

The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 15/11/17

Christmas and the advent calendar

Christmas is coming. Yes, it's that time of year folks. So having an advent calendar is the ultimate countdown to Christmas. It's a calendar that you hang up in December. There are 24 windows or doors on it. Each day you open a different window on it, so if it's the 8th December, you open the 8 window, which can reveal a chocolate. It's something that most of us have done since we were knee high.

The advent calendar starts on the 1st December and ends on the 24th December. Traditional advent calendars show various religious scenes, but they could also show different aspects of Christmas, bible verses, or different winter scenes.

Advent itself is a four-week period that starts on a Sunday nearest the feast day of St Andrew the Apostle (30th November) and runs for the following three Sundays.

The origins of Advent can be traced back to German Protestants in the mid-19th century. Lutherans in Germany made chalk marks on doors from December 1st until the 24th.

Who actually started advent calendars can be contested. One contender is the mother of a Gerhard Lang. She made her son a square of cardboard that she stuck 24 tiny sweets on, to eat over the advent period. The idea stayed with Lang, who as an adult created the idea of a printed advent calendar around 1908. A few years later, he introduced the idea of opening a door or window on them. Lang was forced to close his business in the thirties. During both world wars cardboard was rationed. It was forbidden to keep such calendars.

Advent calendars were reintroduced in 1946, allegedly by a Richard Sellmer. The idea of the advent calendar then rapidly spread worldwide. By 1958, folk could buy advent calendars with chocolate in them. The rest they say is history. Merry Christmas everybody.

SPEAKING – WARM UP

Think of three things you know about advent calendars. 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 questions

- 1) What is an advent calendar?
- 2) Who were Lutherans?
- 3) Who was Gerhard Lang?
- 4) Who was Richard Sellmer?
- 5) What had happened by 1958?

Student B questions

- 1) What happened during both the world wars?
- 2) What is Advent?
- 3) What can you find inside an advent calendar?
- 4) What is a knee?
- 5) When is Christmas Day?

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WRITING / SPEAKING

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

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs – Think of three things you like about Christmas. Why? Write them below. Discuss together.

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

CREATING - A CHRISTMAS CRACKER

In pairs/groups – This can be done in various ways...

Either - Create your own Christmas cracker in class. When this is done, crack it in class. The jokes can be read out.

Or – Each student brings a Christmas cracker to the lesson. During the lesson all the crackers are pulled and the jokes read.

CREATING - CHRISTMAS CRACKER JOKES

In pairs/groups – Write down 6 Christmas jokes you know. When done read them to the other team.

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) When did you last open a window on an advent calendar?
- 3) Are advent calendars still popular?
- 4) Have you ever made an advent calendar?
- 5) What is your favourite type of advent calendar?
- 6) Are the days leading up to Christmas magical and hectic?
- 7) Do you help decorate the Christmas tree?
- 8) What is your favourite part of Christmas?
- 9) Where will you spend Christmas?
- 10) Will you be buying an advent calendar this year?

SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY

In groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Discussion FM* radio studio in London. Today's interview is about: *Christmas and the advent calendar.*

- 1) Someone who lives in the Far East / Australia.
- 2) Someone who lives in South America / Russia.
- 3) Someone who lives in the UK / Europe.
- 4) Someone who lives in North America / Africa.

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

CREATING / SPEAKING - AN ADVENT CALENDER

Allow 5 minutes – In pairs/groups/as a class.

Split the class into pairs/groups. Make an advent calendar. See who is the most creative. Hang yours on the board.

Describe to the class what is inside the 24 different windows!

Have fun!

Afterwards take it home and use it.

The teacher can moderate the session.

DISCUSSION

Student B questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Where is the best place to buy an advent calendar?
- 3) Do you use last year's advent calendar again?
- 4) Do you buy next year's advent calendar in January?
- 5) What do you like to do in the build up to Christmas?
- 6) Why is Christmas so popular?
- 7) What would we do if we didn't celebrate Christmas?
- 8) Is Christmas too commercial?
- 9) What have you asked Father Christmas for this year?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

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GAP FILL: READING

Christmas and the advent calendar

(1)___ is coming. Yes, it's that time of year folks. So having an advent calendar is the ultimate countdown to Christmas. It's a calendar that you hang up in December. There are 24 windows or doors on it. Each day you open a different window on it, so if it's the 8th December, you open the 8 window, which can (2)___ a chocolate. It's something that most of us have done since we were (3)___ high.

The advent (4)___ starts on the 1st December and ends on the 24th December. (5)___ advent calendars show various religious scenes, but they could also show different aspects of Christmas, bible verses, or different (6)___ scenes. (7)___ itself is a four-week period that starts on a Sunday nearest the (8)___ day of St Andrew the Apostle (30th November) and runs for the following three Sundays.

calendar / Christmas / advent / traditional / knee / reveal / feast / winter

The (1)___ of Advent can be traced back to German Protestants in the mid-19th century. Lutherans in Germany made (2)___ marks on doors from December 1st until the 24th.

Who (3)___ started advent calendars can be contested. One (4)___ is the mother of a Gerhard Lang. She made her son a square of (5)___ that she stuck 24 (6)___ sweets on, to eat over the advent period. The idea stayed with Lang, who as an adult created the idea of a printed advent calendar around 1908. A few years later, he introduced the idea of opening a door or window on them. Lang was forced to close his business in the thirties. During both world wars cardboard was rationed. It was (7)___ to keep such calendars.

Advent calendars were reintroduced in 1946, (8)___ by a Richard Sellmer. The idea of the advent calendar then rapidly spread worldwide.

contender / origins / cardboard / chalk / forbidden / allegedly / actually / tiny

GAP FILL: GRAMMAR

Christmas and the advent calendar

Christmas is coming. Yes, it's that time of year folks. (1)___ having an advent calendar is the ultimate countdown to Christmas. It's a calendar that you hang up in December. There are 24 windows or doors on it. (2)___ day you open a different window on it, so if it's the 8th December, you open the 8 window, (3)___ can reveal a chocolate. It's something that (4)___ of us have done since we were knee high.

The advent calendar starts on the 1st December and ends on the 24th December. Traditional advent calendars show various religious scenes, but they (5)___ (6)___ show different aspects of Christmas, bible verses, or different winter scenes. Advent itself is a four-week period (7)___ starts on a Sunday nearest the feast day of St Andrew the Apostle (30th November) and runs (8)___ the following three Sundays.

which / that / each / for / could / most / also / so

There are 8 x 'the' to fill in here!

Origins of Advent can be traced back to German Protestants in mid-19th century. Lutherans in Germany made chalk marks on doors from December 1st until the 24th.

Who actually started advent calendars can be contested. One contender is mother of a Gerhard Lang. She made her son a square of cardboard that she stuck 24 tiny sweets on, to eat over the advent period. Idea stayed with Lang, who as an adult created the idea of a printed advent calendar around 1908. A few years later, he introduced idea of opening a door or window on them. Lang was forced to close his business in thirties. During both world wars cardboard was rationed. It was forbidden to keep such calendars.

Advent calendars were reintroduced in 1946, allegedly by a Richard Sellmer. Idea of advent calendar then rapidly spread worldwide.

the / the / the / the / the / the / the / the

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GAP FILL: LISTENING

WRITING/SPELLING

Christmas and the advent calendar

_____. Yes, it's that time of year folks. So having an advent calendar is the _____ to Christmas. It's a calendar that you hang up in December. There are 24 windows or doors on it. Each day you open a different window on it, so if it's the 8th December, you open the 8 window, which can reveal a chocolate. It's something that most of us have done since _____.

The advent calendar starts on the 1st December and ends on the 24th December. Traditional advent calendars show various religious scenes, but they could also show different aspects of Christmas, bible verses, or different winter scenes.

Advent itself is a four-week period that starts on a Sunday nearest the feast day of _____ (30th November) and runs for the following three Sundays. The origins of Advent can be traced back to German Protestants in the mid-19th century. _____ made chalk marks on doors from December 1st until the 24th.

Who actually started _____ be contested. One contender is the mother of a Gerhard Lang. She made her son a _____ that she stuck 24 tiny sweets

on, to eat over the advent period. The idea stayed with Lang, who as an adult created the idea of a printed advent calendar around 1908. _____, he introduced the idea of opening a door or window on them. Lang was forced to close his business in the thirties. During both world wars cardboard was rationed. _____ keep such calendars.

Advent calendars were reintroduced in 1946, allegedly by a Richard Sellmer. The idea of the advent calendar then rapidly spread worldwide. By 1958, folk could buy advent calendars with chocolate in them. The rest they say is history. _____.

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WRITING / SPEAKING

1) On the board - In pairs/As a class, list 20 things about Christmas. Talk briefly about each of them. *Five minutes.*

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

- 1) Christmas _____
- 2) I think _____
- 3) Advent calendars _____

3) Write down 50 words about: *Christmas and the advent calendar.* Your words can be read out in class.

4) Homework - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: *Christmas and the advent calendar.*

SPELLING

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

- 1) advent
- 2) calendar
- 3) traditional
- 4) various
- 5) period
- 6) tiny
- 7) idea
- 8) few
- 9) allegedly
- 10) folk

SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

Pass = 12

Good = 15

Very good = 18

Excellent = 20

- 11) protestants
- 12) feast
- 13) Christmas
- 14) ultimate
- 15) countdown
- 16) which
- 17) something
- 18) since
- 19) knee high
- 20) cardboard

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