

Task 1 Christmas puzzle

What do you think of when you see the word CHRISTMAS? Try and link up as many Christmassy words as you can like a crossword puzzle.

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Task 2 Happy Christmas word hunt

How many words can you make from the letters in HAPPY CHRISTMAS?

Write the words here:

What's the longest word you found?

Task 3. Where in the world?

- Have you ever spent Christmas in a different country? If so, was it very different to how you usually spend Christmas?
- How much do you know about what happens at Christmas around the world? Try to match the customs on the left with the country on the right.

Custom	Country
1) St. Nicolas brings presents on December 6th to good children and a bag of sticks for bad children.	a. China
2) December 26th is called Boxing Day and was traditionally a day to give presents to the poor.	b. Spain
3) Tropical flowers are used as Christmas decorations.	c. Great Britain
4) The three Kings arrive on the night of January 5th to give presents to children. Most towns have a carnival style parade through the streets.	d. Germany
5) On January 6th a special almond cake with a toy crown inside is eaten.	e. Czech Republic
6) Wooden decorations and candles are put in windows of homes.	f. France
7) The Christian population is between 4 – 6% and big cities put up Christmas trees.	g. Canada
8) Fir trees grow here and they always send the biggest and most beautiful fir tree to Boston in the USA.	h. Costa Rica

- Do you know anything about any of these customs? If so, explain them to your classmates.
- What would you write about your own country?

Task 4 What does Christmas mean to people in the UK?

Work in groups of five if possible. Before you read the text imagine how Christmas is spent in the UK. Do you think it is similar or different to your own country? Discuss your ideas with your group.

Now each member of the group is going to read one paragraph. When you have all finished reading your paragraph explain it to the rest of the group then discuss these questions together.

- Is Christmas in the UK very different to how spend the festive season?
- Do you think Christmas is more important for children?
- Would you consider giving up some of your free time to help homeless people?
- Do you think there's too much pressure on people to spend money on presents at this time of year?
- Do you like the idea of the unusual gifts and gift 'experiences'? What would you choose for an unusual gift?
- Do you watch a lot of television at Christmas time?
- Do you think the real meaning of Christmas is getting forgotten?

What does Christmas mean to people in the UK?

What you might expect

For most people Christmas means a range of things. The most popular ones are spending time with the family and visiting relatives and friends. If there are young children in the family then all activities revolve around them, and parents get very excited for their child's first Christmas. Simon, a first-time parent, commented he will be 'mostly entertaining and being amused by our daughter who will be enjoying her first Christmas ever'. For children in particular it means presents and the more the better.

Christianity

Despite the considerable and increasing commercialisation of Christmas it still holds a religious meaning and importance for some. This is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ; hence the name Christmas. Because of this Christmas is traditionally meant to be 'the season of goodwill' and for some this is still true, for example one woman called Claire spends time giving food to homeless people which she describes as 'VERY sad and depressing.'

Christmas presents

Christmas cards are widely distributed whilst presents are reserved for close friends and family. Traditionally the giving of a gift is symbolic of the three wise men giving their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the baby Jesus.

There are a handful of people who try to be imaginative and buy unusual gifts for their relatives such as the 'experience' gift. Steve's Christmas gift to his 65 year old Mum was an hour's flight in a light aircraft where she was co-pilot. Another popular gift from wives to their husbands is an afternoon at a go-kart racing track. In return, a day spent at a health spa may be their special treat.

However the majority of people after many hours of frantic rushing around the shops end up buying 'smellies' (beauty products), chocolates, wine, hats and scarves and books. Having stood the test of time, these gifts are guaranteed to please.

Unexpected meanings

There are some more unusual meanings to Christmas for some people. Parents associate it with being under a lot of pressure to buy their children the latest – and often most expensive - toys. This is not helped by the TV advertising, which starts in early October. Similarly, for many it means getting stressed about buying presents and spending lots of money. One young man said Christmas for him meant 'stressing over what presents to buy and how I can afford them' but he adds it is also a time of 'great fun'.

Families and television

When families get together there can often be disagreements and some people connect Christmas with family arguments. Others associate Christmas with eating and drinking too much while others think of bad quality TV programmes and films, many of which are repeats. For many in the UK Christmas simply means a time off work and away from the office and for some it's an opportunity to reflect on the past year and also look forward to the next.

Mary-Ann

This article originally appeared on the British Council Japan [Trend UK website](#)

Task 5 New Year's resolutions

Have you ever made any new year's resolutions? In the UK many people make resolutions for the new year. These are promises they make to themselves. Typical resolutions may be to give up smoking, do more exercise or to read more books. Think about what you would like to promise yourself for the next year. Write three new year's resolutions here:

1)

2)

3)

- Do you think you will keep the resolutions?

Task 6 Design your own Christmas card

You are going to make a Christmas card. Your teacher will give you instructions. Remember to write a Christmas message inside.

Task 7. Christmas poems

You are going to write a Christmas poem. Use the letters in CHRISTMAS to start each line.

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Task 8. Unusual Christmas presents

Read about these unusual Christmas presents and put them in order from the best to the worst.

Teenager's Driving Course - £85

You will take your first driving lesson with a professional instructor. You will be in a safe area and not on the roads and you will learn all the basics of driving a car. You will do a little course of 90 minutes and then spend 45 minutes behind the wheel. You'll get a certificate to take home with you.

Makeover and Photo Shoot - £50

You will go to a professional photography studio for a full makeover of your clothes, hair and face. You will be able to ask to look like your favourite celebrity and they will take lots of photos of you. You will be able to take some of the photos home and you'll spend three hours with the professionals.

Adopt a dolphin with the World Wildlife Fund – £35

You will receive an adoption gift pack which includes a cuddly toy, the adoption certificate, a WWF pen, an adoption card, and information about the dolphin you have adopted.

Junior Popstar Experience - £89

You will go to a recording studio and record a song with professional music producers. You will then have your photo taken for the cover of the CD and you will be able to take your CD home to keep forever.

Parachute Jump - £75

You will learn how to do a parachute jump and then you will go up in the plane and take a tandem jump (with an instructor). You will get a DVD of the whole event to show your friends afterwards, just in case they don't believe you were so brave!