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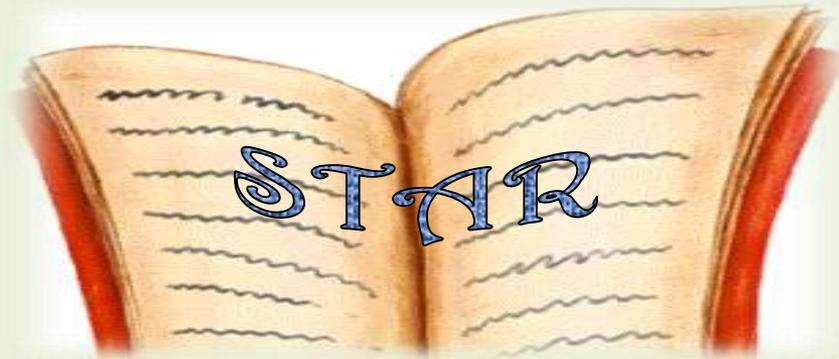
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# TIME TO LEARN ENGLISH

Here some are things (in no particular order) you can do to improve your English.

- \* Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Be confident. People can only correct your mistakes when they hear you make them.
- \* Practise every day. Make yourself a study plan. Decide how much time a week you are going to spend studying and stick to it.  
Establish a routine.
- \* Practise the 4 core skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. They all need to be worked on for you to improve.
- \* Use English whenever you can. It's as simple as that!

# *The Month of December– Everything You Should Know About December*



The month of December brings many holidays, feasts, and happenings!

December is the 12th month in our modern-day Gregorian calendar (as it was in the preceding Julian calendar).

However, it was originally the 10th month of the Roman calendar (until 153 BC).

Hence, "December" comes from the Latin word *decem*, meaning "ten."

Back in Roman times, the calendar only had ten months and began with March!

# December Calendar

**December 6 is Saint Nicholas Day.** St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, inspires traditions around the world from hunts for presents to stockings or shoes filled with sweets.

**December 21 is the Winter Solstice**—the astronomical first day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and first day of summer in the Southern Hemisphere.

**December 25 is Christmas Day,** a Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

**December 26 is Boxing Day** (Canada, UK)

**December 31-** Discover New Year traditions from around the world.

# *What Colour does December represent?*

## *The December Birthstone Colour is Blue*

Blue is the birthstone color for December and comes from the three official December gemstones - Turquoise, Tanzanite and Blue Zircon, which all occur in shades of blue.

Turquoise is formed by groundwater containing copper that has seeped into the bedrock. The name Turquoise comes from 'pierre turquoise' which means 'stone of Turkey' so called when the stone was brought to Europe from Turkish bazaars.





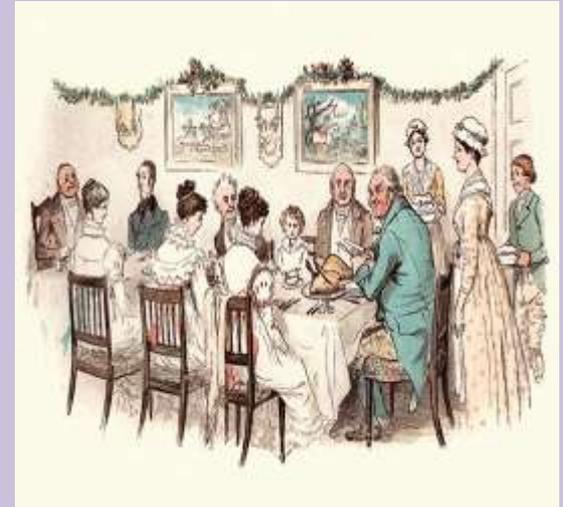
**December is very  
much associated with  
Christmas  
and New Year.**

# HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS



The name Christmas  
(Christ's Mass) is first  
recorded in England in 1038.

The name 'Christmas' comes from the old English phrase *Cristes maesse*, which means 'Christ's mass'. But what about 'Xmas'? Lots of people think this is just a modern-day abbreviation – but it actually dates back to the 16th century! The 'X' is said to represent the Greek letter 'Chi' – the first letter in the Greek word for Christ, **Χριστός** (pronounced 'Christos').



We can't talk about Christmas without mentioning **Father Christmas!** But have you wondered how he got the name **Santa Claus?** It's from *Sinterklaas*, which means **Saint Nicholas** in Dutch, the language of the **Netherlands**. Saint Nicholas was a Christian bishop who lived in the 4th century – known for being kind and generous, he later became the **patron saint of children.**





The legend of Santa Claus can be traced back to a monk named Saint Nicholas who was born in Turkey around 280 A.D.

Saint Nicholas gave away all of his inherited wealth and travelled the countryside helping the poor and sick, becoming known as the protector of children and sailors.

CHRISTMAS, the mass of Christ is held on 25th December and celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago. At the beginning of December, the season of Advent starts. The word advent means "coming", and as its name suggests it is a time of preparation for the coming feast of Christmas.



## *Facts about Christmas*

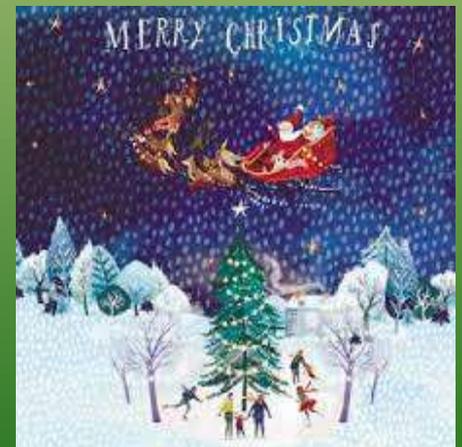
**Christmas trees** also became popular in Victorian Britain. But these were first seen in **16th Century Germany** where, at Christmas time, people decorated fir trees with **fruit and nuts** – and later sweets, paper shapes and candles. Amazingly, historians think the origins of this festive tradition may date back to the **Romans** and **Ancient Egyptians**, who used evergreen plants and garlands as **symbols of everlasting life**.



Every year, **Norway** sends a beautiful home-grown Christmas tree to **London** , where it is decorated with lights in **Trafalgar Square**. Standing a towering **20m tall**, the tree is a gift to say thank you for the help the UK gave Norway during **World War II**.  
What a *tree-mendous* gift!



At Christmas people around the world enjoy all kinds of jolly-good fun! Many of the festive traditions people have in the UK today started in the Victorian era– such as **Christmas cards, gift-giving and crackers**, as well as traditional food like **mince pies** and **roast turkey**! Queen Victoria and her husband **Prince Albert** were huge fans of Christmas, in fact!



take note!

## **Christmas Cards** - *the first Christmas card, 1843*

The year was 1843 and Sir Henry Cole, a popular Londoner, was receiving more holiday notes than he could respond to individually due to the advent of the penny stamp, which made letters inexpensive to send. So, Cole asked artist J.C. Horsley to create a festive design he could have printed and mail en masse and—voilà!—the first Christmas card was created. German immigrant and lithographer Louis Prang is credited with beginning the commercial Christmas card business in America in 1856, while one of the earliest folded cards paired with an envelope was sold in 1915 by the Hall Brothers (now Hallmark).

# Christmas Symbols and their history

Each of those traditional Christmas symbols— has a fascinating history that explains how it worked its way into the hearts of millions of people.



Have you ever wondered why people hang tinsel on Christmas trees or how candy canes became synonymous with the winter holiday? While these holiday decorations may seem arbitrary, most of these traditional decorations have a special meaning.

## Stars

The Christmas star symbolizes the star of Bethlehem, which according to the Biblical story, guided the three kings, or wise men, to the baby Jesus. The star is also the heavenly sign of a prophecy fulfilled long ago and the shining hope for humanity.

## Gifts With a Bow

The men who brought their gifts to honor the birth of Jesus inspired the concept of giving gifts during the holiday.

According to the Christian Bible's New Testament, Melchior, Balthazar, and Gaspar brought gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh to the newborn baby Jesus.

A ribbon is tied around a gift to represent how people should all be tied together in bonds of unity and goodwill during the holiday season.

**Christmas Cookies** - holiday cookie plater on red with ornaments

Their origin stems from Medieval Europe when ingredients like nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger, and dried fruit were beginning to appear in recipes for special biscuits baked during Christmastime. The modern Christmas cake did not appear until the early nineteenth century in the form of Christmas trees and stars.

## **Bells**

Bells are rung during Christmas to proclaim the arrival of the season and to announce the birth of Jesus. The ringing of bells can also be traced back to pagan winter celebrations used to drive out evil spirits.

## **Wreaths**

The wreath is a circular, never-ending symbol of eternal love and rebirth. Today the wreath symbolizes generosity, giving and the gathering of family.

# Stockings

Christmas stockings hanging on fireplace mantel

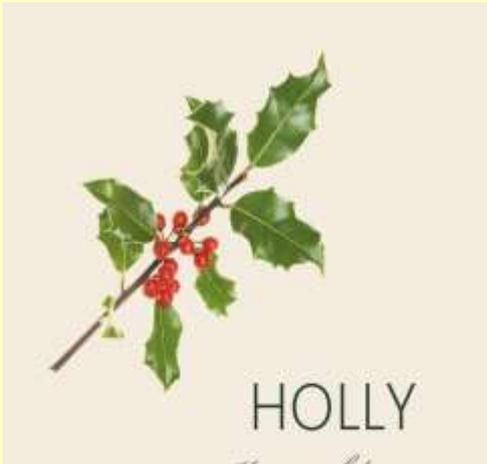
Hanging stockings has been a tradition since the 1800s though no one is quite sure how it started.

One popular legend says that there was once a man with three daughters. He was worried as he had no money for their dowries. Hearing about the family, Saint Nicholas filled the girls' stockings, set by the fire to dry, with gold coins.



## *Mistletoe and Holly*

Two hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Druids used mistletoe to celebrate the coming of winter. They would gather this evergreen plant that is parasitic upon other trees and used it to decorate their homes. They believed the plant had special healing powers. Scandinavians also thought of mistletoe as a plant of peace and harmony.



# Poinsettias

Poinsettias are now widespread as a beautiful Christmas holiday decoration.

They are native to Mexico.

They were named after America's first ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett.

He brought the plants to America in 1828.

The Mexicans in the eighteenth century thought the plants were symbolic of the

Star of Bethlehem. Thus the Poinsettia became associated with the Christmas

season. The actual flower of the poinsettia is small and yellow.

But surrounding the flower are large, bright red leaves, often mistaken for petals.



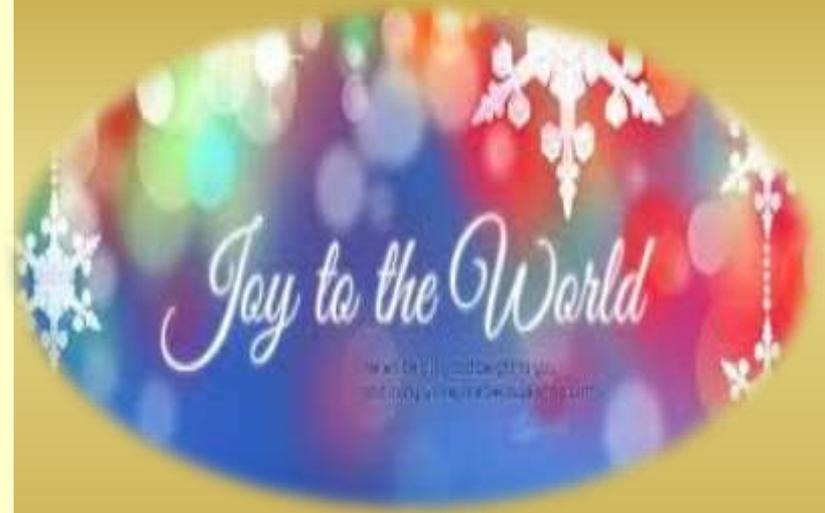
# CHRISTMAS CAROLS



# Joy To The World

**Joy to the world! the Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns;  
Let men their songs employ;  
while fields and floods,  
rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**



# Joy to the World

Isaac Watts, 1719

George Frederick Handel



1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth re - ceive her King; — Let ev - 'ry —



heart — pre - pare — Him — room, — And heav'n and na - ture — sing, And —



heav'n and na - ture — sing, And — heav'n, and heav'n — and na - ture sing.

2. Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

# O Christmas Tree

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree!  
How are thy leaves so verdant!  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
How are thy leaves so verdant!

Not only in the summertime,  
But even in winter is thy prime.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
How are thy leaves so verdant!

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
Much pleasure doth thou bring me!  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
Much pleasure doth thou bring me!

For every year the Christmas tree,  
Brings to us all both joy and glee.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
Much pleasure doth thou bring me!



# Jingle Bells



Dashing through the snow  
In a one horse open sleigh  
O'er the fields we go  
Laughing all the way  
Bells on bob tails ring  
Making spirits bright  
What fun it is to laugh and sing  
A sleighing song tonight

Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells  
Jingle all the way  
Oh, what fun it is to ride  
In a one horse open sleigh  
Jingle bells, jingle bells  
Jingle all the way  
Oh, what fun it is to ride  
In a one horse open sleigh

We all love to sing along to *Jingle Bells*, but have you ever noticed that the song doesn't have the word Christmas in it? That's because it wasn't originally a Christmas song! In fact, the jolly anthem was written in 1850, entitled *One Horse Open Sleigh*, for the American holiday, **Thanksgiving!**

# Silent Night

Silent night, holy night,  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and Child.  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.  
Silent night, holy night,  
Shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born,  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Silent night, holy night,  
Son of God, love's pure light;  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.





## REVISION

And now let us not forget what we have learned.

*English For Everybody!*

# **Christmas Grammar**

**Choose the correct answer:**

She ..... reading a magazine

- am
- is
- are

**Choose the correct answer:**

He ..... writing a card

- are
- am
- is

**Choose the correct answer:**

We ..... playing

- am
- are
- is

**Choose the correct answer:**

I . . . . . a letter to Santa every year

- a) am writing
- b) is writing
- c) writes
- d) write



**Choose the correct answer:**

They always . . . . the Christmas tree

- a) are decorating
- b) is decorating
- c) decorate
- d) decorates

**Choose the correct answer:**

Look! Santa . . . . down the chimney

- a) comes
- b) are coming
- c) is coming
- d) come



Choose the correct answer:  
Children often . . . . . carols

- a) is singing
- b) sing
- c) sings
- d) are singing



Choose the correct answer:  
Santa sometimes . . . . .

- a) are singing
- b) is singing
- c) sing
- d) sings



**Choose the correct answer:**

Santa . . . . . now

- a) skateboards
- b) skateboard
- c) am skateboarding
- d) is skateboarding



**Choose the correct answer:**

Santa Claus always . . . . . his sleigh

- a) rides
- b) is riding
- c) ride
- d) are riding





**Choose the correct answer:**  
Look! Santa . . . . .

- a) skates
- b) skate
- c) is skating
- d) is skate



**Choose the correct answer:**  
Listen! Santa . . . . .

- a) sings
- b) sing
- c) is singing
- d) am singing

Source:

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/history/general-history/facts-about-christmas/>

<https://www.countryliving.com/entertaining/g33822089/christmas-symbols>

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*ENGLISH is YOUR FRIEND !*

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