**CHRISTMAS TIME**

* Do you celebrate Christmas?
* What do you usually do on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day?
* Do most people go to church at Christmas in your hometown?
* What’s the best Christmas you’ve ever had?
* What does Christmas mean to you?
* Do you have any funny Christmas stories?
* What do Christian’s celebrate at Christmas?
* Have your feelings towards Christmas changed since you were a child?
* Do you know the story of the first Christmas?
* What food is associated with Christmas? Is there any special food you like at Christmas?
* What are the best and worst gifts you have ever received?
* **Being Good**: Were you good this year? Do you become a better person every year?
* What is the best Christmas movie in your opinion?
* What makes the best Christmas tree?
* Is it okay to give money as a gift?

**NEW YEAR’S EVE AND DAY**

* What are the traditions on New Year’s Eve in your home?
* Do you have dinner and lunch with your family these days?
* Do you usually go out with friends? Where? And what do you do?
* Do you usually write new year’s resolutions? What would them be this time?
* How different do you think this year will be from the previous one?
* What is special at your home compared to others’?
* What was the most special New Year’s Eve or New Year’s Day for you?

WORDS RELATED TO CHRISTMAS AND CELEBRATIONS

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/vocabulary/intermediate-to-upper-intermediate/christmas-in-the-uk>

**Reading: Christmas Traditions Around the World**

The Philippines: Christmas season begins in September with the feast of Saint Pio and ends in January, meaning nearly half the year is Christmas in the Philippines. The event closest to December 25th is a nine-day **mass** called Simbang Gabi, which includes **hymns** and Filipino foods. Christmas Eve is celebrated all night and then followed by a day of family talks and gift giving. Maligayang pasko (Merry Christmas)!

Mexico: In the nine days before Christmas, children and adults dress up as Mary and Joseph and **re-enact** their search for **lodging** on their way to Bethlehem. Groups of “**pilgrims**” visit different neighbourhoods and sing songs in request of shelter. The host replies in song and offers drink and food. Children try to break a star-shaped piñata and do not receive gifts until January 4th. Feliz Navidad!

Ethiopia: Christmas Eve is celebrated on January 6th in accordance with the local Ge’ez calendar. On that night, priests lead **processions** through cities in traditional clothing and carry **elaborately**decorated umbrellas. In the morning, people feast, presents are exchanged, and some people play sports. During the Timkat procession, observed 12 days later, a stone replica of the 10 Commandments is wrapped in rich fabrics and carried by priests on their heads. Melkam Ganna!

Finland: Finns believe that the Winter **Solstice** brings out the spirits of the dead. On Christmas Eve, celebrated at roughly the same time, Finns place candles around the **graves** of relatives. **hyvää joulua!**

## Vietnam: Christmas was only recently reintroduced to largely Buddhist Vietnam after a relaxation of restrictions in the early 1980s. It is a mainly a Jesus-free **secular** event. Santa is sometimes depicted on a scooter instead of a sleigh and Vietnamese Catholics gather in churches that resemble temples. Citizens visit city centers in**throngs** and later eat Christmas chicken soup. **chúc mừng giáng sinh!**

[Lesson plan sources: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/12/22/christmas-traditions-around-the-world\_n\_1160787.html, http://www.essentialtravel.co.uk/magazine/top-10/international-christmas-traditions.asp]

In Australia, the days before Christmas are hot. Christmas is during the summer months and it is the beginning of a nice holiday time for pupils. Families which have relatives in Europe, dream of having a traditional white Christmas once in their lives. Children would like to build a snowman or go skiing, as they know it from the pictures, Christmas stories and Christmas cards.

In Australia Christmas presents are distributed on Christmas morning the 25th of December. The electric candles burn on the Christmas tree, the family sings Christmas carols and unwraps their presents.

After that, children go outside or down to the beach because it is usually very hot – about thirty-five degrees. At the same time, the rest of the family prepares Christmas lunch. Some families have a barbecue outside in the garden or on the beach, others have a big meal inside the house, because it’s cooler there.**Christmas Lesson Plan (ESL): Comprehension & Follow-Up Questions**

1)     Which country has the longest Christmas holiday season?

2)     In Mexico, what should you do if Mary and Joseph show up at your door?

3)     What do priests carry on their heads during Timkat?

4)     **Your opinion**: Which celebration sounds most interesting to you?

**Christmas Lesson Plan (ESL): Role-Play 1 (Pair Work)**

Student A: You gave a sweater to your friend (Student B) for Christmas. You bought it from a nice old lady when you were on a recent holiday. Now you are having coffee with your friend. You notice that he/she is not wearing the sweater. Comment on this.

Student B: For Christmas, your friend, Student A, gave you a sweater. Not only is it ugly, but it also has a strange smell. You know you’ll never wear it. Ask your friend if you can have the receipt so you can return it.

Group 1 should make a list of **negative** things related to Christmas.

Group 2 should make a list of the **positive** things related to Christmas.

Group 1: Present your arguments to the council and residents for either cancelling Christmas or changing the holiday in some major ways. Take 1-2 minutes to prepare. Go first when ready.

Group 2:  Take 1-2 minutes to form your pro-Christmas arguments. After Group 1 has presented, present your arguments and defend the holiday against their criticisms.