



# Christmas in different countries

Pre-Intermediate and above Weekly Warmer

Time: 10-15 minutes

**Level:** Pre-Intermediate and above.

**Language Aims:** To practice reading for understanding, to practice asking and answering questions, to learn about customs of different countries.

**Preparation:** Make copies of the worksheets A or B on the next page so that each student in a pair will have either an A. or B. worksheet.

## Procedure:

1. Give half of the students in your class the Student A. worksheet, the other half the Student B. worksheet. Ask the As to sit together and the Bs. to sit together.
2. Tell the class they are going to read about different Christmas customs. Ask them to spend a few minutes reading through their worksheet. (You may like to discourage them from using dictionaries).
3. After a few minutes, ask them to look at the parts of the text that have gaps. They should think about what kind of words will go in the gaps.
4. They then look at the question prompts in brackets next to each gap. Tell them to work with the other students around them to make a question to ask about the missing information for each gap. Circulate and help with question formation. Students can check their questions with other students who have the same worksheet (e.g. As talking to As.) if you wish.
5. When everyone has had enough time, ask students to find a partner with someone with the other worksheet. Then ask students to sit in their pairs facing each other over a desk or table.
6. Students ask their partner questions to find the words that go in each gap. They answer their partner's questions. Their aim is to complete their worksheet with the correct information.
7. You may like to check answers with the whole class quickly at the end.
8. You could extend this activity by talking about customs for other festivals. This will be especially effective if you have a multinational class.



## Worksheet for Student A:

Christmas is celebrated in different ways in different countries. Here are a few customs that take place on or around December 25 each year in some countries.\*

In Finland people clean  before Christmas. They have a special meal on Christmas Eve and children receive presents and put decorations on a spruce tree.

(What do people clean ?)

In Germany homes may have a model of the stable where Jesus Christ was born. The stable will have Mary, Joseph and cows and a donkey. Father Christmas delivers presents to children on . The presents are put under the Christmas tree.

(When does Father Christmas deliver ?)

In New Zealand December 25 is  so everyone is dressed in cool clothes. There are Christmas decorations in shops and most homes have a Christmas tree (a real pine tree or an artificial one). A tree called the pohutukawa is usually covered in red flowers so everyone calls it the New Zealand Christmas tree.

(What is the weather like in ?)

In Australia many people still have a large Christmas dinner with ham or turkey. Because it is usually very hot on Christmas Day others like to have a  on Christmas Day and spend time in the pool or at the beach.

(What do many people like ?)

In Italy children get presents  Christmas. A witch called Befana arrives in the house by coming down the chimney. Around Christmas children will visit different houses to sing Christmas songs. On Christmas Day many people meet outside the Vatican in Rome to receive a blessing from the Pope.

(In Italy when do children ?)

In the US many people go to church at  on Christmas Eve. People try to get home to their families for Christmas where they will exchange gifts and have a turkey or goose for Christmas dinner.

(When do many people go ?)

\*(Please note: these are only a few of the customs and of course not everyone in these countries does things the same way.)



## Worksheet for Student B:

Christmas is celebrated in different ways in different countries. Here are a few customs that take place on or around December 25 each year in some countries.\*

In Finland people clean their homes before Christmas. They have a special meal on  and children receive presents and put decorations on a spruce tree.

(When do people have ?)

In Germany homes may have a model of the stable where Jesus Christ was born. The stable will have Mary, Joseph and cows and a donkey. Father Christmas delivers presents to children on Christmas Eve. The presents are put under the .

(Where are ?)

In New Zealand December 25 is summertime so everyone is dressed in cool clothes. There are Christmas decorations in shops and most homes have a Christmas tree (a real pine tree or an artificial one). A tree called the pohutukawa is usually covered in  flowers so everyone calls it the New Zealand Christmas tree.

(What color are the flowers on ?)

In Australia many people still have a large Christmas dinner with ham or turkey. Because it is usually very hot on Christmas Day others like to have a picnic or a barbecue on Christmas Day and spend time in the .

(Where do many people spend ?)

In Italy children get presents twelve days after Christmas. A witch called Befana arrives in the house by coming down the chimney. Around Christmas children will visit different houses to sing Christmas songs. On Christmas Day many people meet outside the Vatican in Rome .

(Why do many people meet outside the Vatican on ?)

In the US many people go to church at midnight on Christmas Eve. People try to get home to their families for Christmas where they will  and have a turkey or goose for Christmas dinner.

(What do many Americans do on ?)

\*(Please note: these are only a few of the customs and of course not everyone in these countries does things the same way.)

