

Christmas: Secular Traditions

B1 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary + Discussion | 50-60 minutes

BEFORE YOU READ

Talk with a partner. How do people celebrate the end of the year where you live? Which traditions do you enjoy?

1. Match the words (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

- | | | |
|---------------|-------|---|
| 1. tradition | _____ | A. a willingness to give or share |
| 2. decorate | _____ | B. a custom passed from one generation to another |
| 3. gathering | _____ | C. people who live or work in the same area |
| 4. generosity | _____ | D. make something look more attractive |
| 5. seasonal | _____ | E. connected with a particular time of year |
| 6. community | _____ | F. a meeting of people |

2. Read the article. The bold words are the vocabulary from Activity 1.

1. In many places, Christmas is celebrated as a cultural as well as a religious holiday. Families may exchange gifts, share a meal and take time away from work or school. These **traditions** can be meaningful even for people who do not take part in religious activities.
2. Homes, streets and shops are often **decorated** with lights, trees and other **seasonal** objects. In some countries, the weather is cold and dark in December, so lights create a warm and cheerful atmosphere. In other countries, Christmas happens during summer, so outdoor meals are common.
3. A family meal or a party can become a **gathering** for relatives, friends and neighbours. Food is different from place to place. Some families prepare a large meal; others enjoy simple snacks, sweets or a special breakfast together.
4. Many people connect secular Christmas traditions with **generosity**. They give presents, volunteer or collect food for local groups. A shared celebration can strengthen a sense of **community**, especially when people include neighbours who might otherwise be alone.

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UNDERSTAND, DISCUSS AND WRITE

3. Comprehension. Answer in complete sentences. Use the article to help you.

1. Why can secular Christmas traditions be meaningful to non-religious people?

2. Why are lights especially popular in some countries in December?

3. How can Christmas food vary?

4. What does generosity mean in the article?

5. How can a celebration build community?

4. Discuss. Talk in small groups. Give reasons and examples.

- What is a seasonal tradition you enjoy?
- Do decorations change the feeling of a public space?
- Is giving time more valuable than giving presents?
- How can a community include people who may be alone?

5. Homework: Write a descriptive paragraph.

Write 120-150 words describing a secular holiday tradition from your home, town or country.

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ANSWER KEY AND TEACHING NOTE

Vocabulary matching

1. tradition - B
2. decorate - D
3. gathering - F
4. generosity - A
5. seasonal - E
6. community - C

Comprehension answers

1. Why can secular Christmas traditions be meaningful to non-religious people?

They can be meaningful as cultural family and community traditions.

2. Why are lights especially popular in some countries in December?

They create a warm and cheerful atmosphere during a cold, dark time.

3. How can Christmas food vary?

Families may have large meals, snacks, sweets or a special breakfast.

4. What does generosity mean in the article?

It means giving presents, volunteering or sharing with others.

5. How can a celebration build community?

It can include relatives, friends and neighbours and help people feel connected.

Teaching note

Compare matching answers before reading. Accept other article-supported comprehension answers; discussion and homework answers vary. Discuss customs respectfully, distinguishing religious, cultural and personal traditions.