



# Christmas

## Winter resource

# Christmas

## What is Christmas?

Ho ho ho! Merry Christmas!

Christmas is a holiday celebrated on the 25th of December by billions of people around the world. The story behind Christmas comes from the Christian belief that the son of God, Jesus Christ, was born on the 25th December.

Though we do not know the real date of Jesus's birth, the Christian church said 1,600 years ago that Christmas should have a fixed date, so that it would be on the same day every year.

The story of Christmas comes from the Bible, the religious book for Christians – even though it has religious roots, Christmas is celebrated by both Christians and non-Christians and is a public holiday in many countries.





# Christmas

## What is Christmas?

Christmas is celebrated by getting together with family and friends, giving gifts and enjoying food such as a Christmas dinner – we'll get to what this is later. However, there are many traditions that take place on Christmas. Some traditions are religious, such as praying, going to church, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ or seeing a **nativity** scene. Some are more **secular**, or non-religious, such as watching a Christmas film with family, decorating a Christmas tree with lights and hanging baubles, sending Christmas cards to friends and family, and more.

One of the most popular figures on Christmas is Santa Claus. Santa is a man said to visit the homes of children across the world every Christmas Eve, bringing them gifts based on whether they have been naughty or nice in the past year. He does this by riding a magic sleigh, or sledge, pulled by flying reindeer – you might have heard of the most famous one, Rudolph, whose red nose guides the sleigh. People leave food out for Santa, such as a mince pie, cookies, brandy, milk or more (even carrots for the reindeer!) hoping that Santa will leave gifts at their house. Santa is said to visit the house of every home that celebrates Christmas – that's a lot of travelling to do in one night!



# Questions

**Find the answers in the text above!**

**1) Why did the church decide to put Christmas on December 25th?**

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**2) How does Santa Claus travel the world on Christmas Eve?**

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**3) What makes Christmas so good for religious and non-religious celebrators?**

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# Christmas

## The story of Nativity



The religious celebration of Christmas is based on the nativity story, which is the tale from the Bible about how Jesus Christ was born.

Christians believe that, two thousand years ago, a woman named Mary lived in the town of Nazareth. Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph, a carpenter who worked with wood, and had a normal life. Until, one day, an angel appeared from Heaven, telling Mary she was going to have a baby boy, and that this boy was the son of God. Joseph doubted Mary, until he was approached by an angel as well, telling him to stay with Mary and name the child Jesus Christ. Joseph agreed.

While Mary was pregnant, the emperor of the land they lived in **decreed** that everyone return to the town they were born in so he could count how many people lived in the country – he called this plan the **census**. Mary and Joseph travelled by donkey from Nazareth to a town called Bethlehem to be counted, which took days and days. By the time they got to Bethlehem, everyone else had got there first, ready for the census – there was no room at any of the **inns**! Mary and Joseph asked one, two, three innkeepers, but they were all full.





# Christmas

## The story of Nativity

Finally, one innkeeper said, “We have no rooms free, but we do have a stable at the back if you need somewhere to sleep.”

Mary and Joseph had no choice – they went to the stable at the back of the inn. There, among the farm animals sharing the stable, Mary and Joseph made a comfortable place to sleep, and it was there that the baby Jesus was born. Mary set him down in a **manger**, where food is kept for the barn animals – it was a strange place for a baby to be born, but it was enough for them.

This is why, in nativity scenes you might see around during Christmas time, you can often see a scene of Mary and Joseph in a stable, with farm animals by their sides, leaning over the baby Jesus who is in the manger.

This scene, though **humble**, is a part of Christmas celebrations in hundreds of countries around the world 2000 years later!





# Questions

Find the answers in the text above!

1) Why did Mary and Joseph have to return to Bethlehem?

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2) How did Mary and Joseph get to Bethlehem?

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3) What about the nativity scene do you think makes it so special?

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# Christmas

## The origins of Santa

But then... who is Santa Claus? Where did he come from? We know about the story of Jesus, but Santa isn't in the nativity story – he has very different roots.

The legend of Santa **harks** back to the figure of Saint Nicholas, who was said to be a saint in the 1400s in a place called Myra, which we now know as Turkey. Not much is known about Saint Nicholas, except that he did good things for people – he is said to have done **miracles**, like saving the lives of three children! Because of his good work, Nicholas was made a saint, and after his death, talk of Saint Nicholas spread around Europe.

As time went on and the memory of what he did faded, countries started to give Saint Nicholas different names and started mixing up his story with other legends. In the end, the legend of Saint Nicholas which lasted the longest was the Dutch version of Saint Nicholas, Sinterklaas, who wore red robes and left gifts or coal on childrens' doorsteps – much like the Santa we know today, when he decides if a child has been naughty or nice!







# Christmas

## The origins of Santa

It is thought that the tale of Sinterklaas was brought to America and the UK by Dutch travellers, and slowly began to change into what we now know as Santa Claus.

In the 1800s, American artists drew versions of Santa Claus on a flying sleigh pulled by eight reindeer, and versions of Santa Claus living at the North Pole instead of Turkey.

In 1931, Santa was shown in a Coca Cola advert dressed in a red coat with white fluff on the trim, a big, bushy white beard and rosy cheeks, as well as a red hat with a pom-pom on the end.

This image of Santa stuck, and has been the **symbol** of Santa Claus for 80 years since the advert.





# Questions

**Find the answers in the text above!**

**1) Where was Saint Nicholas from, and what is that place called now?**

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**2) Why did people spread the legend of Saint Nicholas?**

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**3) When did Santa Claus first appear with a red and white fluffy coat?**

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# Christmas

## Christmas dinner



We learned earlier that people who celebrate Christmas often leave food for Santa, but what are these foods? And what are some of the other dishes people enjoy around Christmas time? The foods served for Christmas change from country to country, so we wouldn't have time to talk about them all, but these are some of the meals you might see served for Christmas dinner in Britain.

One of the most famous foods eaten around Christmas, and one of Santa's personal favourites, is the mince pie. When we think of mince, we might think of mince meat, such as in spaghetti bolognese or keema, but mince pies are very different. Despite the name, the filling of a mince pie, mincemeat, is actually fruit! It's a mixture of dried raisins and spices, which makes a delicious filling.

Another Christmas dessert is Christmas pudding, a cake made with raisins and an alcohol called brandy, which is then lit on fire! The alcohol is cooked off when this happens, so it is still okay for children to eat, but a favourite with children has to be trifle, a British pudding made with layered jelly (or Jell-O), whipped cream and custard. Yum!



# Christmas

## Christmas dinner



For the main course, you'll probably see a big roast turkey, shared with family. This is served with stuffing (bread mixed with herbs, often sage), pigs in blankets (a fun nickname for small sausages – or pigs – wrapped in bacon – or blankets), roast potatoes, cranberry sauce and gravy on top.

It's a **hearty** meal, but it's a great way to spend time with family. To see the dinner out with a bang, families pull christmas crackers, which are decorations which make a snapping noise when you open them – these are full of christmas hats, joke cards and small gifts, perfect for messing with while you wait for pudding.

These are just some of the foods you might see on the British Christmas dinner table. One of the great things about Christmas is that it is celebrated by so many people and cultures, and each one does Christmas dinner differently.

What would you love to serve up for Christmas dinner?





# Questions

Find the answers in the text above!

1) What ingredients are used to make mincemeat?

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2) Why does Christmas pudding have to be lit on fire before children can eat it?

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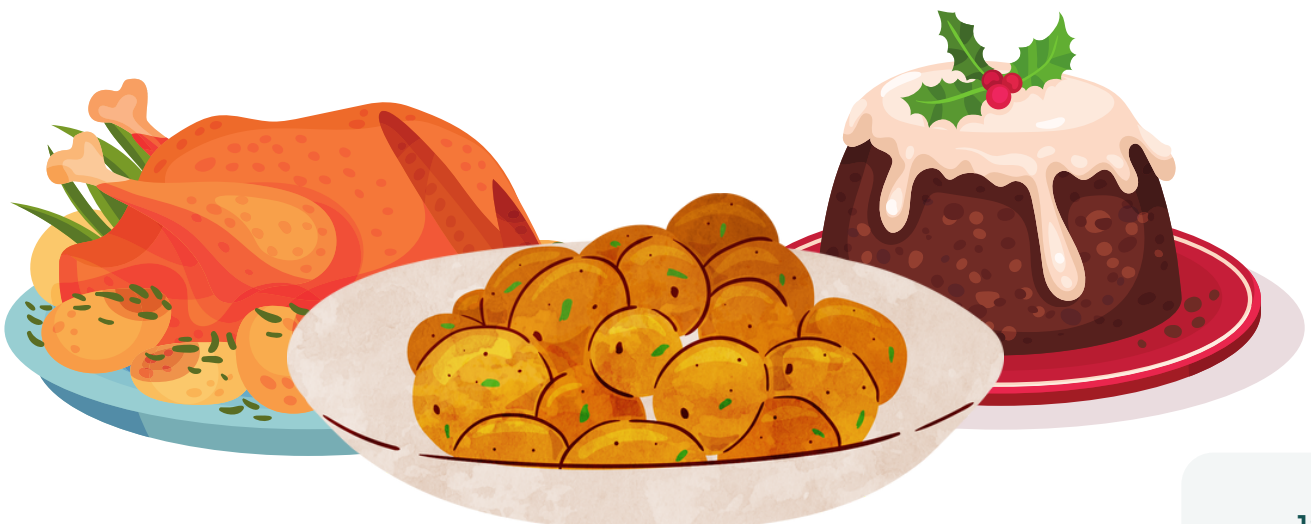
3) Imagine you could invite anyone to share Christmas dinner with you. Who would you pick and why?

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# Discussion



If you were spoken to by an angel, what do you think they would say? How would you feel?

How do you think Santa manages to deliver gifts to every child that celebrates Christmas in one night?

Do you know someone who is kind to people? Who are they? How would you want them to be remembered in a legend?



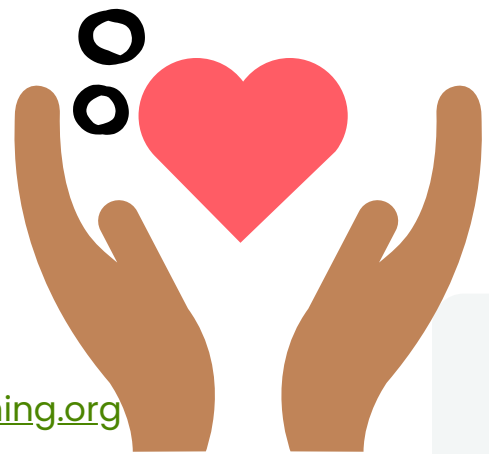


# Discussion Challenge!

Do you know how the story of the nativity continues? If so, describe the next part of the story! If not, why not guess what happens next?

What do you like best about your Christmas? If you don't celebrate Christmas, at what other times do you celebrate?

Christmas is a time where we care for others, whether they are family or strangers. Who in the world do you think needs extra love and support?





# Writing task

## 1 star writing task

Using your Bedrock words, write three sentences about what Christmas means to you.

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## 2 star writing task

Write a description of a delicious Christmas treat and bring it to life using your great Bedrock vocabulary!

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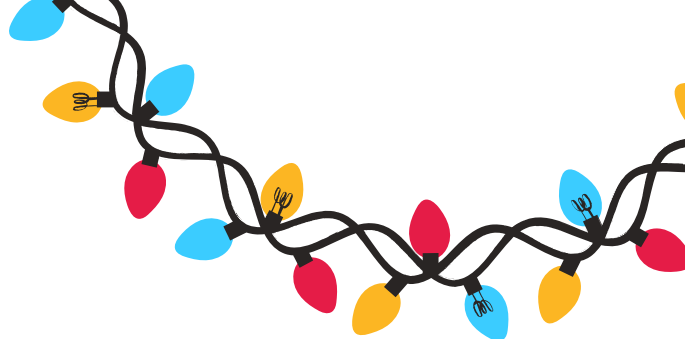
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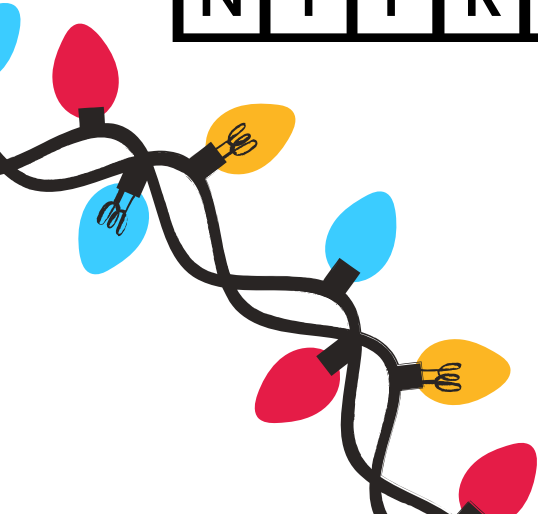
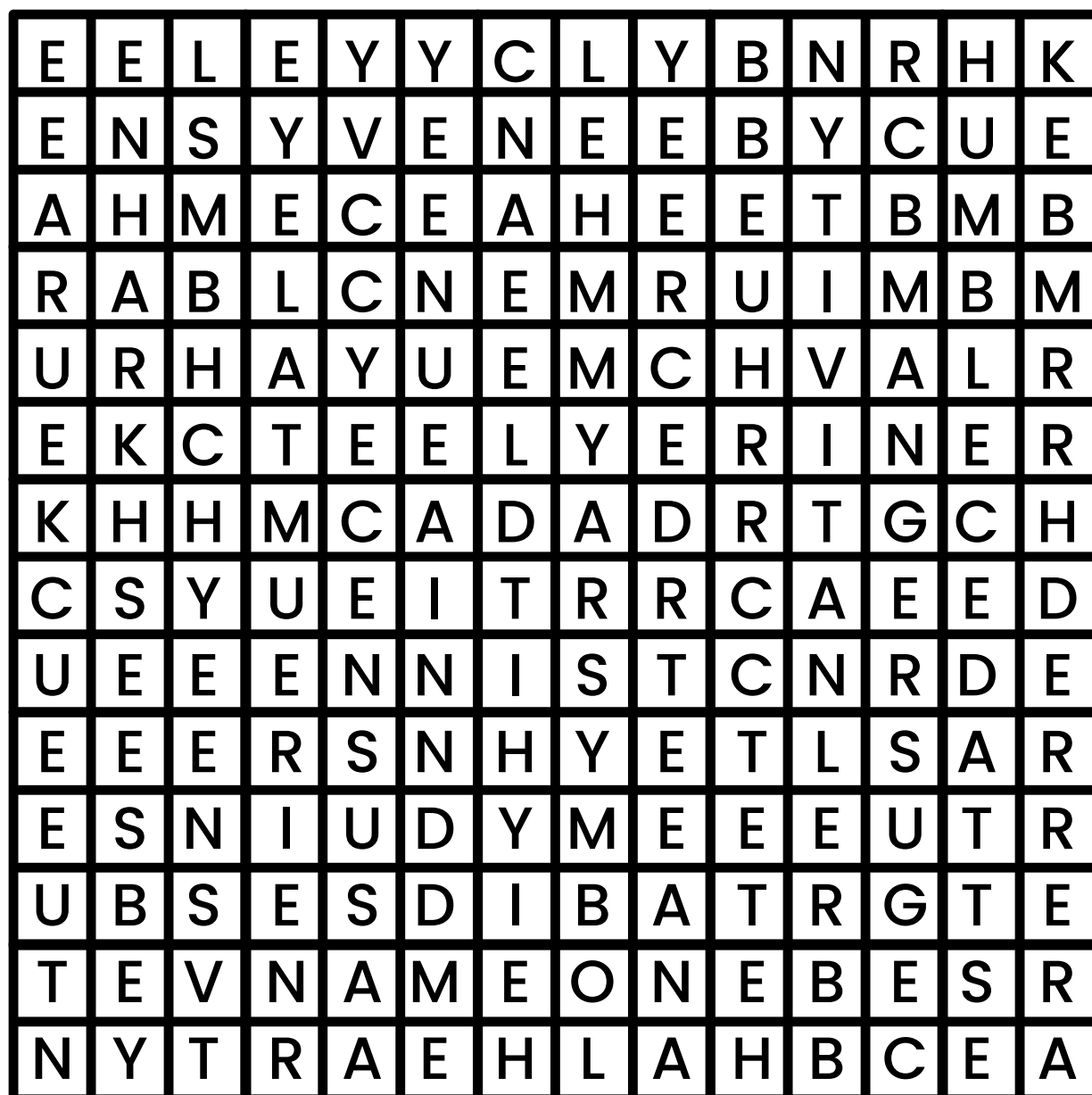
**Make sure to use your Bedrock vocabulary in your writing!**

A stylized, sketch-like illustration of a greyhound dog's head and neck, facing right. The drawing is done in a simple, expressive style with grey and black lines. It is positioned in the bottom left corner of the page, partially overlapping the lined area. The dog's head is turned slightly towards the viewer, showing its characteristic large, pointed ears and long, narrow snout. The neck is long and slender, with some shading to indicate fur texture. The overall style is minimalist and artistic, fitting the theme of a 'writing paper' for a dog.



# Word search

There are 10 words relevant to Christmas hidden in this word search for you to find – see what to look for on the next two pages!





## Word search

There are 10 words in this word search relating to the topic of Christmas. Can you find them all? (Page 1 of 2)

### 1) Nativity (n.)

Someone or something's birth, usually Jesus Christ's.

Tina thought her baby sister's nativity didn't look much like the one from the Christmas decorations.

### 2) Secular (adj.)

Non-religious.

While Katie celebrated a religious Christmas, Amir joined in with the secular parts.

### 3) Decree (n.)

An order given by someone with power.

The teacher gave a decree that students weren't allowed to play football at lunch.

### 4) Census (n.)

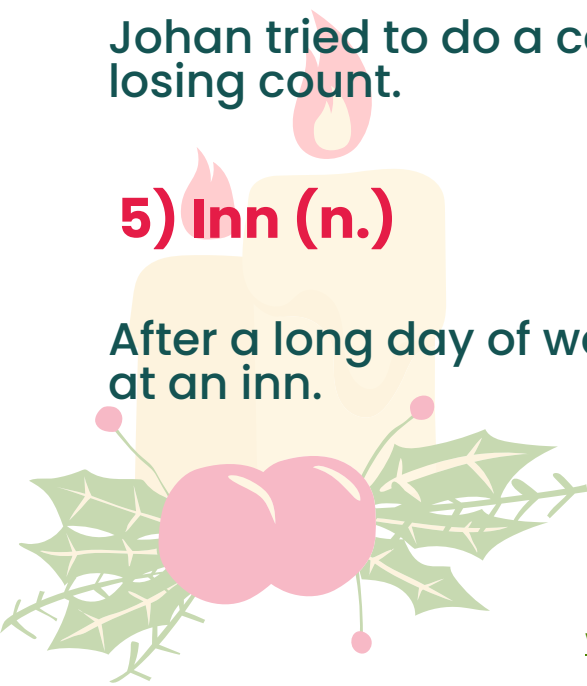
When people in a country or area are counted.

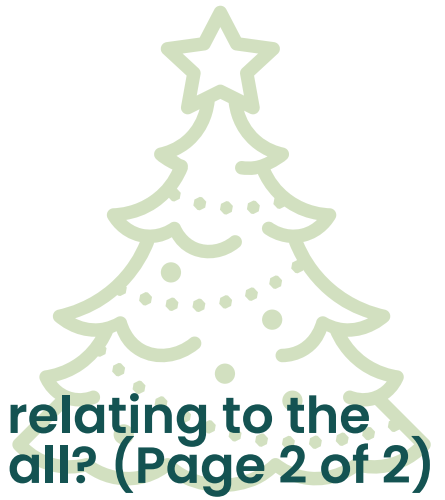
Johan tried to do a census of his toy soldiers, but he kept losing count.

### 5) Inn (n.)

A house that gives food, drink and a place to stay.

After a long day of walking, Sam was glad to eat and sleep at an inn.





## Word search

There are 10 words in this word search relating to the topic of Christmas. Can you find them all? (Page 2 of 2)

### 6) Manger (n.)

An open box where animals eat their food.

The farmer put fresh hay in the manger for her horses to eat.

### 7) Humble (adj.)

Something or someone that is simple but kind and good to others.

Even though she came first in the class, Sophia was humble and didn't show off about it.

### 8) Hark (v.)

To listen.

Hark, your mum is calling you from downstairs to have tea!

### 9) Symbol (n.)

A picture of a person, place or idea that is easy to remember.

Sanjeeva felt hungry every time he saw the McDonalds symbol.

### 10) Hearty (adj.)

Happy, warm and fun.

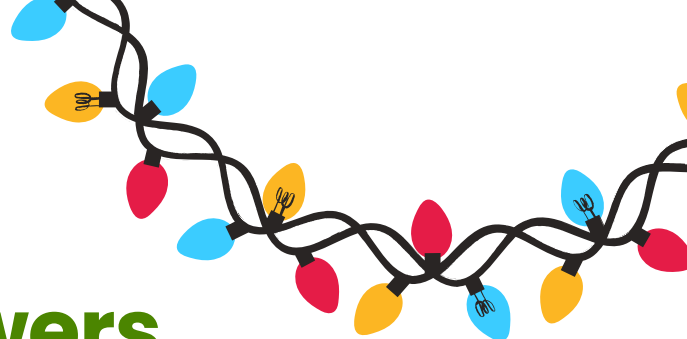
Eliza's mum was warm and hearty, and the food she served was hearty too!



## Activity

One of the most creative parts of Christmas is decorating the Christmas tree! Cover your tree with baubles, tinsel, lights, colours and decorations to add some Christmas spirit!





# Word search answers

Did you manage to find them all?

E	E	L	E	Y	Y	C	L	Y	B	N	R	H	K
E	N	S	Y	V	E	N	E	E	B	Y	C	U	E
A	H	M	E	C	E	A	H	E	E	T	B	M	B
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U	R	H	A	Y	U	E	M	C	H	V	A	L	R
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