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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 30/11/12

What is Christmas today?

Today, let's talk about Christmas. What is it? Why is it? How do we celebrate it? What does it mean to you? Also how has it changed over the years? Some interesting questions for you to mull over...maybe over a glass of Glühwein? This German pre-Christmas tradition has in recent years spread across Europe to the UK in the form of popular Christmas markets.

In Britain, people celebrate Christmas with roast turkey and all the trimmings followed by Christmas pudding. Families open their presents that surround the Christmas tree. In Europe, many people eat fish, a good catholic tradition, for their Christmas meal. In Central Europe, they celebrate Christmas one day early on the evening of December 24. It is also a public holiday on this day in some of these countries!

Christmas, as many know it, is actually down to one man - Charles Dickens. He invented the family Christmas! Up until he did, the festivity had been waning, as people celebrated it as a community rather than as a family. Queen Victoria's husband introduced the Christmas tree. Father Christmas in red was an idea that originated from the USA!

These days, Christmas is very commercial. We see Christmas promoted in shops in October! Has Christmas lost its actual meaning? These days, it seems to be more about Santa delivering the presents, yet the origins of Christmas are about Christ being born. In the past, many people went to church to remember this.

Children are taught the nativity play of baby Jesus being born, of Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem, of the three Kings, the shepherds and the angel in the sky. We tend to overlook these important aspects when opening our presents.

SPEAKING – WARM UP

Think of three things you know about Christmas. Go round the room swapping details with others.

LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

1) The article – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

2) The article - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

3) Article quiz - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) What is very commercial?
- 2) Christmas, as we know it, is down to whom?
- 3) Name Queen Victoria's husband.
- 4) What do you tend to overlook?
- 5) Who were Mary and Joseph?

Student B

- 1) Who was Charles Dickens?
- 2) What type of market is now popular in the UK?
- 3) What do British people mostly eat at Christmas?
- 4) What do people eat in Central Europe at Christmas?
- 5) Who is in red?

Category: Christmas / December / Tradition
Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

What is Christmas today? – 30th November 2012

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with '**Christmas**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

WRITING / SPEAKING

What is Christmas today? *In pairs* choose three things from the article. Write them below.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Add three similar ideas of your own about what you think Christmas today means. Discuss together.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

WRITING / SPEAKING

Think of three Christmas traditions practised in your country - **or** - Think of three kinds of food you eat over the festive period. How do they differ from those in England? Write down your thoughts.

The teacher will choose some students to read out their work to the class.

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) What day in December do you celebrate Christmas?
- 3) Is Christmas too commercial?
- 4) Have we forgotten the meaning of Christmas?
- 5) Do you go to church at Christmas?
- 6) Do you see kids playing the nativity play on their PlayStation?
- 7) Do you use the internet at Christmas?
- 8) Who do you talk to at Christmas?
- 9) Do you have a real or artificial Christmas tree?
- 10) Have you learnt anything today?

SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 1

In groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Discussion FM* radio studio. Today's interview is about: *What is Christmas today? 10 mins.*

- 1) Father Christmas/Santa Claus.
- 2) Rudolf the red nose reindeer.
- 3) The fairy/angel on the top of the Christmas tree.
- 4) A hard-pressed shopper.

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

In pairs. You are in a bar in your town/city. Start a conversation about Christmas. *5 mins.*

SPEAKING - STORY

In pairs prepare your version of **the nativity story** to tell the class. *5 mins prep.* **The teacher** will choose some pairs to hear their story in front of the class.

SPEAKING - GAME

Allow 10 minutes – *As a class* form a circle. Play the game in a clockwise direction...

All I want for Christmas is ...

Repeat the previous things said then add one more... Forget one and you are eliminated!

The teacher can moderate the session.

DISCUSSION

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) What is Christmas?
- 3) Why do we celebrate Christmas?
- 4) How do we celebrate Christmas?
- 5) What does Christmas mean to you?
- 6) How has Christmas changed over the years?
- 7) What movies might you watch on TV at Christmas?
- 8) What do you eat at Christmas?
- 9) What is Christmas today?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

GAP FILL: READING

What is Christmas today?

Today, let's talk about Christmas. What is it? Why is it? How do we (1)_____ it? What does it mean to you? Also how has it changed over the years? Some interesting questions for you to (2)_____...maybe over a glass of Glühwein? This German pre-Christmas (3)_____ has in recent years spread across Europe to the UK in the form of popular Christmas (4)_____.

In Britain, people celebrate Christmas with roast (5)_____ and all the trimmings followed by Christmas (6)_____. Families open their presents that (7)_____ the Christmas tree. In Europe, many people eat fish, a good catholic tradition, for their (8)_____ meal. In Central Europe, they celebrate Christmas one day early on the evening of December 24. It is also a public holiday on this day in some of these countries!

mull over / markets / surround / turkey / pudding / celebrate / Christmas / tradition

Christmas, as many know it, is actually down to one man - Charles Dickens. He invented the family Christmas! Up until he did, the (1)_____ had been waning, as people celebrated it as a community rather than as a (2)_____. Queen Victoria's (3)_____ introduced the Christmas tree. Father Christmas in red was an idea that originated from the USA!

These days, Christmas is very (4)_____. We see Christmas promoted in shops in October! Has Christmas lost its (5)_____ meaning? These days, it seems to be more about Santa delivering the (6)_____, yet the (7)_____ of Christmas are about Christ being born. In the past, many people went to (8)_____ to remember this.

Children are taught the nativity play of baby Jesus being born, of Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem, of the three Kings, the shepherds and the angel in the sky...

husband / presents / festivity / commercial / church / family / actual / origins

GAP FILL: GRAMMAR

What is Christmas today?

Today, let's talk about Christmas. What is it? (1)___ is it? How do we celebrate it? What does it mean to you? Also (2)___ has it changed over the years? Some interesting questions for (3)___ to mull over...maybe over a glass of Glühwein? This German pre-Christmas tradition has in recent years spread across Europe to the UK in the form of popular Christmas markets.

In Britain, people celebrate Christmas with roast turkey and all the trimmings followed (4)___ Christmas pudding. Families open their presents that surround the Christmas tree. In Europe, many people eat fish, a good catholic tradition, (5)___ their Christmas meal. In Central Europe, they celebrate Christmas one day early (6)___ the evening of December 24. (7)___ is also a public holiday on this day (8)___ some of these countries!

by / in / on / it / why / you / how / for

Christmas, as (1)___ know it, is actually down to one man - Charles Dickens. He invented the family Christmas! Up until he did, the festivity had been waning, as people celebrated it as a community (2)___ (3)___ as a family. Queen Victoria's husband introduced the Christmas tree. Father Christmas in red was an idea (4)___ originated from the USA!

These days, Christmas is (5)___ commercial. We see Christmas promoted in shops in October! Has Christmas lost its actual meaning? These days, it seems to be (6)___ about Santa delivering the presents, (7)___ the origins of Christmas are about Christ being born. In the past, many people went to church to remember (8)___.

Children are taught the nativity play of baby Jesus being born, of Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem, of the three Kings, the shepherds and the angel in the sky...

more / yet / rather / this / that / very / many / than

What is Christmas today? – 30th November 2012



GAP FILL: LISTENING

What is Christmas today?

Today, let's talk about Christmas. What is it? Why is it? How do we celebrate it? What does it mean to you? Also how has it changed over the years? Some interesting questions for you to mull over... _____ of Glühwein? This German pre-Christmas tradition has in recent years spread across Europe to the UK in the form of popular _____.

In Britain, people celebrate Christmas with roast turkey and all the trimmings followed _____. Families open their presents that surround the Christmas tree. In Europe, many people eat fish, a good catholic tradition, for their Christmas meal. In Central Europe, they celebrate Christmas one day early _____ December 24. It is also a public holiday on this day in some of these countries!

Christmas, as many know it, is actually down to one man - _____. He invented the family Christmas! Up until he did, the festivity had been waning, as people celebrated it as a community rather than as a family.

_____ introduced the Christmas tree. Father Christmas in red was an idea that _____ USA!

These days, Christmas _____. We see Christmas promoted in shops in October! Has Christmas lost its actual meaning? These days, it seems to be more about Santa _____, yet the origins of Christmas are about Christ being born. In the past, many people went to church to remember this. Children are taught the nativity play of baby Jesus being born, of Mary and Joseph _____, of the three Kings, the shepherds and the angel in the sky. We tend to overlook these important aspects when opening our presents.

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WRITING / SPELLING

1) Christmas songs and carols – As a class - write as many as you can on the board. (2 mins) Which are your favourite? Talk about them.

2) Sentence starters - Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- 1) Christmas _____
- 2) Christmas trees _____
- 3) Jesus _____

3) Write down 50 words about: *What is Christmas today?* Your words can be read out in class.

4) Homework - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: ***What is Christmas today?*** Your email can be read out in class.

SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) celebrate
- 2) Christmas
- 3) Glühwein
- 4) tradition
- 5) popular
- 6) trimmings
- 7) countries
- 8) actually
- 9) family
- 10) know

SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

Pass = 12

Good = 15

Very good = 18

Excellent = 20

- 1) festivity
- 2) rather
- 3) until
- 4) community
- 5) commercial
- 6) remember
- 7) Bethlehem
- 8) shepherds
- 9) nativity
- 10) overlook

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