

CELEBRATIONS

The Christmas Cracker Quiz

Christmas crackers are a traditional feature of a British Christmas meal. Two people hold each end of a cracker and pull. When the cracker breaks open, the person who is left with the biggest part wins whatever is inside. The commonly accepted history of the Christmas cracker is that it was an invention of Tom Smith, the owner of a London sweet shop. In 1847, he started selling sugar-almonds wrapped in paper with a twist at either end. There was a lot of competition so he made the packaging bigger, added a "love motto" and replaced the sugar-almond with a small present. But the biggest change was in 1860, when he added a piece of paper with gunpowder that created the exploding 'crack' and gave the cracker its name.

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In the Christmas cracker quiz, we test your knowledge of Christmas! Working in a group, read through the questions and choose the right answers.

- 1 In many countries, people eat turkey on Christmas Day. Do you know where turkeys come from?
 - a Turkey. The birds are named after the country.
 - b North America. Sailor William Strickland brought turkeys to Europe in the 16th century.
 - c Hungary. A famous chef started the fashion for eating turkeys at Christmas when he was feeling Hungary in 1764.
- 2 After finishing the turkey, the British eat a special pudding. The pudding, which was originally created by the Celts to honour the god Dagda, traditionally has a special ingredient. What is it?
 - a Money! Yes, eating Christmas pudding is dangerous. You can break a tooth or swallow a pound coin.
 - b A prediction! Yes, it's true. On a piece of paper you can read what will happen to you in the next 365 days.
 - c A crown! The person who finds the wise man's crown in their portion of pudding will be lucky.
- 3 A lot of people think that Christmas has become too commercial and that the religious aspects of Christmas have been forgotten. Why do we celebrate December the 25th?
 - a It's the day on which Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
 - b Pope Julius I decided it was a good day to celebrate Jesus' birth – people already celebrated pagan festivals around this time.
 - c The shops are closed and there's usually a good film on TV.
- 4 At Christmas, lots of men dress up in red outfits and white beards and say, 'Ho ho ho.' Where did Father Christmas (also known as Santa Claus) originally come from?
 - a The Vikings used to dress a man as 'Winter'. They invited the bearded man into their homes and were nice to him in order to please the gods.
 - b Father Christmas is based on Nicholas, a bishop who became very popular after his death. Children were told that if they left food for his horse on the anniversary of his death then Nicholas would leave them sweets.
 - c The Santa Claus that we all know today was created by Coca-Cola in 1931 for the company's winter advertising campaign. The artist, Haddon Sundblom, decided to make Santa's clothes the same colour as the famous Coca-Cola red.
- 5 Why does Santa Claus always come down the chimney instead of using the front door?
 - a Santa is from Lapland. People in Lapland used to live in houses under the snow, where a hole in the roof was used both as a chimney and a front door.
 - b Because doors and windows are locked at night to stop burglars entering. So the chimney is the only way for him to get into the house.
 - c Because he travels through the air, and lands on the roof. The chimney is nearer than the front door.

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- 6** The average person in Britain sends 50 Christmas cards each year. Christmas cards were invented by Sir Henry Cole in 1843. Why did he invent them?
- a* Because he realised that people would pay for cards with pictures of snowmen on them, so he could make money from his idea.
 - b* Because he worked at the post office, and it was his job to make people buy more stamps.
 - c* Because he had lots of friends and couldn't be bothered writing letters to all of them. He thought sending a card would be much quicker.
- 7** What is a Christmas cracker?
- a* It's a triangular object that people place under the Christmas tree. On Christmas Eve they crack it open and eat the sweets inside.
 - b* It's a square box-like object with a figure inside. When you open the box, the figure jumps out. The figure is called Cracker Jack.
 - c* It's a cylindrical object that two people pull. It breaks open and the person with the biggest portion wins a paper hat.
- 8** What was special about Christmas in 1644 in England?
- a* 5,000 people died in the Great Christmas Pudding Plague.
 - b* It was fashionable to be a vegetarian, so no one ate turkey for Christmas dinner.
 - c* An act of parliament abolished the celebration of Christmas and people had to go to work as usual.
- 9** Christmas Eve is the night before Christmas Day. Who said on Christmas Eve: 'If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart'?
- a* The Queen of England in last year's royal message.
 - b* Scrooge in the novel *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens.
 - c* Sting in the pop song 'Fight Christmas'.
- 10** Christmas is a time to think of other people and the environment. Imagine that you have to travel somewhere to see a friend at Christmas. Environmentally, what is the best way to travel?
- a* By bus.
 - b* By train.
 - c* By car.
- 11** The circus is very popular at Christmas, and the circus ring is where the performance takes place. Which of the following, built in 329 BC, is said to have been the first circus?
- a* Piccadilly Circus
 - b* Circus Maximus
 - c* Moscow State Circus
- 12** Robins are often the subject of pictures on Christmas cards. What is a robin?
- a* A figure of a man made of snow.
 - b* A person who takes money from the rich to give to the poor.
 - c* A little bird with a red breast.
- 13** New Year's Eve is a time for celebration, especially in Scotland. However, New Year's Eve isn't called New Year's Eve in Scotland. What is it called?
- a* Old Night
 - b* Hogmanay
 - c* Saint Sylvester's Eve
- 14** Carols are songs celebrating the birth of Jesus. In Bavaria in 1818, Franz Gruber and Joseph Mohr, a priest, wrote one of the most popular Christmas songs of all time, which was first performed on a guitar. Which song?
- a* 'Do They Know it's Christmas?'
 - b* 'Silent Night'
 - c* 'White Christmas'

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Worksheet

- 15** The British send around 125 million Christmas cards each year. Santa Claus received 600,000 cards and letters last year from children asking for presents. Santa has his own postcode, according to the Royal Mail. What is it?
- a* XMAS1
 - b* WC1 XA
 - c* XM4 5HQ
- 16** Many people have their birthday on Christmas Day. Which of these people was not born on December 25?
- a* Singer Annie Lennox
 - b* Actor Charlie Chaplin
 - c* Canadian politician Justin Trudeau
- 17** Christmas can be hard work, so most people relax the next day. The day after Christmas is called Boxing Day. Why?
- a* This is the day when people gave presents (Christmas boxes) to servants, postmen and rubbish collectors.
 - b* There used to be boxing matches in the streets on this day.
 - c* It is traditional for people to throw old things out of their houses, to be ready for the new year. These are put into boxes and given to charity.
- 18** What happened on Christmas Day in 1914, during World War One?
- a* A temporary truce was called, and some British and German soldiers sang carols together and played football.
 - b* The war ended, and everyone ate turkey together and pulled crackers.
 - c* Nothing – Christmas was cancelled because of the fighting.
- 19** What do children do with their socks on the night before Christmas?
- a* Wash them so that their feet will be clean on Christmas Day.
 - b* Hang them on the Christmas tree for decoration.
 - c* Leave them at the end of their beds for Santa to put presents in.
- 20** Christmas is celebrated in countries around the world. In Germany people say, 'Fröhliche Weihnachten.' What does it mean?
- a* Merry Christmas.
 - b* God bless you and your family.
 - c* Come to our traditional wine drinking festival tomorrow at eight o'clock and bring a friend.
- 21** What do people do under the mistletoe?
- a* Pray for happiness in the year to come.
 - b* Kiss each other.
 - c* Leave a glass of whisky for Santa Claus.
- 22** Christmas is often referred to as Xmas by many people. Why?
- a* Xmas is used by people who don't have time to write the full word.
 - b* The X represents the Greek letter 'chi' which is the first letter of 'Christos' (Christ). Xmas has the exact same meaning as Christmas.
 - c* The X represents the cross.
- 23** How does Santa Claus travel on Christmas Eve?
- a* On a magic sleigh, pulled by ten flying reindeers.
 - b* By private plane, or sometimes helicopter.
 - c* Santa isn't real – he's actually your mum or dad – so he doesn't travel anywhere.
- 24** The three wise men followed the star to Bethlehem. What presents did they take for Jesus?
- a* Gold, a sheep and a crown.
 - b* Gold, frankincense and myrrh.
 - c* A paper hat, a DVD and a skateboard.