

## Christmas



It's nearly Christmas again – presents have to be got, decorations put up and cakes made. To prepare you for the festive season, we thought we'd give you some fun Christmas facts to share with your students this year. You could prepare them for your students as a true/false quiz, a multiple-choice game or use them as a springboard for a discussion on facts, figures and songs in their languages.

### Christmas facts

1. The name *Christmas* comes from a contraction of *Christ's Mass* in Old English.
2. Electric lights were first used in 1895 on Christmas trees.
3. 'The Nutcracker' is the most famous Christmas ballet.

If you received all the presents in the song '**The 12 Days of Christmas**', you would get 364 gifts: one for each day of the year.

To see the lyrics of this popular Christmas song as well as what religious symbol each present represents, click here:

[http://www.carols.org.uk/the\\_twelve\\_days\\_of\\_christmas.htm](http://www.carols.org.uk/the_twelve_days_of_christmas.htm)

4. Charles Dickens wrote 'A Christmas Carol' in six weeks in 1843.
5. More diamonds are sold around Christmas than any other time during the year.
6. The North Pole is actually located in the Arctic Ocean.
7. The 25th December was fixed as *Christmas Day* in 440 AD.
8. England had only had 7 white Christmases in the 20th century. The definition of a white Christmas is one snowflake falling on the roof of the London Weather Centre in the 24 hours of the 25th December. Interestingly, if you have bet on a **white Christmas** (as many British people do), you can only win if a snowflake *falls* on the 25th December. You don't win if snow covers the ground but there is no snowflake!

Click here to read more about a discussion on this definition:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/weather/2010/dec/19/bookies-storm-white-christmas>

9. Celebrating Christmas was officially illegal in England in 1647, as Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan leader, considered it immoral to make a festival out of a holy day.
10. The song, 'Jingle bells' was originally called 'One-horse open sleigh' and was actually written for Thanksgiving.
11. The city of Oslo in Norway has given Britain a Christmas tree since 1947 as a token of friendship. It is traditionally put up in Trafalgar Square.
12. A Christmas card – the most expensive ever – was sold at auction in the UK for £20,000 in 2001.

### Christmas is dangerous!

Here are some interesting statistics about accidents at Christmas in the UK:

1. 4 people broke their arm in 2010 while pulling crackers\*.
2. Three people are injured each year testing batteries on their tongue.
3. Five people were injured last year in accidents where electric toy cars went out of control.
4. Eighteen people had serious burns in 1998 trying on a new jumper with a lit cigarette in their mouth.
5. Thirty-one people have been electrocuted since 1996 after watering their Christmas tree while the fairy lights were plugged in.
6. One hundred and one people have had broken parts of plastic toys pulled out of their feet in hospital since 1997.
7. One hundred and forty-two people were injured in 1998 because they didn't remove all the pins from new shirts.
8. Five hundred and forty-three people were admitted to hospital in the last two years after opening bottles of beer with their teeth.



\* crackers: These traditionally have a toy, a joke, and a paper hat inside and are pulled on Christmas Day in the UK.

## **Christmas cracker quiz**

Are you fond of Christmas crackers? Why not try our quiz on typical Christmas cracker jokes? Just click here and have fun:

<http://xportal.klett-sprachen.de/club/0026/>

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**file:** <http://www.klett-sprachen.de/special-day-file>