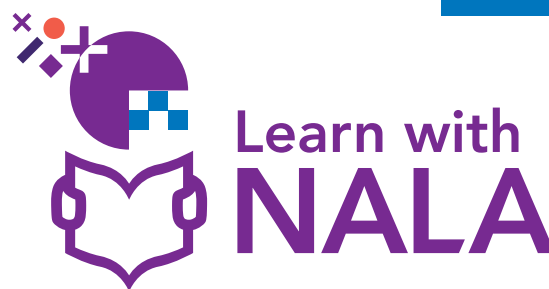


Step into Learning



A worksheet for adults to practise reading, writing, spelling and numbers.

Christmas long ago



Christmas is a busy time. We buy presents, we put up lights, and we plan our Christmas dinner. But did you ever think what Christmas was like many years ago?

Kitty is 95 years old. She grew up on a farm in the west of Ireland. When she was young Christmas was a lot different than it is today.

"We did not have a Christmas tree", Kitty said. "We went to the fields to get holly and ivy. We put holly over the fireplace and over the pictures. We would light a candle and put it in a jar and then put it on the window. On Christmas Eve, the youngest in the family would light this candle."



Christmas started early. In October, people made cakes and puddings. Farmers killed a pig to have ham and bacon. They had geese and sold them at the market in December. The Christmas dinner at that time was roast goose and ham. Roast turkey came later.

There were no big shops. People would buy food and clothes in small village shops. Kitty remembers, "Before Christmas, we did a big shop. This was called "bringing home the Christmas". We would buy sweets and new clothes."

Kitty said that this day was a great day for every family. The shopkeeper would give every customer a Christmas gift called the "Christmas Box". It had nice things like biscuits, sweets or a bottle of whiskey.

On Christmas Eve or at 6am on Christmas morning, all the family went to mass. After mass, the children looked for their presents from Santa. Kitty said, "One year, I got an orange and a banana from Santa. I was so happy. I had never seen them before, and they were so nice."

There were no TVs in homes in Ireland at that time. A few homes had a radio. On Christmas night, people went to the houses of their friends. They played cards, talked, and played music.



On Saint Stephen's Day, children and adults dressed up in old clothes and straw and went from house to house. They would sing and play music. People gave them money or sweets. This was called "hunting the Wren." Some places in Ireland still do this today.

Kitty lives alone now. Her family has passed away, so when she talks of Christmas long ago, she is a little bit sad. She still keeps some of the old Christmas ways.

She puts a candle on the window, but this is now an electric candle. She goes to mass on Christmas Eve. She cooks roast goose, and she has her money ready for people who will call to her "hunting the Wren" on Saint Stephen's Day.

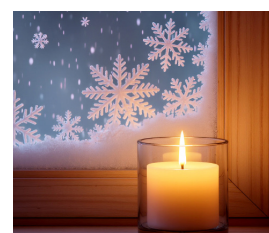
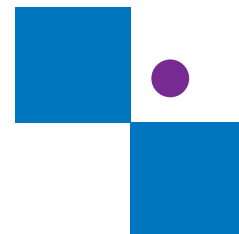


Image sources pages 1-2:

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Questions and answers



Choose a word from the box to answer these questions.

a candle holly presents goose ham turkey

| Question | Answer |
|---|--------|
| 1. What did Kitty put on every window at Christmas? | |
| 2. What did she put over the fireplace? | |
| 3. What does Santa bring to children? | |
| 4. What did Kitty eat for Christmas dinner? | |
| 5. What do we eat today for Christmas dinner? | |

Matching



Match the picture with the word. The first one is done for you.

Santa candle holly ~~TV~~ presents pudding orange banana



TV



Reading practice



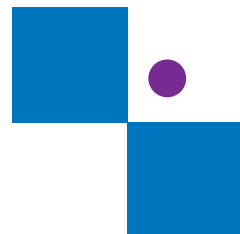
- Christmas is on 25 December.
- The day before it is called Christmas Eve.
- It is a busy time.
- We put up a Christmas tree and lights.
- Some people light a candle.
- We give presents to our family and friends.
- We eat turkey and ham.
- We eat Christmas cake and pudding.
- Many people love Christmas.
- Some people are sad at Christmas.
- We think of all the people who passed away this year.

Questions and answers



Read the piece above again and answer the questions below.

| Question | Answer |
|--|--------|
| 1. On what date is Christmas Day? | |
| 2. What is the day before it called? | |
| 3. What do we give our friends and family? | |
| 4. What do most people eat for Christmas dinner? | |
| 5. Who do we think about at Christmas? | |



Christmas word search



See if you can find these words in the word search. The first one is done for you.

~~holly~~ turkey candle lights Christmas
pudding presents Santa tree bells

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

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Dear Reader,

Thank you to everyone for reading our worksheet and for sending us nice comments and feedback during the year. We would like to invite you all to enter our Christmas competition below.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

The Learn with NALA team

Competition



Would you like to win a €25 book voucher? Please answer this question:
Who brings presents to Children on Christmas night?

Send your **answer** and **your name** by texting NALA on **087 1984 228**
or

Email your **answer** and **your name** to learn@nala.ie (put the word **competition** in the subject box)

or

Post in your **answer** and **your name** to: Competition
Freepost
NALA
Sandford Lodge
Ranelagh, Dublin 6

Closing date is **31 January 2026**. Good Luck and Happy Christmas!



National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

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'Step into Learning' are not
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