

Christmas activities

To be used at the level of A1 Starter or A1.

If you have some extra time in one of the lessons before Christmas, you might like to try some of these ideas for short, fun activities.

1 A Christmas song (Fun) (10-15 minutes) (from A1)

Choose a Christmas song which does not contain complicated or outdated vocabulary. Give everyone a copy of the lyrics, with gaps where some words (Christmas words are best) have been taken out.

We have chosen *Here comes Santa Claus* as it's short and the vocabulary isn't too complicated. Write the words on the board and check everyone knows what they mean (e.g.: *singing, bag, bells, stockings, beautiful, toys, sleigh, reindeer* for our song).

HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS

Here comes Santa Claus!
Here comes Santa Claus!
Right down Santa Claus Lane!
Vixen and Blitzen and all his _____
are pulling on the reins.
_____ are ringing, children _____;
All is merry and bright.
Hang your _____ and say your prayers,
'Cause Santa Claus comes tonight.

Here comes Santa Claus!
Here comes Santa Claus!
Right down Santa Claus Lane!
He's got a _____ that is filled with _____
for the boys and girls again.
Hear those _____ bells jingle jangle,
What a _____ sight.
Jump in bed, cover up your head,
'Cause Santa Claus comes tonight.

If you have a copy of the recording*, ask your students to listen and place the words into the correct gap. Otherwise, students put the words into the gaps and then say or sing the lyrics in class.

*NB: The Gene Autry version can be found on *You Tube* at http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=here+comes+santa+claus+gene+autry&aq=3

Key:

HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS

Here comes Santa Claus!
Here comes Santa Claus!
Right down Santa Claus Lane!
Vixen and Blitzen and all his **reindeer**
are pulling on the reins.
bells are ringing, children **singing**;
All is merry and bright.
Hang your **stockings** and say your prayers,
'Cause Santa Claus comes tonight.

Here comes Santa Claus!
Here comes Santa Claus!
Right down Santa Claus Lane!
He's got a **bag** that is filled with **toys**
for the boys and girls again.
Hear those **sleigh** bells jingle jangle,
What a **beautiful** sight.
Jump in bed, cover up your head,
'Cause Santa Claus comes tonight.

2 Differences in Christmas celebrations (Personalisation) (5-15 minutes) *(from A1 Starter)*

The song above is based on Christmas traditions in the Anglo-Saxon world. Use it to prompt a discussion on how your students celebrate Christmas in their country / in their family.

Start by asking questions such as:

- Does Santa Claus come to you on Christmas Eve?
- Do you hang up a stocking for presents?
- When do you celebrate Christmas?
- Do you have a special cake at Christmas?
- Do you write a lot of Christmas cards?

3 True/False quiz on Christmas in English-speaking countries (Fun) (15 minutes) *(from A1)*

Divide your students into different teams. Either ask questions 1-9 below in class or give each group a copy of the questions for them to work on in their team.

When you are going through the Yes/No-answers in class, encourage people to talk about any of the traditions mentioned in the quiz which they have had contact with. They can also talk about similar traditions from their own cultures.

True or false?

- 1 Children leave out whisky, mince pies and carrots for Santa and his reindeer on Christmas Eve.
- 2 The parents put up the Christmas tree on the 24th December.
- 3 People kiss under mistletoe.
- 4 People often drink lots of alcohol at Christmas.
- 5 Queen Elizabeth makes a speech every Christmas Day at 3 pm.
- 6 The traditional Christmas dinner is fish.
- 7 The 26th December is called 'Boxing Day' in the UK.
- 8 People sing *Auld Lang Syne* at Christmas.
- 9 In the UK people wear paper hats at dinner on Christmas day.

Key:

- 1 True
- 2 False: The Christmas tree is put up and decorated at the beginning of Advent.
- 3 True
- 4 True
- 5 True
- 6 False: The traditional Christmas meal is turkey.
- 7 True
- 8 False: *Auld Lang Syne* is sung on New Year's Eve.
- 9 True

4 My ideal Christmas (Mixed ability) (15 minutes)*(from A1 Starter)*

Make cards with the ideas below on each one.



My clothes	My guests
The tree	The entertainment
The dinner/drinks	The place

Put students into small groups and give each group a set of cards. Ask each student to choose a card and to think of their ideal Christmas clothes / tree / dinner/drinks etc. It doesn't matter if not all cards are used in each group.

Give them a few minutes before asking them to tell the rest of the group. Tell them they can say as much or as little as they want. Monitor and help with ideas (e.g. ideal place = cruise / at home / a ski hut) and vocabulary.

5 Send a Christmas card (Authenticity / Can do)**(15-20 minutes)** (from A1 Starter)

Bring in some Christmas cards, ones with something printed in English if possible. Collect some ideas for Christmas greetings in class and write them on the board. Give each person a card and ask them to write a greeting in English in it. Monitor and help. Collect the cards and redistribute so that everyone has one. You could ask volunteers to read out their card in class.

6 Christmas pronunciation (10 minutes) (from A1)

Draw the pronunciation blobs on the board and demonstrate how they work by saying *July*, stressing the second syllable. You might like to clap the syllables or tap them out on the table. Ask the class which syllable was stronger and point to oO on the board. Demonstrate again with the word *Network*, stressing the first syllable. Ask the students to tell you which syllable is stronger and point to Oo.

Put the students into small groups and make a set of 10 cards (each of these words on a card) for each group: *turkey, Christmas pudding, presents, Father Christmas, Christmas shopping, mince pies, stocking, decorations, whisky, reindeer*. Each group puts the words into the correct pronunciation patterns: Oo, oO, Oooo or ooOo.

Go through the words in class, writing each word under the correct pronunciation pattern.

Key:

Oo: turkey, presents, stocking, whisky, reindeer

oO: mince pies

Oooo: (none)

ooOo: Father Christmas, Christmas pudding, decorations, Christmas shopping