

## Christmas Activities for Young Learners



## The Christmas stocking game



### Warmer

Draw a picture of a Christmas stocking on the board. Ask students “What is this?” Explain the difference between a sock and a stocking. Tell the students about the English Christmas tradition of stockings (traditionally stockings are hung above the fireplace, and Father Christmas leaves gifts inside them; if you get left a piece of coal it means you were bad this year). Ask students if they have any similar kind of tradition where they come from.

### Play the Game

Tell the students that in this class they are going to talk about different aspects of the Christmas season. Divide the class into groups of three or four and give each group a board and a coin. Give them a copy of the instructions (above) and let them start’ to ‘Choose one of the game options and explain the rules to your students. Monitor and help where necessary.

### The Stocking Squares – Two options

If you are playing with a very small class (and maybe have only two games going at the same time), here’s a nice activity you can do using the stocking and a series of small, everyday objects (pen, calculator, mobile phone, cassette, piece of clothing etc.). Every time somebody lands on a stocking square, they must try to guess what is in the stocking (so you have to slip the object in the stocking without students seeing you!). Tell them to use language of speculation and sensations when they do this e.g. It might be...

It could be... It must be... It feels (adj)... It feels like a (noun)...

Prepare a series of revision questions on little pieces of paper (taken from your course). Every time someone lands on a stocking square, they must answer a revision question correctly. Another variant on this would be to have the students make their own revision questions and put them all in the stocking.

Another possibility that is compatible with the two above is to have a little Christmas treat for each time someone answers a stocking question correctly. This involves the teacher buying a bag of sweets for the class though!

## Board Game

**START**

In your opinion, what's the best thing about the holiday season?



Do you think that Christmas is too commercial these days? Do people waste a lot of money?

In your opinion, what's the worst thing about the holiday season?

When was the first time you spent an important holiday away from home? What happened?

What was the last "perfect" gift you gave someone? The last one you received?



If you could spend New Year's with anyone and anywhere, what would you do?

During your holidays, what will you do to pass the time?

Who do you spend Christmas with? What are some of your family Christmas traditions?

Make three words with the letter:

**CHRISTMAS**



What three events from the past year are most memorable for you?

Make three words with the letter:

**MISTLETOE**



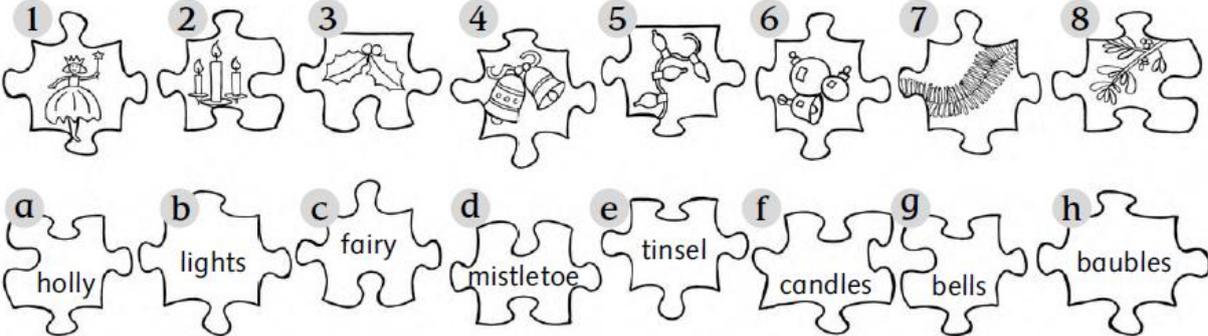
What is your favourite holiday song? What is your favourite holiday movie?

**FINISH**

### Festivals – Christmas

- Explain that people in the UK decorate their houses with these objects.
- Pupils match the words and pictures.

1. Match the puzzle pieces.



- Pupils name the items they can see in the living room.
- They then label the picture using the words from activity 1.

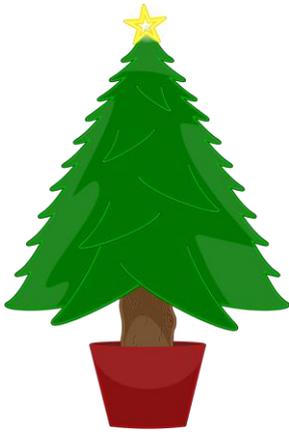
2. Label the room.



- Ask Do you have a Christmas tree? What do you put on it?
- Pupils decorate the Christmas tree using items from activity 1. They then complete the sentences.
- Ask volunteers to read their sentences out loud.

### 3. Decorate and describe your Christmas tree

is isn't are aren't



- There \_\_\_\_\_ lights.  
 There \_\_\_\_\_ baubles.  
 There \_\_\_\_\_ tinsel.  
 There \_\_\_\_\_ a fairy.

### Festivals – Christmas Advent Calendar

- Explain that Advent is the time from 1st of December until Christmas Eve – it's the Christmas countdown. An Advent calendar has 24 windows. A window is opened every day during Advent.
- Hand out materials and read the instructions out loud.
- Pupils follow the instructions to make their own Advent calendar. More advanced pupils could also write the names of the items they draw in the squares.
- Pupils can decorate the classroom with their finished Advent calendars or take them home.

**1. Make an Advent calendar.**



coloured pencils



scissors

**You need:**



sticky tape



paper

**Instructions:**

1. Cut out the Advent Calendar.
2. Draw Christmas pictures in the blank squares.
3. Colour the Christmas words.
4. Cut out 24 small squares.
5. Write the numbers 1 to 24 on each square.
6. Tape the square covers over the pictures on the Calendar.

## Advent Calendar




### Festivals: Christmas

#### 1. Make a Christmas cracker

##### *You need:*

- Coloured paper (A4)
- Cardboard tube (10cm)
- String
- Squares, circles and stars for decoration
- Glue/sticky tape

**What to do:**

1. Roll the paper round the tube and stick.
2. Make a hat with coloured paper and decorate with Christmas words.
3. Fold the hat and put it in the tube.
4. Write a riddle on a small piece of paper (Example: It is an animal. It has big ears. It can run and jump. It likes carrots. What is it?)
5. Put the riddle in the tube.
6. Tie the ends of the cracker with string.
7. Decorate the cracker with squares, circles and stars.
8. Pull the cracker with a friend, give him the hat and ask him the riddle.

2. Ask students to prepare and decorate 12 big cards with each of the 12 grammar rules and examples.

<b>Is for the singular</b> There <i>is</i> a dog.	<b>Are for the plural</b> There <i>are</i> 2 cats.	<b>Don't forget the –s</b> She <i>likes</i> football
<b>Do you...?, Does he...?</b> <i>Do you</i> like apples? <i>Does he</i> like apples?	<b>Do your homework!!</b> Write about Christmas.	<b>Adjectives come first</b> The <i>green</i> door.
<b>He is for boys</b> <i>He</i> is a tall boy.	<b>She is for girls</b> <i>She</i> is a pretty girl.	<b>-ed for the past</b> I watched TV yesterday.
<b>Did for past questions</b> <i>Did</i> you go to school yesterday?	<b>Will for the future</b> I <i>will</i> pass my test tomorrow.	<b>Remember please and thank you</b> Can I have a sweet <i>please</i> ? <i>Thank you</i> .

### 3. Practise the song with the students.



#### Twelve days of Christmas Song

- On the first day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'Is for the singular.'
- On the second day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'Are for the plural.'
- On the third day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'Don't forget the -s.'
- On the fourth day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'Do you...?, Does he...?'
- On the fifth day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'Do your homework!!'
- On the sixth day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'Adjectives come first.'
- On the seventh day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'He is for boys.'
- On the eighth day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'She is for girls.'
- On the ninth day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'-ed for the past.'
- On the tenth day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'Did for past questions.'
- On the eleventh day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'Will for the future.'
- On the twelfth day of Christmas my teacher said to me:  
'Remember *please* and *thank you!*'

## Christmas in Britain



In Britain Christmas is very special. Families decorate their Christmas trees with pretty lights and sing Christmas carols. December 24th is Christmas Eve and children put stockings next to their bed. These are like big socks and in the morning they are full of presents from Father Christmas. They also put a plate of biscuits and a glass of milk under the Christmas tree for Father Christmas and an apple outside the door for his reindeer. On Christmas morning the plate is empty and there is no apple. There are also lots of presents under the Christmas tree. The children open their presents very early and play with them all day. The family eats turkey for Christmas lunch and pulls Christmas crackers, which have little presents, hats and jokes inside.

### 4. Match the underlined words above with their definitions below.

1. Families sing these songs at Christmas.
2. This happy old man brings everyone presents on Christmas Eve.
3. People eat this for Christmas lunch. It looks like a big chicken.
4. These are animals that take Father Christmas to children's houses.
5. Father Christmas gives these to good children.
6. Children put these big socks next to the bed.
7. They grow in forests and look pretty at Christmas.
8. People pull them and they have a hat and present inside.
9. The day before Christmas.





## New Year's Eve

### Warmer: Answer the questions

How did you celebrate New Year's Eve last year?

Did you go to a party or stay at home?

What did you do at midnight?

Did you drink champagne?

### 1. New Year's Eve in Scotland. Read the text. Are the sentences True or False?

#### New Year's Eve in Scotland

**In Scotland, New Year's Eve is called Hogmanay. While Christmas is a time to spend with the family, Hogmanay is a time to be with friends.**

Before celebrations can start, it is important to clean the house and have a bath so that the New Year will start well. Hogmanay parties often include dancing, music and singing. At midnight everyone always sings a song called 'Auld Lang Syne' (although most people don't know what it means). The words 'Auld Lang Syne' literally translate from old Scottish dialect meaning 'Old Long Ago', and the song is about love and friendship in times past. After midnight, the custom of 'first footing' starts. A 'first footer' is the first person to enter someone's house in the New Year. Tradition says that the person should have dark hair and bring a gift. The gift is often a piece of coal and a bottle of whisky.



- a. In Scotland, New Year's Eve is celebrated with friends. **T/F**
- b. Christmas Eve is called Hogmanay in Scotland. **T/F**
- c. It's the custom to clean the house and have a bath before midnight on New Year's Eve.  
**T/F**
- d. 'Auld Lang Syne' is a place in Edinburgh where people meet on New Year's Eve. **T/F**
- e. A 'first footer' is the first person to enter a house in the New Year. **T/F**
- f. A 'first footer' should ideally be fair with blue eyes. **T/F**

- g. The 'first footer' brings a piece of coal if the children have been bad the previous year.  
T/F

**2. New Year's Eve in your country. Answer the questions**

- Are any of the traditions in Scotland similar to New Year celebrations in your country?
- What traditional ways of welcoming the New Year do you have in your family or in your region?
- How old are your New Year traditions? Did your grandparents celebrate in the same way?
- Are children allowed to stay up late to see in the New Year?
- Are there any special meals or activities for New Year's day?

**3. New Year Resolutions**

At midnight on New Year's Eve many people make a New Year resolution. No-one is sure where the custom started. All over the world people resolve to give up drinking or smoking or to exercise more or learn a language. Most people keep their resolution for a week and then return to their old habits. Here's your chance to make a New Year resolution.

**Unjumble the sentences below:**

1. stop going I smoking am to
2. eat am every not chocolate going day to I
3. I be to this nice going am to sister year my

**Write some resolutions for yourself:**

This year I am going to ...

This year I am not going to ...

**Write some resolutions for the following people:**

Your mother

Your best friend

Your boyfriend / girlfriend

Your teacher

- 4. Good Year. Some years are better or more enjoyable/successful than others. We remember these years and the special things that happened.**

Choose a good year for you. Tell your partner why the year was special: What happened? What did you do? Who did you meet? Where did you go?

Make a list of things that have happened in over the last year. Follow these headings to help you:

**New friends**

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**Fun things I heard or saw**

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**Fun things I did**

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**Important lessons I learned**

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**Key events/moments**

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## Christmas Shopping

### 1. Christmas presents



□ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_



□ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_



□ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_ □ \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Going shopping

- Imagine that you have to buy six different presents for six different people at six different shops. Make a list of six people you know (friends and family), and then think of a good present for each person. Finally, write down where you'd buy the presents. Try to name six different types of shop!

Person	Present	Shop
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

2. **Talk to three different classmates. Ask them each to tell you about one present. What is it? Who is it for? Where is it from?**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. **Talking about Christmas**

Do you like Christmas? Answer the questions.

Do you ...

- do your Christmas shopping in September or on Christmas Eve?
- spend lots of money, spend some money, or spend no money on presents?
- put up Christmas decorations, or not?
- send Christmas cards, or not?
- go to church on Christmas day, or not?
- eat lots of Christmas food, then go on a diet in January?
- feel sad or happy when Christmas is over?

### **Advent**

1. **Warmer. Match the words in the box below to the correct Advent images.**

star	spices	fir cone	pine branches	picture
icing	door	chocolate	candle	decorations

## 1. Advent biscuits



a. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Advent calendar



a. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Advent wreath



a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Key Words

a. Match the words on the left (1–8) with their correct meanings (a–h).

1. baking	a. when something is this, a lot of people have heard about it
2. cinnamon	b. substances made from plants and added to food to give it a special taste
3. decorated	c. a word to describe a hot drink made of wine or juice mixed with sugar and spices
4. famous	d. a brown powder or small stick made from the bark of a tree and used for giving a special taste to food, especially sweet food
5. gifts	e. a circle of flowers or leaves that is used for decoration
6. mulled	f. making bread, cakes, biscuits, etc using an oven
7. spices	g. things that you give to someone as a present
8. wreath	h. made something look more attractive by putting nice things on it

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b. Now use the words 1–8 above to complete the article text.

### Advent in Germany



Advent in Germany is a time of candlelight, food and drink made with sugar and \_\_\_\_\_, and spending time with friends and family. Advent makes people feel warm and happy in the cold, dark weeks before Christmas. Advent starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. This is usually between November 27th and December 3rd.

German Christmas markets start on the first weekend of Advent. They are \_\_\_\_\_ all over the world, and many thousands of people go there to drink hot \_\_\_\_\_ wine, eat good food and buy Christmas \_\_\_\_\_. Advent markets in big towns and cities are usually open for the four weeks of Advent. Most villages and small towns have a small Christmas market on the first weekend of Advent.

At home, adults and children have fun in the kitchen, \_\_\_\_\_ special traditional Advent biscuits such as \_\_\_\_\_ stars. They eat the biscuits with their friends and family or give them as gifts.

For Advent, people make or buy an Advent \_\_\_\_\_ and put it on a table or in a window. An Advent wreath is made of real pine branches, has four candles and is \_\_\_\_\_ with dried orange, cinnamon sticks and ribbons. People light the first candle on the first Sunday of Advent. On the second Sunday, they light the second candle, and on the third Sunday they light the third candle, too. By Christmas, all four candles on the wreath burn at the same time.

Many parents and grandparents make Advent calendars with 24 doors for their children or grandchildren. Door number 1 is opened on 1st December and door number two on 2nd

December, and so on. Behind each door there is a picture, a chocolate or a small gift. The last door tells excited children that Christmas Eve, the last day of Advent, has finally come.

### 3. Understanding the article

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

1. Advent lasts for the whole of winter.
2. Advent always begins on December 1st.
3. There are always four Sundays in Advent.
4. Advent ends on Christmas Eve.
5. Many Advent traditions give people a feeling of being warm and happy.
6. Children open the first door of their Advent calendar on 1st December.
7. Advent calendars have 31 doors, the same number as the days in December.
8. When children open the calendar doors they find a picture, a chocolate or a small toy.
9. It is a tradition to make and eat Advent biscuits on Christmas Eve.
10. Advent biscuits are usually very salty.
11. Many families bake Advent biscuits together at home.
12. Advent and Christmas markets are only on in big cities.
13. People go to the markets to drink and eat with their friends.
14. Nobody buys Christmas gifts at the markets.
15. The Advent and Christmas markets are very popular.
16. Most Advent wreaths have one big candle in the middle.
17. People light the first candle on the Advent wreath on the first Sunday of Advent.
18. Most Advent wreaths are made of green plastic.

### 4. German Christmas recipe – hot mulled fruit punch



This hot Advent drink is easy to make but first the recipe needs some help.

- a. Use these words to complete the list of ingredients. Look up any words you don't know.

fresh

juice

sticks

orange

whole

**Ingredients:**

500ml of apple

250ml of cranberry juice

½ large, sliced

3 small cinnamon

15g of ginger, cut into pieces

10 cloves

- b. Now put the recipe instructions in the correct order by numbering them 1–5.

**Instructions:**

- a. Turn the heat down and simmer slowly for ten minutes. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Heat slowly until it starts to boil. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Drink the punch while it is still hot. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Pour it out through a sieve to remove the spices. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Put all the ingredients into a large pan. \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Discussion**

Talk about the recipe above and what you read about in the Advent article text using the comments below to help you.

*I would/wouldn't like to try the hot mulled fruit punch because ...*

*I like / don't really like spicy things, so I would/wouldn't like to try the Advent biscuits.*

*We often/never have candles at home in the dark winter months. They make me feel ...*

*When I was a child, I sometimes/always/never baked biscuits and cakes with my ...*

a. Search the internet to find out more about Advent and the Christmas markets in one of these cities.

Stuttgart   Dresden   Nuremberg   Constance   Munich

**Think about:**

- When does it start?
- When is the last day of the market?
- What can you see, buy and do there?

**Find some images of your market. Is there anything that you read about in the article that you can see in the images such as candles, people drinking mulled wine, etc?**

- b. Tell the other students in your group about your market.
- c. Decide which market you would like to visit.



## Answer key

### Festivals – Christmas

1. 1-c; 2-f; 3-a; 4-g; 5-b; 6-h; 7-e; 8-d
2. 1-mistletoe; 2-candles; 3-holly; 4-bells; 5-tinsel

### Festivals: Christmas by Katie Maunder

4. 1. Carols 2. Father Christmas 3. Turkey 4. Reindeer 5. Presents 6. Stockings 7. Christmas trees 8. Crackers 9. Christmas Eve
5. 1. Carols 2. Father Christmas 3. Turkey 4. Reindeer 5. Presents 6. Stockings 7. Christmas trees 8. Crackers 9. Christmas Eve

### New Year's Eve

1.
  - a. true
  - b. false (it's New Year's Eve)
  - c. true
  - d. false (it's the song people sing at midnight)
  - e. true
  - f. false (they should be dark)
  - g. false (they always bring coal as a gift)
3.
  1. I am going to stop smoking.
  2. I am not going to eat chocolate every day.
  3. I am going to be nice to my sister this year.

### Christmas Shopping

1. Top row: a kitten/cat; flowers; socks; a guitar; clothes Middle row: a box of chocolates; a lump of coal; a teddy bear; cash/money; a watch Bottom row: a ring/jewellery; a bar of soap/toiletries; books; a lipstick/make-up; a holiday

## **Advent**

### **1.**

1. **Advent biscuits:** a. star; b. decorations; c. icing
2. **Advent calendar:** d. door; e. chocolate; f. picture
3. **Advent wreath:** g. candle; h. pine branches; i. fir cone

### **2.**

- a. 1. f 2. d 3. h 4. a 5. g 6. c 7. b. 8. E
- b. The words should be written into the text in this order: spices, famous, mulled, gifts, baking, cinnamon, wreath, decorated

### **3.**

1. F – Advent lasts for four weeks before Christmas
2. F – it starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. T
7. F – it has 24 doors
8. T
9. F – they are made and eaten at any time during Advent
10. F – they are mostly sweet and spicy
11. T
12. F – they are also on in towns and villages
13. T
14. F – they do
15. T
16. F – they have four candles
17. T
18. F – they are made of real pine branches

### **4.**

#### **a.**

- 500ml of apple **juice**
- 250ml of cranberry juice
- ½ large **orange**, sliced
- 3 small cinnamon **sticks**
- 15g of **fresh** ginger, cut into pieces
- 10 whole cloves**

#### **b.**

- e – 1
- b – 2
- a – 3
- d – 4
- c – 5