



Live from London podcasts

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Level: Intermediate +
Age: Teenagers / adults
Time needed: 40 minutes (approx)
Language and skills: Christmas vocabulary, listening for details, Christmas cultural information (UK), discourse markers and linkers (optional).
Preparation: Write the sentences for miming on separate pieces of paper, one for each student. You may wish to change these cards with examples of your own to make them more appropriate for your students.



Warm up

1. Tell the students that they are going to begin the class with a miming activity. Each student has to take turns miming a sentence you give them on a piece of paper. Do an example first yourself. Then give a card to a student and let him/her begin. The person who correctly calls out the sentence gets the next sentence to mime.

Sentences for miming:

You are opening a very big present – it's a bicycle!

You are singing a Christmas song.

You are putting on a scarf, hat and gloves.

You are cutting and serving turkey to other people.

You are opening a bottle of champagne.

You have a stomach ache – you ate too much food.

You are wrapping a present.

You are answering the phone. It's a person from your family calling to say Merry Christmas.

You are opening a very small present – it's a ring!

You are shopping for Christmas presents. You have a lot of bags.

At the end, ask students to work in pairs and try to remember the sentences they heard. They should write them down. Check answers, then ask students which activities happen at a "typical Christmas" in their house.

Stage one

2. Direct students to the description of traditional Christmas activities in the UK and clarify any unknown vocabulary that comes up. Then play the listening through once. Students tick the number of times they hear the different traditions mentioned.

Answers:

Hanging Christmas stockings. (twice)

Eating roast turkey with all the trimmings. (3 times)

Going to midnight mass at church (once)

Watching Christmas television. (once)

Listening to the Queen (once)

Stage two

3. Ask students to compare their answers in pairs and look at exercise four. Can they answer any of the questions already? Play the listening again. You may wish to pause after each speaker.

Answers:

Speaker 1 – an hour and a half north of London

Speaker 2 – all day

Speaker 3 – England and France

Speaker 4 – eating, singing and listening to music

Speaker 5 – the presents are being wrapped and the room is being decorated

Speaker 6 – Australia

Speaker 7 – croissants and champagne; piano and cello



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Optional language focus

If you want to focus on some of the language features in the podcast, you could hand out copies of the tapescript. Here are some questions that could lead onto a more detailed analysis.

- What tense do the speakers mainly use? Why?
(answer: present simple, because they are describing a typical, routine, Christmas)
- What is the most common time linker that the speakers use?
(answer: Then.. And then...)
- What verb collocates with 'Christmas Day'?
(answer: spend)
- Speaker 5 uses two very formal linking devices. What are they and what do they mean?
(answer: insofar, meaning 'the degree that something happens'; whereupon, meaning 'happening just after')
- What does speaker 6 say to check that the other person is listening?
(answer: you know)
- Find two different meanings of the phrasal verb *go on* in speaker 6's turn
(answer: to mean 'happen' or to mean 'continue')



Stage three

Ask students to sit in pairs and look at the fifteen questions for Christmas. Tell them to read the questions individually first and choose five they would like to ask their partner. When they are ready, they take turns asking each other the questions. Circulate and help with any difficulties.

Optional

If you want to take advantage of this to do some language work, make a note of any difficulties or interesting language you hear during stage three. After five or six minutes, stop the students and go through the examples you heard. Then tell them to work with a new partner and repeat the speaking exercise.



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Christmas mime game

1. Your teacher is going to give you a piece of paper with a sentence on it. You must act out the sentence, without saying anything. Can the others guess the sentence?
2. How many sentences can you remember? Which things do you do at Christmas?



Listening

3. The following are some typical Christmas traditions in Britain. Read the information. Then listen and tick the number of times you hear people talk about them.

_____ Hanging Christmas stockings – the Christmas stocking is a sock, or sock-shaped bag that children hang on December 24 so that Santa Claus can fill it with presents.

_____ Eating roast turkey with all the trimmings – on December 25th the traditional meal is a roast turkey. “All the trimmings” refers to other food served with the turkey, for example bacon or sausages.

_____ Going to midnight mass at church – many people go to church on December 24, and there is a special service at midnight.

_____ Watching Christmas television. Many popular television shows in Britain have a Christmas special episode. Popular movies are also shown every year at Christmas.

_____ Listening to the Queen. Every year on December 25 the Queen of England gives a Royal Christmas message. The message is on television and radio at 3pm.



4. Listen again and answer the questions.

Speaker 1

The man says he has dinner up in the Midlands. Where is this in relation to London?

Speaker 2

How long does it take the woman speaker to open her presents on Christmas day?

Speaker 3

Where is the man’s family from?



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Speaker 4

What are the people doing around the table at this woman's Christmas?

Speaker 5

What is happening in the room where the kids (children) aren't allowed?

Speaker 6

This man mentions having stubbies (beers) on the beach at Christmas. What English-speaking country might he be from?

Speaker 7

What does the woman and her family have for breakfast on Christmas day? What instruments do they play later on?



Speaking

5. Work in pairs. Choose five questions from the list and ask a partner. Then swap roles and repeat.



Fifteen Questions for Christmas

- What do you usually do on December 24?
- What do you usually do on December 25?
- Have you bought any presents yet this year? Who for?
- What would you most like to receive this Christmas?
- What is the earliest Christmas memory you have?
- What was your favourite present as a child?
- Do you like any Christmas films? Which ones?
- Do you think Christmas has become too commercial?
- If you could go anywhere for Christmas this year, where would you go?
- What do you like most about Christmas?
- What do you dislike most about Christmas?
- Who would you most like to spend Christmas with?
- Are there any sales after Christmas? Do you buy anything in the sales?
- Have you ever spent Christmas in another country? Where? What was it like?
- What three words do you associate most with Christmas? Explain your associations.



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Transcript

Introduction

Welcome to onestopenglish's *Live from London* podcast. In *Live from London*, we go to different parts of London to ask locals and visitors questions about their daily lives. Today, *Live from London* reports from Covent Garden and we ask people the question: 'What's a typical Christmas for you?'

Speaker 1 (male, UK)

My typical Christmas would be spending Christmas day with my family up, uh, in the midlands, about an hour and half north of London. Uh, traditional Christmas dinner, turkey, roast potatoes, all the trimmings.

Speaker 2 (female, UK)

Okay, so I wake up about 8 o'clock, have some bacon sandwiches, stockings and then maybe might go to church if we haven't gone to midnight mass. Um, and then we'll sort of spend the day opening presents throughout the day and make them last the whole day. Smoked salmon, champagne for lunchtime. Afternoon game or a walk, maybe. And then, in the evening, we have our main meal, like turkey, all the trimmings, Christmas pud. Um, then open your last present in the evening, have some drinks, more drinks and then, off to bed, 'bout twelve.

Speaker 3 (male, UK)

My typical Christmas day: I spend it with family, I have French family and English family and um, they normally come over to, to spend time with us. Um, I normally have a nice roast, roast turkey, and um, also a few drinks by the fire and just generally relax and enjoy myself.

Speaker 4 (female, France)

Um, people very happy along the table and uh, um, eating together and, um, singing and listening music and [sings] '*petit Papa Noël...*' [sings in French] [laughs].

Speaker 5 (male, UK)

Okay, well I celebrate my Christmas slightly differently, insofar as it starts on the 24th of December at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, whereupon in the morning we may have gone for a walk, you know, and just, um, got some fresh air. And in the afternoon, we'll come and wrap some presents. Father Christmas, or the Weihnachtsman, will be in a room which we're not allowed in as kids - or the kids aren't allowed in with the adults and there he is preparing the room, wrapping presents. We're then led in when a bell has rung and the candles on the tree have been lit and we are led in, in order of height, with our eyes shut. And then, we are led to the Christmas tree, whereupon we must then burst into a spontaneous gasp of excitement and a song.

Speaker 6 (male, Australia)

Well, you know, I uh - we generally have a barbie. Um, you know, going to the beach, have a few stubbies. Um, you know, watch the cricket if it's on. Uh, you know, just generally have a good time out in the sun.





Transcript

Speaker 7 female, UK)

Well, first thing in the morning, the children (who are all grown up), um, open their stockings – we still have stockings in our house. If you don't believe in Father Christmas, you don't get anything! And then, we have breakfast together, and we always have croissants and champagne. My son-in-law, who's a great cook, he then gets on with lunch and we all do things like lots of singing. My children all play the piano, so there's lots of singing goes on and playing the piano, and I play the cello, and so we all have lots of music on Christmas day. And then we have presents, and you all have to go round and you have to open every present from that person. And, it has to be written down so you can write thank you letters.

And then we have lunch, and it goes on and on and on and, if my mother is with us she insists that we watch the queen at three. The rest of us are probably still eating. Um, then what do we do? Sometimes we go for a walk, but usually people go to sleep a bit around then. Um, we're keen on games 'cos this is Christmas day. And then, people might say 'Oh, well, I wanna watch this film', or something or, they might slope off and do something. Uh, nobody ever eats anything more because they've been eating all day, you know. So, um, and we tend to go to bed a bit early I think, because I think we're all exhausted. How's that for Christmas day?

