

Level
2

The Best Christmas

Summary of the story

Brothers and sisters, Vivvy, Rich, Kirsten and Tom are staying in a holiday cottage. Their parents cannot get back from town, so the children have to spend Christmas by themselves. They make all the Christmas preparations together, write a letter to Father Christmas and play in the snow. On Christmas Day, they open their presents and have a party. It turns out to be their best Christmas!

Background to the story

The basis for the story is to introduce some of the traditions of Christmas, the presents, their preparation and presentation; stockings and Father Christmas tree, food. An original story by Annie Hughes.

Topics and themes

Celebrations. Christmas is of course a huge topic. In addition this story could link into work on other celebrations such as birthdays and marriage as well as other religious festivals.

Family. The story concerns two brothers, two sisters and their parents. The relationships among siblings can be explored. The responsibilities of children towards the younger ones, especially when parents are absent, is also an area for development.

Clothes. The children wear different clothes at different times in the story. The two youngest children are less interested in changing before going out to play in the snow (page 11 of the Reader). What clothes do the pupils wear because their parents or school ask them? When do pupils wear different clothes – for school, parties, cold weather? Do they know any special clothes people wear e.g. firemen, surgeons, skin divers?

Making use of the Reader

Invitations and Thank you letters. Explore invitations with pupils. Whole class. First elicit methods from pupils: e.g. face-to-face, telephone, letter, e-mail. Are different methods appropriate for different events. Then decide together what information is needed, guest name, time and place, type of event, required dress. Pair work: One pupil can choose an event

Food. Special food for different celebrations.

Mealtimes. What do pupils usually eat for breakfast, lunch, supper? Favourite foods. Healthy foods. Cooking: Who cooks in the family and have the pupils ever cooked something themselves?

My House. The house in the story is a holiday cottage. What do the pupil's houses look like? Are they similar to the one here or different? Have they ever stayed overnight in another house? Was it exciting, boring, scary? Revise vocabulary for household items and interiors.

Toys. The children in the story have lots of toys and games to play with. When pupils play, do they play by themselves, with their brothers and sisters or their friends? When during the day do they play most? Do they have any toys not shown in the book?

and write the invitation. The other pupil can reply, as though after the event, thanking his/her host. The pairs can swop. This can be extended to thank you letters for presents.

Wrapping paper. Pupils can design their own present wrapping paper for various types of celebration e.g., new baby, wedding, Christmas, birthday, using pencils, crayons, paints and potato stamps. The whole class could vote for the best in each category.



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Celebrations calendar. Revise language for time and the seasons by making a wall calendar marking all the celebrations in the year. You could include national days, religious festivals, school celebrations, pupils' birthdays, whatever is relevant to the class. Throughout the year, set up small table and wall exhibitions of pictures and objects associated with the individual celebrations collected by the pupils.

Dramatization. Pick out one scene (let the pupils choose it). In groups of four, the pupils could it act out with their own dialogue. Here are some examples, how they felt and what they said just after their parents phone call or cooking dinner, 'what shall we have', 'what food is in the cupboard/fridge', 'how do we make it', 'where are the plates/knives/forks?'

Using the accompanying audio cassette

During listening – whole class prediction. Play the audio cassette all the way through. During the second playing, stop just before a dramatic event (such as on page 1. when the children's parents phone, or page 11 when Rich discovers the presents) and ask the pupils to tell you what happens next, then listen to see if they are right.

Listening for specific information. Each pupil can make a mask or finger puppet of their chosen character. As they listen to the story on the cassette, they can raise their mask as the character speaks or acts.

Notes on using the activities in the Factsheet

Activity 1

Pupils label the pictures using the words in the box. The toy in only one picture is the teddy.

Activity 2

Read and match. First revise telling the time. Checking the pictures, the pupils then match the times to events described in the text.

Activity 3

The pupils break up the line of letters to make the words. They could use different colours to underline the words.

Activity 4

If the pupils have not done similar activities before, you may want to do the first sentence with the pupils and then fill in the crossword line.

Answers to the activities

In the back of the Reader

Before you read

1. the pupils draw their own snowman.
2. Four children.

After you read

Presents are shown in the book on pages 10 and 12.

In the Factsheet

Activity 1. A teddy bear is on page 7 only.

Activity 2. a.2. (page 2) b.4. (page 4)
c.1. (page 7) d.3. (page 10).

Activity 3. presents/snowman/crackers/
party/pizza/christmas/snow/toys/tree

Activity 4. 1. chocolate. 2. watched. 3. tree.
4. kite. 5. snow. 6. wrote. 7. Tom. 8. pizza.
9. presents. The middle word is Christmas.

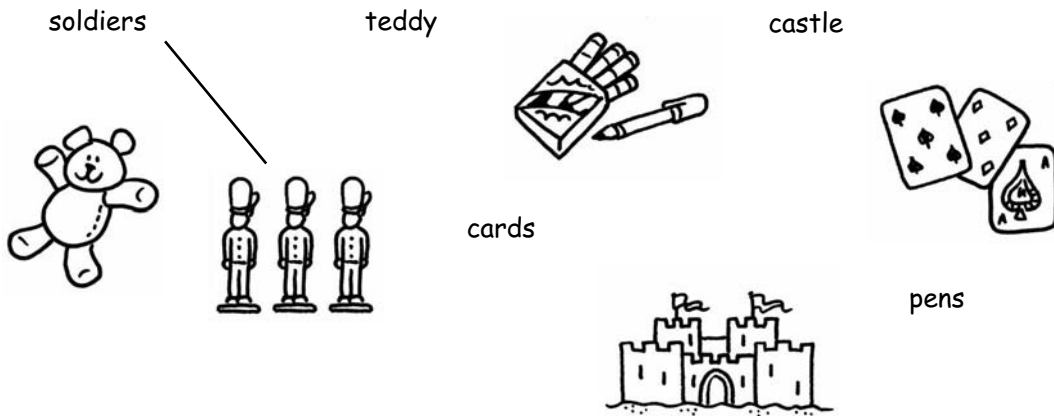


The Best Christmas

Name.....

Activity 1

Here are five of the toys and games in the story. Match the words to the pictures. The first one is done for you.

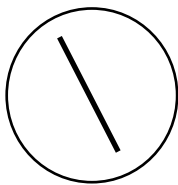


Now look carefully at the pictures on pages 4 and 7. Which of the five toys is only in one picture?

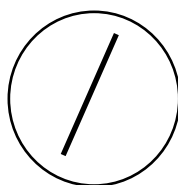
Activity 2

Look carefully at the pictures in the story and read these sentences. Match the time to a sentence.

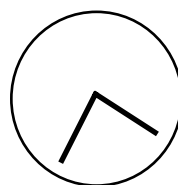
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The children wrap up presents.
(page ____) | 2. The children are sad.
(page ____) |
| 3. The children come down early.
(page ____) | 4. The children write a letter.
(page ____) |



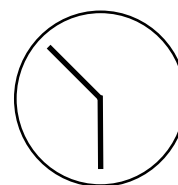
a.



b.



c.



d.



The Best Christmas

Name.....

Activity 3

Find the following words:

Christmas, crackers, snowman, tree, toys, pizza, snow, party, presents.

PRESENTSSNOWMANCRACKERSPARTYPIZZACHRISTMASSNOWTOYSTREE

Activity 4

The children did lots of things for Christmas. Find the answers to see what it says in the middle of the crossword.

1. They ate _____ things for breakfast.

2. They _____ TV.

3. They decorated the _____.

4. Kirsten got a _____ for a present.

5. They played outside in the _____.

6. They _____ a letter to Father Christmas.

7. _____ got books.

8. They made _____ for dinner.

9. They wrapped up _____.

