasha



Kayleigh



Kamilla



Patrick

d. What can you remember? Put the words in order to make the questions that the interviewer asks.

1. would / in / traditional / your household / describe / how / you / Christmas / a / ?
2. how / Christmas / do / celebrate / you / ?
3. there / meal / typical, traditional / a / you / is / have / that / ?
4. of / what / food / kind / ?
5. Christmas / your / thing / about / what's / favourite / ?

3. Language in use

What do people do at Christmas?

a. Match the verbs on the left with the words on the right.

- | | |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1 wrap | a. carols |
| 2 decorate | b. a special meal |
| 3 sing | c. cards |
| 4 go | d. with friends and family |
| 5 celebrate | e. crackers |
| 6 hang up | f. presents |
| 7 light | g. stockings |
| 8 eat | h. the tree |
| 9 send | i. to church |
| 10 pull | j. candle |

b. Choose the correct option to complete the definitions.

1. a _____ is a small present that goes in a Christmas stocking
a. stocking completer

- b. stocking filler
 - c. stocking packer
2. a _____ is a shiny coloured ball used as a decoration on a Christmas tree
- a. bubble
 - b. globe
 - c. bauble
3. in the United Kingdom, _____ is the day after Christmas day and a public holiday
- a. Resting Day
 - b. Feasting Day
 - c. Boxing Day
4. _____ is a Christmas picture with 24 small doors, one of which is opened each day of the month before Christmas
- a. Nativity count
 - b. an Advent calendar
 - c. a Christmas diary
5. _____ is long, thin pieces of shiny paper used as a Christmas decoration
- a. tinsel
 - b. tonsil
 - c. tinfoil
6. a _____ is a small pie filled with dried fruit and spices which is eaten at Christmas
- a. mince pie
 - b. plum pie
 - c. cholly pie
7. _____ are small lights used for decorating a Christmas tree
- a. berry lights
 - b. angel lights
 - c. fairy lights

5. Discuss

Read what Natasha said in the video and discuss the questions.

'I don't like the fact that Christmas is started so early. I mean, September you go into the shops and Christmas is in your face. You haven't even had Halloween yet ...'

- Do you think Christmas products and decorations are available too early in the year?
- Have Christmas and other yearly celebrations become too commercial (= focused on buying and selling things)?

Activity 5

Advent

1. Warmer

Read the article and write the names of what you see in the images below.



Advent

Advent in Germany is a tradition-rich time of warmth, cosiness, soft lights, spicy aromas, and friends and family. It helps bring about a sense of good cheer, known as *gemütlichkeit*, which adds to people's well-being during the cold and dark weeks leading up to Christmas.

Advent lasts for around four weeks and always includes four Sundays, the fourth of which is the last Sunday before Christmas. Depending on which day of the week Christmas Eve (24th December) falls on, Advent will begin sometime between November 27th and December 3rd.

Most traditional German Christmas markets start on the first weekend of Advent. These have become well known all over the world and, especially those in big towns and cities, are visited by many thousands of tourists. But they are also atmospheric places where locals enjoy meeting after work for a hot mulled wine and something to eat, and to shop for Christmas gifts. These larger markets are usually on for the whole four weeks of Advent. Most villages and small towns hold their own smaller Christmas markets on the first weekend of Advent. These are more about community and less about commercialism, and provide an opportunity for local groups, clubs and associations to raise money by selling home-made cakes, sausages, drinks and handicrafts.

Special kinds of biscuits such as Lebkuchen and Pfeffernüsse, types of spicy gingerbread, are sold in shops during Advent. At home, adults show off their baking skills and children have fun in the kitchen baking special traditional Advent biscuits such as cinnamon stars (Zimtsterne), coconut macaroons (Kokosmakronen), and bear claws (Bärentatzen). These biscuits are given as gifts or shared with friends and family and eaten with hot tea or coffee in the cosy glow from candles on the Advent wreath.

Advent wreaths, made of evergreen pine twigs woven together to form a circle, are placed on the dining table or in a window. Each circular wreath holds four candles and is decorated with dried orange peel, cinnamon sticks and ribbons. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. One candle is lit each Sunday in Advent so that by Christmas all four candles are burning at the same time.

Advent calendars have 24 doors to help count down the days until Christmas. Door number one is opened on 1st December and a further numbered door opened every day until the final one announces to excited children that Christmas Eve has finally arrived. Although many toy and chocolate companies sell their own Advent calendars, many parents and grandparents prefer to make them themselves. These personal and home-made Advent calendars contain not only sweets and small gifts, but also love.

2. Look at the words in the box below. Find them in the text and underline them. Then match the words to the correct definitions below.

aromas	atmospheric	commercialism	community	cosiness
	count down	glow	good cheer	peel
			peel	woven

1. a feeling of being warm, comfortable and relaxed _____
2. smells that are strong but pleasant _____
3. a feeling of happiness _____
4. creating a special positive mood or feeling _____
5. the people who live in a particular area _____
6. the activities or attitudes of people who think that making a profit is more important than anything else _____
7. a soft warm light _____
8. made by crossing long pieces over each other so that they join together _____
9. the skin of a fruit or vegetable _____
10. wait for something to happen, usually noticing every day or moment that passes until it happens _____

3. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F) according to the information in the text? Correct any that are false.

1. Advent lasts for the whole of December.
2. Advent begins on December 1st.
3. Many Advent traditions provide people with a feeling of cosiness, warmth and general well-being.
4. German grandparents traditionally buy their grandchildren an Advent calendar with a chocolate present for each day of Advent.
5. It is a tradition to make and eat Advent biscuits on Christmas Eve.

4. These simple but delicious Advent biscuits are easy to make. But first the recipe needs some help.

a. Use these words to complete the list of ingredients.

cinnamon	egg whites	almonds	sugar
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Ingredients:

250g of icing _____

3 whisked _____

2 teaspoons of _____

350g of ground _____

b. Now put the recipe instructions in the correct order

	a. Add the ground almonds and cinnamon to the smooth mixture to make a dough.
	b. Any leftover biscuits can be stored in an airtight container for two to three weeks.
	c. Stir the icing sugar into the egg whites to make a smooth mixture.
	d. Brush the rest of the egg white mixture thinly onto the biscuits for the glaze.
	e. Roll the dough out so that it is half a centimetre thick.
	f. Preheat the oven to 150°C.
	g. Enjoy eating the cinnamon star biscuits with family and friends.
	h. Let the biscuits cool completely.
	i. Use a star-shaped cookie cutter to cut out approximately 50 cookies.
	j. Bake for about 15 minutes.
	k. Keep aside two tablespoons of the egg white mixture for the glaze.
	l. Beat the egg whites until they become stiff.

5. Find out more about the Advent and Christmas markets in one of these cities.

Stuttgart	Dresden	Nuremberg	Constance	Munich
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Think about:

- When does the market open?
- How long is the market on for?
- What special events or attractions does the market offer visitors?

Get together in a group and present your findings. Then decide which market you would most like to go to and why.

Activity 6

Christmas: #Sadtree



1. For many people around the world, the sight of an evergreen tree decorated with lights and baubles conjures up the spirit of Christmas. That said, it hasn't always been this way. In fact, the modern-day image we share of the Christmas tree only became widespread in 1846, when the popular royals Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were pictured in a popular magazine standing around a Christmas tree with their children. Until then, the Christmas tree had been viewed with suspicion as a foreign or pagan symbol.

2. Since the beginnings of man, the evergreen tree has held a special, symbolic meaning for people living in the northern hemisphere. During the short, cold days and long, dark nights of winter, evergreen plants have always reminded people that, once the winter solstice ends, warmer weather will return and the world around them will once again turn from frozen white to living green.

3. As far back as ancient Egypt, people have been decorating their homes to help them through the winter. In the time of the pharaohs, green palm leaves were used in order to symbolize the return of longer days. Some credit the ancient Greeks as being the first to decorate evergreen trees in honour of their gods. The Romans then adopted the tradition by decorating trees with pieces of metal and images of their fertility god, Bacchus, to celebrate the solstice of Saturnalia.

4. It wasn't until the sixteenth century that Christian missionaries began to synthesize Christian and pagan traditions and the symbol of the Christmas tree that we know today began to take shape. The first hybrid symbols were seen in what are now known as the Baltic countries. The medieval Brotherhood of the Blackheads, a drinking society of merchants and soldiers, is said to have ended their winter festival of drinking and eating by dragging a tree into a square and setting it ablaze. The tradition later moved to Germany where Christians began bringing trees into their homes and decorating them and the Christmas tree as we now know it was born.

5. Because of its pagan associations, the tradition of decorating trees remained a strictly German tradition until well into the nineteenth century when it became fashionable among European royalty. The aforementioned portrayal of the British royal family standing around a decorated tree in 1846 signalled widespread acceptance of the custom, which then crossed the Atlantic.

6. Although decorated trees had been seen in the homes of German settlers as early as the late 1700s, it wasn't until this royal stamp of approval that Christmas trees became popular in North America. A reprint of the famous Queen Victoria picture with all of the royal symbols removed was widely distributed a few years later, thus converting the symbol into an accepted American scene.

7. While small pockets of modern-day opposition can still be found, the Christmas tree has now been widely adopted around the world. From Bangkok to Bogotá, glittering balls and blinking lights strung around a green tree remind us that, despite ever-changing tastes, the passing of the seasons will always remain constant.

Exercise 1. Match each heading to the right paragraph of the text.

- a. The Christmas tree goes public
- b. The symbol's meaning to early man
- c. The modern-day Christmas tree appears
- d. A Photoshopped picture
- e. Have Christmas trees always had the same meaning?
- f. Pre-Christian celebrations
- g. The Christmas tree's popularity around the world

Exercise 2.

Go back to the text and answer the following questions.

a. What did the Christmas tree symbolize for pre-Christian cultures?

b. Have evergreen trees always been the exclusive symbol?

c. Where were the first Christmas trees found?

d. What happened in the nineteenth century?

e. How did the Christmas tree's popularity spread in North America?

Exercise 3.

Which of the following adjectives and verb phrases do not collocate with Christmas tree?

adjectives	Verb phrases
a. sparkling	a. put up
b. massive	b. put something underneath
c. real	c. lay over
d. dazzling	d. take down
e. religious	e. decorate
f. artificial	f. light

Stories behind the trees

1. I remember my first flat. I shared it with three friends and we barely had enough money to eat, let alone pay the rent. We were coming home late one night from the bars and my roommate sees this rotten old tree next to the bins. He suddenly has the bright idea that this was going to be our tree and that it would be the perfect centrepiece for a party the next day. We dragged the sad looking tree home and decorated it with CD covers and takeaway leaflets that we often ordered

from. The next day we invited some friends over for a party, with one rule: they had to bring something for the tree. I tell you, that was the strangest looking tree ever!

2. My parents always made a big deal out of putting up the Christmas tree. My father thought it was a crime to cut down a real, live tree for something like this, so we had this artificial tree that looked like something you used to clean glasses. At least it looked like that until it was decorated. Sometime after Thanksgiving, we could haul out the Christmas box from the basement and start putting up the tree. My brother and I would always fight over who got to help my dad figure out which lights worked and which ones didn't. Once we replaced all of the burnt out lights, we would string the lights around the tree and start decorating it. My mother would always insist on putting up homemade decorations and would only allow a certain number of store-bought ornaments. We would have strings of popcorn and others with different pasta shapes. We would of course have to put up the things my brother and I had made at school and, then, finally, we would all make a star for the top together. Back then, I couldn't wait to get the tree up because it meant that the presents would soon go under it. Now that I look back, I think I can understand why my parents insisted on the ritual.

3. When my wife and I first got married, we were living and working abroad in the developing world – Mauritania, to be exact. Being a Muslim country, Christmas isn't exactly one of the most popular celebrations and, therefore, it was impossible to find a tree and, being in the Sahel, there aren't many trees around. As Christmas approached the first year we were there, we were wondering what we were going to do for a tree. For me, there is just something about having a tree and putting gifts underneath it that conjures up the Christmas spirit. One day, after an unsuccessful search through the markets for anything that would serve as a tree, my wife had a great idea. We went home and she asked me to wait outside. It must have been about an hour later when she finally came out and got me. She insisted that I walk in blindfolded and I reluctantly agreed. When I finally got in, she took off the blindfold and shouted, 'Surprise! Merry Christmas!' There, in front of me, was a lamp that she had decorated with ribbons and aluminium stars with the three or four presents that she had bought all nicely wrapped and placed at the base of the lamp/Christmas tree. It might not have been much for anyone else but it was the best 'tree' I had ever seen!

4. My most vivid memory of a Christmas tree isn't necessarily about a beautiful one from my childhood or anything like that. One year, when I was coming home from work, I saw smoke pouring out of my neighbour's house. She was standing at the front door shouting, 'Help, help! Someone, please help!' I ran up the steps and looked inside and saw that the Christmas tree had caught fire and was starting to burn the curtains near the window. I asked her if she had an extinguisher and she said that she didn't. So I ran next door to my house and got the extinguisher that we keep in the kitchen and ran back to my neighbour's house. By the time I got back, the fire had begun to spread and, without thinking twice, I started to spray the foam all over the place. Just as I put out the last bit of fire, the firemen arrived and rushed in. Unfortunately, my neighbour had

lost all of their Christmas presents and some curtains, although they really were ugly anyway. But I learned something that day. The best present isn't necessarily under the tree but under the kitchen sink!

Answer Key

Activity 1

a.

1. A Christmas stocking. These are put at the end of children's beds and presents from Santa Claus are then put in the stockings
2. A Christmas pudding. This is a fruit-based dessert which is traditionally eaten as part of Christmas dinner.
3. A snowman. Snow sometimes falls at Christmas time in England, so many people associate making snowmen with Christmas.
4. A Christmas cracker. These are usually put next to plates at Christmas dinner and are pulled before eating. They contain a paper hat to wear, a cheap gift and a joke to tell.

b.

1. c; 2. a; 3. B

c.

Students' own answers

d.

- A. 4; B. 2; C. 3; D. 1

e.

1. an animation; 2. Home Alone; 3. the schoolchildren; 4. have a mince pie and a cup of tea; 5. his / her family; 6. a silver coin; 7. milk and cookies for Santa and a carrot for Rudolf

f.

1. we; 2. you; 3. your; 4. their; 5. them; 6. Us

g.

1. animated; 2. mood; 3. recreation; 4. barely; 5. feast your eyes on; 6. trimmings; 7. cool; 8. Cos

h.

1. roast; 2. classic; 3. mince; 4. silver; 5. Stuffing

i.

students' own answers

Activity 2

1.

Hanging Christmas stockings. (twice)

Eating roast turkey with all the trimmings. (3 times)

Going to midnight mass at church (once)

Watching Christmas television. (once)

Listening to the Queen (once)

2.

1. Speaker 1 – an hour and a half north of London

2. Speaker 2 – all day

3. Speaker 3 – England and France

4. Speaker 4 – eating, singing and listening to music

5. Speaker 5 – the presents are being wrapped and the room is being decorated

6. Speaker 6 – Australia

7. Speaker 7 – croissants and champagne; piano and cello

3.

Students' own answers

Activity 3

1. b; 2. a; 3. b; 4. a, b and c; 5. a; 6. c; 7. c; 8. c; 9. b; 10. a; 11. b; 12. c; 13. b; 14. b; 15. c; 16. b; 17. a; 18. a; 19. c; 20. a; 21. b; 22. b; 23. c; 24. b

Activity 4

1a.

Students' own answers

1b.

Christmas card: a card that you send to your friends and family at Christmas

Christmas pudding: a sweet food made with dried fruits and spices, eaten at Christmas

Christmas Eve: the day or evening before Christmas Day

Christmas cracker: a tube of coloured paper given at Christmas which makes a sudden sharp noise when two people pull it apart. It contains a small present, paper hat and a joke.

Christmas carol: a traditional song sung at Christmas

Christmas stocking: a large sock that children hang on their bed the night before Christmas that is filled with presents while they sleep

Christmas tree: a tree that you cover with lights and other decorations at Christmas

2a.

1. walk the dog
2. duck
3. 3pm
4. the food
5. the washing up
6. doesn't like
7. as early as possible
8. stressed

2b.

1. big thing
2. dinner
3. tradition
4. starts
5. consists
6. the trimmings
7. worst thing
8. early

2c.

Students' own answers

2d.

1. How would you describe a traditional Christmas in your household?
2. How do you celebrate Christmas?
3. Is there a typical, traditional meal that you have?
4. What kind of food?
5. What's your favourite thing about Christmas?

3a.

1. f
2. h
3. a
4. i

5. d
6. g
7. j
8. b
9. c
10. e

3b.

1. b
2. c
3. c
4. b
5. a
6. a
7. c

4.

Students' own answers

5.

1. party (other answers possible)
2. off
3. Christmas Eve
4. celebrate (other answers possible)
5. spending
6. Christmas tree
7. baubles (other answers possible)
8. fairy lights
9. mince pies
10. least
11. stockings
12. presents (other answers possible)
13. tradition
14. dinner/lunch
15. trimmings
16. crackers

Activity 5

1.

1. Advent wreath
2. cinnamon sticks
3. a cup or glass of mulled wine

4. Advent biscuits
5. Advent calendar
6. ribbons
7. evergreen pine twigs

2.

1. coziness
2. aromas
3. good cheer
4. atmospheric
5. community
6. commercialism
7. glow
8. woven
9. peel
10. count down

3.

1. False – it lasts for four weeks up until Christmas Eve on 24th December
2. False – it begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (this might be at the end of November)
3. True
4. False – this type of Advent calendar exists, but people also like to make home-made Advent calendars – and not only grandparents for their grandchildren
5. False – they are made and eaten at any time during Advent, preferably with friends and family

4.

a.

- 250g of icing sugar
- 3 whisked egg whites
- 2 teaspoons of cinnamon
- 350g of ground almonds

b.

1. f
2. l
3. c
4. k
5. a
6. e
7. i
8. d
9. j
10. h
11. g
12. b

5.

Possible information that could be included is:

- Stuttgart – particularly attractive market stands with decorated roofs and an ice rink
- Dresden – Germany’s oldest market, includes a Medieval market
- Nuremberg – Germany’s most famous market, opened by the Christkind, also famous for its sausages and Lebkuchen (a type of gingerbread)
- Constance – cross-border stands from the countries surrounding Lake Constance: Germany, Switzerland and Austria
- Munich – has the largest manger; live Advent music is played every evening from the town hall

Activity 6

Exercise 1

1. E; 2. B; 3. F; 4. C; 5. A; 6. D; 7. G

Exercise 2

- a. Evergreen plants have always reminded man that spring will return.;
- b. No, palm trees were used in Egypt.;
- c. The first trees were seen in the Baltic countries.;
- d. European royalty made it fashionable to have Christmas trees.;
- e. A reprinted picture of Queen Victoria’s family around a tree minus all of the royal symbols was widely distributed across the continent.

Exercise 3

Adjectives: religious

Phrasal verbs: lay over