

Christmas Tips

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There are lots of Christmas activities on the British Council's site for young learners LearnEnglish Kids which you can use with your students during the festive season.

You can find these at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-topics-christmas>

On this page you will find tips and ideas for using and extending the activities in the classroom.

Song: Santa, Santa, High in the Sky

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-songs-santa>

Tell your learners they're going to listen to a song about Santa. Ask them to tell you what they know about Santa, for example, what does he look like? What does he wear? Where does he live? What does he do during the year? What does he do the night before Christmas? How does he travel? What does he like eating and drinking?

- Play the song without any volume. What can your learners see in the pictures? What colour are they? How many are there? What's Santa doing? Play the song again and mime the actions together-fly through the sky, come down the chimney, put a present in a stocking, drink a glass of sherry, eat a mince pie, the wind's blowing, the stars are shining! Then give your learners an action in turn and ask them to mime the action. Now guess-what are they doing? Play the song again and sing along!

- Practise Christmas words from the song with this online game:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-pelmanism-xmas.htm>

- When you've finished listening and singing to the song you could download and print off the words to the song, or download and print an activity to do related to the song: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-songs-santa-activity.pdf>

Finally, your learners might like to illustrate the song with his/her own drawings or to draw a picture of Santa arriving at his/her house.

- If you'd like to develop the topic further, another idea might be to prepare a menu for Santa and his reindeer what would your learners give Santa to eat and drink?

What would you give his reindeer?!

- You could also ask your learners to write a letter to Santa. What would they like for Christmas? See also:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-reordering-santa-letter>

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-santa-letter.pdf>

Santa Claus, North Pole
Dear Santa,
How are you? I hope you are well!
My name's _____ and I'm a very good student.
This Christmas I would like a _____ and a _____.
Thank you very much and Merry Christmas! Say hello to the reindeer from me.

Here are some Christmas games to try:

- Tell your learners they're going to play a Christmas word game. What Christmas words do they already know in English? Play 'Hangman' with the words or make a Christmas picture dictionary.
- Start drawing a picture of a word related to Christmas, for example, a snowflake. Your learners must guess what it is before you've finished the drawing. Alternatively, if your home or classroom has been decorated for Christmas, play 'I-Spy'. For example, if there's a present in the room you could say, "I spy with my little eye something beginning with 'p'". Your learners then have to guess what you can see.

- When your learners have finished playing the word games, they could draw and colour their own Christmas picture/word cards and play with a friend. All the cards should be placed on the table, face down. The first player turns over a picture card and a word card. If they match, they play again. If they don't match, the cards are turned face down again and the next player turns over another two cards. Players must try and remember where the cards are. The player with most pairs is the winner.

Christmas greetings

If you have a selection of old or new Christmas cards you could talk about the pictures, pointing to and describing the different objects. Your learners could then design their own Christmas card or make a Christmas collage with the pictures. They could also make some Christmas decorations to hang on the Christmas tree. All you need is a little card, glue, tissue paper and/or felt-tip pens, crayons, glitter and cotton wool.



Don't forget that your students can send Christmas ecards too:

http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kidsecards_frame.html

Christmas words and messages

Practise words related to Christmas using this worksheet:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-christmas.pdf>

Can your learners also decode the message? Why not ask learners to write their own Christmas messages (or any other messages) using this code, or a code they've invented. Can you or others work out what the message is?

Christmas customs

Read and listen to the story My Favourite Day and find out about Christmas customs in the UK:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-favourite-day-christmas>

Your students could write about their own Christmas customs, or their own favourite days:

- What do people usually do at Christmas in your country? What do they do in other parts of the world? For example, do they put lights in their houses? Do they decorate a Christmas tree? Do they get presents at Christmas? When do they open their presents? Write a short description of Christmas in your country.
- What's your favourite day of the year? What do people wear, eat, drink? What do people do? Why do people celebrate this day? Do you give and receive presents? Also find online and printable quizzes about Christmas around the world:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-quiz-christmas.htm>

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-xmas-quiz.pdf>

- Have a look at the first exercise on the printable worksheet. How do you say "Merry Christmas" in your language? Do you know how to say "Merry Christmas" in any other language? What about "Happy New Year"?
- Next, the quiz! You could try the quiz without any online help first of all. If your learners find this too difficult, you could give them 2 or 3 multiple-choice options (including the correct answer from the answer key!) Once they've finished, they can check their answers by searching the 2 websites suggested.
- For more advanced learners, ask them to research Christmas in a country of their choice and make a poster of their findings and/or make up their own Christmas quiz to test your Christmas knowledge!

Story: The Snowman

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-snowman>

- Before reading the story 'The Snowman', you could introduce the topic by asking your learners about snow and winter, for example, does it snow in your country? When does it snow? What do children like doing when it snows? Do you know how to make a snowman? Have you ever made one?
- Draw a picture of a girl and a boy to introduce the characters of Katie and Eddie. Then draw some snow. Ask your learners what they think is going to happen in the story. Now read and listen to each page of the story online. Don't worry if your learners don't understand every word-the pictures will help them make sense of what's happening.
- After listening to the story, act it out! Start by miming the actions together-wake up, shout, run outside, dance in the snow, make a snowman, wave 'Hello', put on a scarf and a hat. Then take different roles of Katie, Eddie and the snowman in turn and add the dialogue. If you've got a digital camera and/or video camera you could record your learners' play and then make it into a slide show. Alternatively, you could ask them to draw their own version of the story and add captions to describe what's happening. Make the snowman 3-dimensional with cotton wool for his head and body, some wool or coloured thread for his scarf and hat and some orange tissue paper for his nose!
- Learners can print and make their own snowman:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-snowman.pdf>

Finally, wrap up a present in Christmas paper. Make sure there are plenty of layers, with a Christmas forfeit in between each layer, for example, 'Name something we eat at Christmas'. Now play the game 'Pass the parcel' to some background Christmas music. When the music stops, the child holding the parcel carries out the forfeit. The child who opens the final layer wins the present! A very Merry Christmas to you all!