

It's Christmas Time!

What can you see in the picture? Write a caption for this photo.



Christmas traditions

(1) Match the vocabulary (1 to 8) with the correct definition (a to h).

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1..... a charity | a. a tube made of card that goes 'bang' when you pull it |
| 2..... a department store | b. a bird, similar to a chicken but larger |
| 3..... a chimney | c. a type of large shop that sells many different things |
| 4..... the music charts | d. an organisation that tries to help people |
| 5..... to bet (on something) | e. having a strong, heavy or sweet flavour |
| 6..... a turkey | f. to try to win money by guessing correctly what is going to happen in the future |
| 7..... a Christmas cracker | g. a list of the best-selling songs at the moment |
| 8..... rich (flavour) | h. a part of a house above a fire that lets the smoke out |

(2) Read the text quickly and choose the best heading to describe it:

Christmas around the world

Christmas shopping

Christmas in the UK

Christmas can mean different things to different people. For many people it means eating a lot, spending time with family and visiting relatives and friends. For children it often means presents, presents and more presents!

The origins of Christmas

In ancient times people had winter festivals when the days were short and the nights were very long to help the sun's power return, and the Romans decorated their homes with green plants in December to remind their god Saturn to return the spring.

In the year 440, when the Christian church decided that the birth of Christ should be celebrated every year on 25 December, some of these ancient customs were adopted by Christians too. Green plants are still used to decorate many British homes in December and trees are covered with shiny balls and flashing lights!

Cards and presents

It's very common to send Christmas cards to friends, family, classmates and neighbours before 25 December. Christmas is traditionally a time for helping other people and giving money to charities. People send fewer cards than in the past in the UK, as they now send Christmas greetings by email or via Facebook.

Christmas presents are given to 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.

Father Christmas (aka Santa Claus)

Every year small children tell Father Christmas, also known as Santa Claus, exactly what presents they would like to receive. They can write him a letter or can visit him personally in one of the large department stores across Britain in the weeks before Christmas. On the night of 24 December, Father Christmas travels through the sky on a sleigh pulled

by magic reindeers and delivers presents to children across Britain. How does he enter the children's houses? Via the chimney, of course!

The Christmas number one

Every year, for a few weeks around Christmas time, the UK music charts go mad. Groups and singers who normally make cool music create a song that they hope will be the best-selling song on Christmas Day. The Christmas number one is written about in newspapers, talked about on the radio and people can even bet money in betting shops to see which song will win the race. Recently, the Christmas number one has been dominated by singers who have won reality television competitions.

Some music fans, who were not happy about this dominance, started a campaign against them and encouraged people to buy a song by the rock band Rage Against the Machine. They won!

Snow

Snow at Christmas is part of British culture. You often see it on Christmas cards and there are even a lot of songs about snow at Christmas. But it doesn't snow every year in Britain, although many people hope for a white Christmas.

People can bet on whether it will snow or not on 25 December too.

Turkey and crackers

Christmas dinner is usually eaten at midday or early afternoon. It usually includes roast turkey, vegetables and potatoes. For dessert, there's a rich, fruity cake called Christmas pudding.

Traditionally, a Christmas cracker is placed next to each person. When you pull the cracker with the person next to you, you hear a loud 'bang!' and a paper hat, a joke and a small gift fall from the cracker. You have to wear the hat, tell the joke to the other people at the table and keep the gift.

Christmas means ...

Does everyone like Christmas? These comments from young Brits show that people have different opinions about it.

Christmas to me means catching up with your family, having a laugh, eating loads of delicious foods and opening your presents.

Yasmeen, 20, Liverpool

It's too commercial. There are too many adverts trying to get everyone to spend their money.

Ruby, 15, London

The shops start selling Christmas cards in September! That's three months before Christmas. Ridiculous!

Tony, 18, Bakewell

I work for a charity that gives food to homeless people every Christmas. These people have no home or family so we try to make 25 December a happy day for them.

Claire, 22, Derby

I think that Christmas is a religious time, not just for Christians but for Jews and Muslims too. I celebrate the season the Christian way.

Alisha, 16, Manchester

(2) Read the text again carefully this time. Are these statements true or false?

- | | | | |
|----|---|------|-------|
| 1. | Some modern Christmas traditions date from Roman times. | True | False |
| 2. | British people send money to friends, family, colleagues, classmates and neighbours at Christmas. | True | False |
| 3. | Gold, frankincense and myrrh are popular Christmas presents for young people in the UK. | True | False |
| 4. | Santa Claus is another name for Father Christmas. | True | False |
| 5. | A song by Rage Against the Machine was the best-selling song at Christmas one year. | True | False |
| 6. | It doesn't always snow at Christmas in Britain. | True | False |
| 7. | A Christmas cracker is a type of dessert. | True | False |
| 8. | Only Christians celebrate Christmas. | True | False |

(3) Choose the correct preposition to complete these sentences:

1. The Romans decorated their homes with green plants **in / on / at** December.
2. In the year 440 the Christian church decided that the birth of Christ should be celebrated every year **in / on / at** 25 December.
3. **In / On / At** Christmas we cover trees with shiny balls and flashing lights.
4. **In / On / At** the night of 24 December, Father Christmas travels through the sky.
5. Groups and singers create a song that they hope will be number one **in / on / at** Christmas Day.
6. People can bet on whether it will snow or not **in / on / at** 25 December.
7. Christmas dinner is usually eaten **in / on / at** midday.
8. The shops start selling Christmas cards **in / on / at** September.

Watch this video about Christmas in the UK:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okVpri6kkxw>

In the video, Emily and Jack mention two more Christmas traditions that were not in the reading text above: what are they?

1. _____
2. _____

Key:

Reading text

(1)

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. d | 5. f |
| 2. c | 6. b |
| 3. h | 7. a |
| 4. g | 8. e |

(2)

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. True

5. True
6. True
7. False
8. False

(3)

1. in
2. on
3. At
4. On

5. on
6. on
7. at
8. in

Video

1. *stockings*
2. *coal*

Well done!

Merry Christmas and see you next year!