

Teacher's notes

Happy Christmas!

by John Escott



SUMMARY

This book is an anthology of fact and fiction connected with Christmas. There is a play, which tells the story of the first Christmas. There are many facts concerning the traditions and customs that have grown up around the celebration. The book reveals that the celebration of Christmas is widespread – there is information about Egypt, Japan and China as well as details of customs in the known Christian areas of Europe and America. The book demonstrates that although Christmas is celebrated all over the world, there are marked differences in the days which are special and ways in which the period is marked. Special meals and present giving, however, seem to be common to many countries.

In addition to the factual information, there is a Christmas love story, a Christmas ghost story, and a Christmas quiz, to find out if you are a Santa – the mythical Santa Claus who gives presents to children at Christmas – or a Scrooge – the character who hated Christmas in Dickens' famous short story, *A Christmas Carol*.

ABOUT JOHN ESCOTT

John Escott lives in Bournemouth, on the south coast of England and has been a writer for some time. He writes both fiction and factual books for readers of all ages.

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

Christmas is clearly a Christian festival. The name simply means Christ's Mass or birth and originally it was a time to celebrate the birth of Christ. However, in the New Testament there is no mention of any Christmas customs. Indeed, it does not even tell us

the year or the date of the birth of Jesus. The celebration of the Nativity did not, in fact, start until the fourth century, when the Romans allowed public observance of Christianity in their empire.

The date of 25th December was chosen around this time because it fitted with existing pagan festivals to mark the winter solstice. The sun reached its lowest point and was then reborn into a new year, just as God's son was born.

Many of the symbols of Christmas were already involved in pagan winter festivals – the yule log, for example, was part of sun worship long before Christianity, pagans sang carols – or singing dances before they got religious words, and the holly and ivy were celebrated in ancient times because they survived the winter in all their splendour. Later, for Christians, the holly berries came to represent Christ's blood and its prickly leaves His crown of thorns. Even present giving was not a Christian invention but was adopted from an old Roman tradition. But the name of the present-giver in many countries, Santa Claus, is a corruption of a Christian figure St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children.

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HAPPY CHRISTMAS!



Teacher's notes

Communicative activities

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the Reader and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopiable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of the discussion and pair/groupwork activities, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Ask students to work in groups and answer these questions:

- 1 What are some of the traditions associated with Christmas in your country?
- 2 How important is Christmas to the people of your country?

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

Pages 1–11

- 1 Ask students to work in small groups. Tell them to make a calendar beginning on 1st December with advice on what to do to prepare for Christmas and when to do it.
- 2 Put students in groups of five to rehearse and then act out Party Boy.

Pages 12–21

Put the students in groups of twelve (if possible) or smaller to rehearse and then act out The Christmas Story.

Pages 22–29

Put students into small groups. Ask them to look through the story again up to page 28 – 'We must get you inside quickly,' he said.

Ask them to think up a different ending to the story so that it is not a ghost story – there must be a rational explanation for what the old man says in the living room and for the fact that there is no other set of footprints leading onto the lake. Get students to tell their endings to the other groups and decide which is the best one.

Pages 30–39

Put students into teams to play noughts and crosses. Copy the following grid onto the board:

Santa Claus	pantomimes	Twelfth Night
decorations	Boxing Day	stockings
Christmas carol	White Christmas	Christmas card

One team starts and chooses a square – they must say something true about the word in their square. Either you or the members of the other team decide if the sentence is acceptable. If it is, they put their symbol, a nought (0) or a cross (X) in that square. The first team to get three of their symbols in a row, up, down or diagonally, wins.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

Ask students to work individually and make a list of ten things they learnt about Christmas from reading this book. Then put students in small groups to compare their lists.

Glossary

for your students to know the following new words. They are practised in the 'Before You Read' sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)

Pages 1–11

- bishop** (n) a priest with a high rank who is in charge of the church and priests in a large area
- carol** (n) a song that people sing at Christmas
- chimney** (n) a pipe inside a building that goes from the fire to the roof in order to let the smoke out
- coin** (n) a piece of money made of metal
- custom** (n) something that people do in a society because it is traditional
- eve** (n) the night or day before
- magic tricks** (n) impossible or apparently impossible things which are done to entertain people, especially children
- oak** (n) a large tree that is common in northern countries
- wrap** (v) to fold paper around something to cover it

Pages 12–21

- emperor** (n) the ruler of an empire
- footprint** (n) a mark made by a foot or shoe
- ghost** (n) the spirit of a dead person that some people think they can see or feel in a place
- narrator** (n) someone who tells a story in a play or book

Pages 22–29

- scene** (n) part of play
- skate** (n) to move on ice with boots having a piece of metal on the bottom

Pages 30–39

- merry** (adj) happy
- pantomime** (n) a funny play for children that is performed at Christmas in Britain.
- priest** (n) someone who performs religious duties



Student's activities

Photocopiable

Students can be these exercises alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group-only activities are marked.

Activities before reading the book

- Look quickly through the book. Which of these types of text can you find in this book? Tick one or more.
 - facts
 - stories
 - instructions
 - jokes
 - advice
 - plays
 - newspaper articles
 - games
 - puzzles
- Which pages do you think you will enjoy reading most?

Activities while reading the book

Pages 1-11

- Find this information as quickly as possible on pages 1, 2 and 3:
 - When do children get Christmas presents in the Netherlands?
 - Where do children get Christmas presents on 1 January?
 - What did people send to each other before there were printed Christmas cards?
 - What colour is mistletoe?
 - Where did Christmas crackers begin?
 - In which year did Bob Geldof write 'Don't they know it's Christmas?'
- Match these sentences and replies from Party Boy:
 - I'll pay you £25.
 - Mr Magico? Who's he?
 - Mike, this is my daughter, Cathy.
 - I didn't know you were coming.
 - He's good, isn't he?
 - Here's your money.
 - Not know, Wayne.
 - I'll be back soon.
 - You were great with the children.
 - Er - you and Wayne. Are you ...?
 - These are for you!
 - He's OK.

Happy Christmas!



- Hi, Cathy.
 - Hi, Cathy. I wanted to give you a nice surprise.
 - I like children.
 - Magic! Thank you!
 - OK. Mrs Bertram, I'll do it.
 - OK. Wayne.
 - Oh, Cathy! Just one little kiss.
 - Thanks, Mrs. Bertram.
 - Wayne's nobody special.
 - You, Mike!
- This letter to Santa Claus has 10 grammar mistakes. Find and correct them.

Dear Santa

I hoping to get a bicycle for the Christmas. Also computer game. I want really a horse, but my Mum says 'No, you can't to have one.' So I can have a book about horses? I was good for almost of last year.

I leave a drink for you and any food for you reindeer, on Christmas Eve.

Thank you.

Happy Christmas!

Simon.

Pages 12-21

- Are these sentences true or false? Correct the ones that are false.
 - Mary and Joseph lived in Galilee.
 - Mary was married to Joseph.
 - Joseph was born in Nazareth.
 - The Emperor of Rome gave orders to people in Galilee and Judea.
 - Mary met an angel called Gabriel.
 - Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem on donkeys.
 - They found somewhere to sleep but it was cold and wet.
 - The shepherds saw an angel, then a great light, then a bright star in the sky.
 - Only the shepherds saw the bright star.
 - The shepherds did not tell anyone about the baby.
 - Herod was the king of Judea at that time.
 - Jesus spent the first years of his life in Egypt.

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PRE-INTERMEDIATE

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!



Student's activities

2 Find eight words connected with Christmas in the Wordsearch. You can read. → ↘ ↙ ↘

All the words are on pages 16 or 17.

w	y	a	l	u	c	k	q	w	e	r	pudding
t	u	r	k	e	y	n	g	t	y	u	...
i	l	d	o	p	i	a	o	s	d	f	...
g	e	h	d	o	e	h	o	l	l	y	...
j	l	k	c	i	l	v	s	z	x	c	...
v	o	b	m	i	n	c	e	p	i	e	...
n	g	m	a	s	d	g	f	g	h	u	...
											...

3 Number these instructions for making a yule log in the correct order.

- Beat the eggs and sugar until they are thick and smooth.
- Cover the cake with another piece of greaseproof paper and roll it up. Wait until it is cold.
- Grease some greaseproof paper, and place it in the tin.
- Make the butter cream. Use a wooden spoon to make the butter very soft and white.
- Mix in the flour and cocoa, and add the warm water.
- Mix in the icing sugar.
- Pour it all into the tin, and cook the cake in a hot oven for seven minutes.
- Spread butter cream over the log and add small pieces of holly as decorations.
- Turn the cake out onto a piece of greaseproof paper covered with sugar.
- Unroll the cake and take off the greaseproof paper. Spread the butter cream over the cake. Then roll it up again.

Pages 22–29

Who ...?

- wanted to stay in New York?
- needed a quiet Christmas?
- saw a girl on the frozen lake?
- talked to Janey in the living room?
- got up at 3 o'clock in the morning?
- said she wanted to use her new skates?
- said 'Stop there! Don't move!'
- died thirty years before?

- lived in the house at that time?
- died in a plane crash twenty four years before?
- drowned in the lake twenty years before?
- stays at the hotel every Christmas?

Pages 30–39

What is the significance of these names, dates and places in the story of Christmas? All the information is on pages 30–33, or 36 and 37

- Indiana
- Aladdin
- Twelfth Night
- carol
- Joseph Mohr
- White Christmas
- Hoteiosho
- 6 December
- Dun Che Lao Ren
- fata
- le revillon
- 1849
- 1843
- Scrooge

Activities after reading the book

- Look back at the answers you gave to Activities before reading the book. Check your ideas.
- Work in pairs. Test each other on the words in the picture dictionary.

Either:

- say a word and ask your partner to describe what it is OR
- say a word and ask your partner to draw the object!

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!



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