

History Lesson Plan – Christmas traditions and meanings

Subject content from the National Curriculum 2014 (content in bold can be met through this topic)
<p>Study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066 [non-statutory examples]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in an aspect of social history, such as how Christmas has changed since the Tudor period <p>A local history study [non-statutory examples]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a study over time tracing how several aspects of national history are reflected in the locality - a study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.
Aims of the National Curriculum 2014 (aims in bold will be met during this day)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world. • Pupils should continue to develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study. (KS2) • Know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind. • Gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'. • Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses. • They should note connections, contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of historical terms. (KS2) • They should regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance. (KS2) • They should construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information. (KS2) • Understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed. • They should understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources. (KS2) • Gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.

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Cross-Curricular Links	SMSC (from Ofsted Guidance April 2014)
<p>English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage. • Elaborate and explain clearly understanding and ideas. • Develop positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by listening to and discussing plays. • Preparing poems and play scripts to read aloud and to perform. • Discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination. • Pupils' confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language should be extended through performance. • Increasing familiarity with fiction from our literary heritage • Discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language. 	<p>Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience enjoyment and fascination in learning about others and the world around them. • Use imagination and creativity in learning. <p>Moral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate, and offer reasoned views about, moral and ethical issues. <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show interest in, and understanding of, the way communities and societies function at a variety of levels. <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage • Be willing to participate in, and respond to artistic, technological, scientific and cultural opportunities.
Learning Objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put periods of history in chronological order • Identify similarities and differences between Christmas in different periods • Explain how changes in Christmas traditions explain life in the past • Explain how an aspect of British society has changed over time 	

Christmas

Through the Ages

Activities



Name:

Teacher:

Class:

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What is Christmas like today?

Hello, I'm Ernie the Elf. I'm here to help you through this booklet. By the time you reach the end of it, you should know all about the history of Christmas and its traditions. First off, let's see what you already know...



Task: Imagine that you have stepped into your time machine and you have set the date to the 25th December 2014.

Your time machine makes a loud humming noise and you see a bright flash of light, suddenly you are transported to a street in London on the 25th December 2014!

- 1) Draw what you can see from your time machine's window in the box provided below.
- 2) In the second box write a description of what you can: see, smell, hear and feel.

My Time Machine's Window

What I can: see, smell, hear and feel:

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What is Christmas like today?

As you have just shown, Christmas is celebrated in lots of different ways today.

Task: Use the words at the bottom of the paragraph to fill in the gaps below...

Christmas is a time of _____. Many people like to celebrate Christmas by placing a _____ in their homes, this is often decorated with _____. As December passes, families will start to collect _____ and place them under the tree. These are saved up until Christmas day, the 25th of December, when they are opened. Throughout December, most people enjoy listening to Christmas _____ and _____. On Christmas day itself, a large meal is usually enjoyed, it is traditional to eat _____ and vegetables. Often people place Christmas _____ on the table and these are opened to provide small gifts and paper crowns. Once the presents are opened people like to spend time with their _____ and may watch some Christmas _____ on the T.V.

Use these words to fill in the gaps:

- lights
- carols
- crackers
- families
- presents
- turkey
- tree
- films
- celebration
- songs

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Where does Christmas come from?



Christmas is a very old celebration and although it may be enjoyed slightly differently today, the story of Christmas began over 2000 years ago! Read through the story below in readiness for your next task.

Over 2000 years ago there lived a woman named Mary, she lived in the Kingdom of Judea which was ruled by King Herod. Mary was engaged to marry a local carpenter named Joseph and they both lived in a small village called Nazareth.

One day Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel. The angel said to Mary: "Peace be with you! God has blessed you and is pleased with you." Mary was a little shocked by this visit and wondered what this statement meant. The angel reassured Mary and told her not to be afraid. The angel Gabriel continued to explain to Mary that God has chosen her to give birth to a baby boy which will be named Jesus and that he will be "God's own son and his kingdom will never end". Mary was very afraid but she trusted God.

Joseph was worried when he found out that Mary was expecting a baby before their marriage but an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and reassured him. The angel told Joseph that Mary would give birth to a boy that would be named Jesus which means saviour' and that he would be the son of God.

Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem and looked to find a suitable place to stay for the night. By this time Mary was heavily pregnant but all they could find was a stable filled with animals. It was in this place that Mary gave birth to Jesus. When Jesus was born, a new bright star appeared in the sky. Some Wise Men in faraway countries saw the star and guessed what it meant. They were very clever men that studied the stars and had read in very old writings that a new star would appear when a great king was born. They set out to find the new king and bring him gifts.

The Wise Men followed the star towards Bethlehem (where it said that the king would be born in the old writings). It seemed to stop and shine directly down upon the place where Jesus was.

The Wise Men entered the house where they now lived and found Jesus with Mary, they bowed down and worshipped him. The Wise Men spread the gifts they had brought before Jesus. The gifts were gold, frankincense and myrrh.



Task: Use the information that you have just read through to create a storyboard in these 6 boxes. You should use both text and pictures. Feel free to use stick people or symbols if you find drawing difficult.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

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Task: Use the words at the bottom of this word search to locate words related to Christmas. How quickly can you do it? You may want to time yourself!

P C M M E I P Z S Y Y D Z F S
L J K X W F E A B A L U J Y U
O F I P B K M U S T J I U N S
W A J K S T N A N U G B M W E
S V I I S Z P R O R P L G A J
N U F I O G C Y I K X G E A F
L M R I T K X R T E R Z T A L
I H T D W I O S A Y T N R I O
C R E N N I D X R C A R G P S
P R E S E N T S O S K H E F T
A N D R T S Q I C Z T E I E A
X W M D S V V N E S K R R K R
H U B F P X X O D K E G S S S
K C S O N G S W M U E G X Z M
S H O S P O M G M P M D K E V

CHRISTMAS
CRACKERS
DECORATIONS
DINNER
FAMILY
FIRE
JESUS
LIGHTS
PIE
PRESENTS
SANTA
SONGS
STAR
TREE
TURKEY

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How did people in the past celebrate Christmas?



Christmas has been celebrated by different people in many different ways. On the following pages you will find information about how people from the past have celebrated Christmas.

Task One: In pairs divide yourself into A and B. Read and highlight the different worksheets:

Person A = Medieval

Person B = Tudor

Task Two: Take just one minute (I'll be timing) to teach your partner about the Christmas you have just researched.

I found out the medieval people believed that Christmas was a time for...

The most interesting thing I read was...

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Medieval Christmas

People used the Christmas period as a celebration of light, fire and cheerfulness due to the darkness of the winter months. It was considered a true religious holiday. The tradition of decorating the home with native evergreens is a truly ancient one and these trees were popular because they showed signs of life during the harsh winters. These early Christians brought other plants into the home to demonstrate ever-lasting life. Holly, Ivy and herbs such as rosemary and bay were used to decorate their homes.

In this period people decorated a large log (usually a whole tree!) with ribbon and plants. This "Yule log" was ceremoniously carried into the house on Christmas Eve, and put in the fireplace of the main living area. It was lit and then burnt continuously for the Twelve Days of Christmas, providing light and warmth. December 25th was unfortunately a 'quarter-day' and the poor peasants were often expected to pay rent for their land on Christmas!



Medieval Christmas Menu

The traditional meat on Christmas Day was either: goose or swan. Venison (deer) was also eaten but this would be a Lord's right. Peasants were sometimes given the less favourable parts of the deer to make a pie. These were: the heart, liver, tongue, feet, ears and brains.

Mince pies were eaten as they are today but these included a meat filling too. It was also believed that if you made a wish with the first bite of your first mince pie, your wish would come true.

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Tudor Christmas

The expectation that people 'eat, drink and be merry' was a large part of the Tudor Christmas. Houses were decorated with plants and candles were placed on branches of trees to represent stars. The 'Unlawful Games Act' of 1541 banned all sports except archery on Christmas Day.

The highlight of the season was the huge Christmas Feast which was a large selection of sweet and savoury courses. This feast allowed the host to display his wealth and status and often demonstrated their artistic skills. Sugar, very expensive at the time and considered to have medicinal properties, was the key ingredient of most of the elaborate dishes.

Dishes were designed to impress and the Tudors who could afford it went to great lengths to dazzle their guests. Gold leaf was used to gild lemons and other fruits and also gingerbread, which added to the rich and splendid appearance of the banquet. Different meats were joined together to create 'mythical creatures' to further impress the Christmas guests.



Tudor Christmas Menu

The traditional meat on Christmas Day was either: goose or swan.

Peacock was sometimes used and often the cooked bird would be placed back into its skin so that it looked like a stuffed peacock was sitting on the table!

Some families choose to cook wild boar with the cooked head of the pig being used as a table decoration.

Mince pies were made into the shape of a crib to remember Christ's birthday.

Drinks were often served hot and with spices, these included: ale, cider and sherry.