

Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful -- Norman Vincent Peale

In this lesson your students will learn the differences between Christmas traditions in England and America. They will get a grasp of the particular and sometimes strange rituals that are used in England, while watching a short documentary. This good lesson plan focuses on listening and speaking skills.

Language level: intermediate B1

Learner: teens, adults

Activity: listening, speaking

Time: 60 mins

Topic: How to have a British Christmas

Materials: [video](#)

1. Lead in: Set context, and short class discussion (10 mins)

Explain that you're going to talk about Christmas traditions, particularly in England. Ask your students whether they have any particular traditions themselves. This is a great way to get to know a little bit more about each other's background, especially when your class is a multicultural setting.

You can use the following prompts to generate the discussion:

- What do you do for Christmas?
- What kind of food do you eat?
- Do you visit your family on Christmas day?
- Do you exchange gifts for Christmas?
- Did you believe in Santa Claus as a kid?

Make sure you don't forget to talk about your traditions as well! But if you're British, make sure your information doesn't overlap with what is presented in the video too much.

2. Watch the video, and generating the vocabulary (30 mins)

Tell your students you are going to watch a [video](#) on the differences between Christmas in England and America, with a focus on the British particularities.

While watching the video for the first time, ask your students to write down ten words they can hear and/or see, related to Christmas. Possibilities are:

- Father Christmas
- Crimbo
- stockings
- Christmas crackers
- Christmas hats
- pudding
- Boxing Day
- pantomime
- fireplace
- the Queen's royal message

Explain any vocabulary needed, and ask your students to watch the video again, this time focusing on the differences between England and America. It might help if you give one or two examples, dividing the whiteboard into two parts (one side for England, the other side for America).

After watching the video, invite the students to come and complete your whiteboard scheme. Following the video, the correct answers are:

England	America
In England they sometimes call Christmas 'Crimbo'.	In America, they never do that.
In England they say Father Christmas.	In America they say Santa Claus.
In England kids toss their letters to Father Christmas into the fireplace.	In America kids put their letters to Santa Claus in the mailbox.
In England (the UK) children hang stockings around their beds.	American children hang stockings around the fireplace.
They leave brandy and a mince pie for Father Christmas.	They leave milk and cookies for Santa Claus.
In England they hand out Christmas crackers to each other.	In America they don't.
In England it is mandatory to wear a Christmas hat.	In America they don't wear them.
In England they have a big Christmas dinner.	In America they have a big Christmas dinner.
In the UK they have Christmas pudding for dessert.	In America they have pumpkin and pecan pies for Christmas dessert.
In the UK the Queen gives a speech for Christmas every year.	In America there is no Queen's speech.
The day after Christmas is called Boxing Day. People go shopping on this day.	In America there is no such day after Christmas.
In England around Christmas times all theatres will play pantomimes. In England they believe that the Christmas tree and decorations should be taken down within twelve days after Christmas.	This is not a popular thing to do in America. In America they sometimes leave their tree and decorations out for a long time after Christmas.

3. Grammar point: contrasting (20 mins)

Have a look together at the information on the whiteboard. Students will now learn how to compare and contrast the different Christmas traditions in England and America.

This can be challenging for the students, as comparing and contrasting can be done using conjunctions, adverbs, and phrases. In this lesson, however, we will focus on conjunctions.

Introduce the grammar point to your students.

Conjunctions: but/although/though

We use these conjunctions to connect ideas that contrast. Explain to your students that you can combine contrasting ideas into one sentence when these connectors are used.

For example:

In England they sometimes call Christmas 'Crimbo', BUT in America they never do that.

In England they sometimes call Christmas 'Crimbo', ALTHOUGH in America they never do that.

In England they sometimes call Christmas 'Crimbo', THOUGH in America they never do that.

Point to the fact that BUT AND ALTHOUGH/THOUGH can't always be used in the same way.

For example:

ALTHOUGH in England they sometimes call Christmas 'Crimbo', in America they never do that.

~~Not: BUT in England they sometimes call Christmas 'Crimbo', in America they never do that.~~

Explain to your students that THOUGH/ALTHOUGH mean the same thing, but THOUGH is less formal and more often used in speaking, while ALTHOUGH is usually used in writing and sounds quite formal.

Allow your students to practice with the sentences they have written on the whiteboard. Make sure they use the three different conjunctions introduced during this class.

[LINK TO THE VIDEO:](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2W3QR9WXdA) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2W3QR9WXdA>