

Try something different this New Year's Eve



Everyone is familiar with New Year's Eve on the South Bank in London, in Times Square in New York and at the Harbour Bridge in Sydney. But what about something smaller and more unusual this year?

As the clock counts down to midnight you could find yourself walking amongst flaming tar barrels in Northumberland or watching for ghostly apparitions on the Isle of Wight; getting dressed up for a party in North Devon or dancing on the streets of Inverness. Or even running a five kilometre race.

If you're in Mountain Ash in South Wales, then why not get some exercise before midnight and enter the world famous Nos Galon road race which celebrates the memory of the legendary Welsh runner Guto Nyth Bran (he could run seven miles in the time it took to boil a kettle). For the past 56 years, runners have met to compete in a 5km road race that starts at 7pm (so it is well and truly dark!) and finishes in time for the evening party and fireworks.

What about a fancy dress party? Go to Bideford in North Devon, for a fun evening in the costume of your choice. Up to 20,000 revellers dressed as snowmen, pirates or anything else that takes their fancy, mingle and dance in the streets. At midnight everyone gathers on the medieval Long Bridge waiting for the parish church bells of St Mary's to ring at midnight. If you can't get to Bideford, there are similar parties in Dartmouth in South Devon, and Looe and St Ives in Cornwall.

Further north in Allendale in Northumberland, you can watch (and join in) an ancient festival that has been celebrated for hundreds of years: the Allendale Baal Fire. An evening of merriment with costumed performers in the town square is followed at 11.30pm by guisers (men in ancient mummers' costume and painted faces) who carry their flaming barrels on their heads in a fire-filled procession. This is led by a raucous six-piece band who takes the guisers through the town, before finishing at a prepared bonfire where the tar barrels are ceremoniously thrown – a pyre to the old year and a flaming welcome to the new.

Fancy something more spooky? What about going to Knighton Gorges on the Isle of Wight: the site of a demolished house that was once one of the island's grandest manors and is now marked only by two weathered stone

gate posts. It has a terrible past – a history full of violence, murder and suicide. In 1915 witnesses claim that they saw a phantom house, the windows ablaze with light and a party in progress with fancy ladies and gentlemen. Subsequent sightings have also occurred and so every year on 31st December people go to watch the ghostly house reappear in the gloom.

Back up in the north of Scotland, you could enjoy some lively dancing: the Red Hot Highland Fling in Inverness. At the end of December, Inverness has less than seven hours of daylight, so a good old party is especially welcome, though this particular party has a short history – this is only its fourth year. And of course there are fireworks at midnight.

Wherever you celebrate the New Year, we wish you a safe and happy arrival into 2015 and a year of successful teaching!

If you would like to use the New Year as a topic in your lesson, we have provided you with two activities. You'll find them in the following **Teacher's notes** and there's a **Worksheet** for Activity 2.

Teacher's notes

Activity 1 (level A1 upwards, 20+ minutes)

- Students need a piece of A4 paper.
- On the board write: *resolutions*. Discuss what this means and ask students if they have ever written a New Year's resolution.
- Tell students to write the months of the year underneath each other:
January
February
March and so on
- Circulate and check spelling and month order. Ask students to write a 'resolution' next to each month using *I'm going to*.
These resolutions can be funny and don't have to be true:
January - I'm going to go skiing / climb Mount Everest.
February - I'm going to make pancakes for Pancake Tuesday.
- In pairs, students ask each other what they are going to do:
What are you going to do in (September), (Sabine)?
- Students tell the rest of the class about their interesting or funny resolutions.

Activity 2 (level A1 upwards 15+ mins)

- Copy **The end of the year** (see Worksheet) – make sure you make one copy of the Student A part and one copy of the Student B part for each pair of students.
- Explain that students are going to complete a crossword.
- On the board write: *midnight*. Ask students how you could write the clue for this word: *The hour after eleven. It is very dark. You are usually asleep.*
- Give each pair of students a copy of the crossword, but make sure one of the pair gets the Student A version and one gets the Student B version.
- Tell students to look at the words in their crossword and think of (or write) clues for each word. Help with any difficult or unknown words.
- If you think it easier, put two Student As and two Student Bs together to help each other with the clues and then put students into A and B pairs.
- Students complete the crossword together giving their clues to each other to find out the missing words.
- When every pair has finished, ask what the central words are in the crossword (*New Year's Eve*). Remind students that there is an apostrophe + -s after *Year*!
- Ask students how they are going to celebrate New Year's Eve and whether they have ever celebrated a very special New Year's Eve in the past.

Suggested clues:

1. SNOW: It's cold and white and falls from the sky.
2. DECEMBER: The last month of the year.
3. FIREWORKS: Coloured lights in the sky that explode with a bang.
4. PARTY: A social event where friends (or family) come together to celebrate with food and drink.
5. BELLS: The church _____ ring at midnight.
6. CHAMPAGNE: An expensive fizzy wine that comes from France.
7. JANUARY: The first month of the year.
8. FIRST: After the thirty first of December, it is the _____ of January.
9. WINTER: The season with the coldest days.
10. TWELVE: The time at midnight is _____ o'clock.
11. CALENDAR: This shows the days, weeks and months of the year.

Worksheet

The end of the year

STUDENT A

Complete this crossword with Student B's help.

1				S	N	O	W		
2									
3		F	I	R	E	W	O	R	K
4									
5					B	E	L	L	S
6									
7	J	A	N	U	A	R	Y		
8									
9		W	I	N	T	E	R		
10									
11			C	A	L	E	N	D	A

STUDENT B

Complete this crossword with Student A's help.

1									
2			D	E	C	E	M	B	E
3									
4		P	A	R	T	Y			
5									
6	C	H	A	M	P	A	G	N	E
7									
8			F	I	R	S	T		
9									
10		T	W	E	L	V	E		
11									