



CHRISTMAS CRACKERS



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
1952-131A-BSJQ



1

Warm up

Crackers are an important part of Christmas celebrations in the UK. Look at the pictures and then answer the questions.



1. When do you think people pull crackers?
2. What's inside them?
3. What else do you know about this tradition?
4. How old do you think it is?
5. Have you ever pulled a cracker with someone?



2 Vocabulary

Use the words in the box to complete the sentences. Then explain the meaning of each item using the context of the sentence.

bows (bəʊz) / clients / gift wrap / parcel / snap / warehouses

1. I need to buy some stick-on _____ for the presents I am going to put under the tree.
2. I've bought three rolls of Christmas _____ this year, with pictures of winter scenes.
3. It's so exciting when the postman rings the doorbell with a _____ for you at Christmas!
4. Lots of companies send cards and presents to their most important _____ at Christmas.
5. Months in advance, stores are filling their _____ with items to sell at Christmas.
6. The forest was so quiet that you could hear the wood on the ground _____ as you walked over it.

Read the words and definitions. Complete the gaps with your own ideas to show that you understand.

1. A **bonbon** is a candy with a soft center. They could have a mint or flavor.
2. **Prestigious** means famous and of high quality. Liberty of London is one of the most prestigious stores in London, and other examples are
3. **Crackle** is a sound that a fire makes as the wood burns. To hear this sound, you can make a fire in a fireplace or
4. **Perforated** means that small holes have been made in something to make it easy to fold or tear. You can see perforations on stamps or
5. **Trims** are decorations for the holidays, like wreaths for the front door and
6. **Confectioners** make beautiful sweets and candy like chocolate Santas and





3

Watch the video

Watch the video, "Inside a Christmas cracker making factory" (00:00-02:58) and choose the best option to complete the sentences according to the information in the video.

1. Kim and Sam, who run Celebration Crackers, are **brother and sister** / husband and wife / father and daughter.
 2. The Celebration Crackers factory makes **300** / 250 / 200 million crackers every year.
 3. Confectioner Tom Smith invented the Christmas cracker in **1814** / 1840 / 1940.
 4. These days, **about half** / all / nearly all families in Britain include crackers as part of their celebrations.
 5. Celebration Crackers sometimes use paper that **their customers give them** / is left over from last year / can be recycled.
 6. Kim shows how she uses jewelry as a **gift inside the cracker** / a trim for the cracker / a decoration for the box.
 7. Kim also shows a cracker meant for **pet owners** / children / chocolate lovers.
 8. Kim gets the jokes for the crackers from **the Internet** / an old book / her nephew.
 9. The video includes **four** / three / two typical cracker jokes.
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1. **What's the most interesting or surprising thing you learned from the video?**
 2. **What else would you like to know about Christmas crackers?**

4

Language in context

Read these sentences from the recording and use the context to explain the meaning of the words in bold.

1. The first part is a snap. Shall we see if this works, Kim? / **Let's have a go.**

2. And after the gifts, of course, there's the **all-important** hat which everybody has to wear at the Christmas dinner table ...

3. They're (the jokes are) **cheesy** but it's just what you want at Christmas.

**5 Reading**

Read the article and add eight missing words from the lesson to complete the text. Use the first letters you are given and write one letter in each gap.

Christmas Crackers

Still going strong after more than 180 years

- A. Growing up in America, I was a big reader, and for some reason, I was particularly fond of 19th century English literature, although it was often a bit confusing. While I could handle the fact that Christmas trees in those days were decorated with candles and that Father Christmas was the same guy as Santa Claus, I just couldn't work out why everyone got so excited about having crackers at Christmas. To me, crackers were thin, dry, crunchy biscuits that you snacked on when there was nothing better available - why would someone be **thrilled** by that? Of course, I could have checked the dictionary, but I just wanted to carry on reading...
- B. Now that I live in the UK, I am a huge cracker fan. They've been part of our family Christmas dinner for years, and I've even had a **1) g _** at making them myself. However, I've also made a shocking discovery: crackers are French! It was French **2) c _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _** who took sweets wrapped in decorative paper and added the all-important **3) s _ _ _**. They called these "cosaques" after the noisy guns of Russian Cossack soldiers. Londoner confectioner Tom Smith, often **credited** with inventing the cracker, actually just **spotted** a great opportunity and introduced crackers to the country.
- C. The contents of crackers were **established** early on: a paper hat, a **4) c _ _ _ _** joke or motto, and small toys or prizes. **Themed** boxed sets quickly became popular. Some were intended for lovers - a romantic poem could set off an evening of romance. Those for children contained a small doll in the box and each cracker held an item of clothing for it. When all the crackers were pulled, the doll was fully dressed. Designs often referred to current events - an 1897 collection had a North Pole exploration theme with polar bear masks and tiny thermometers among the prizes.
- D. Crackers are still a big part of Christmas celebrations in the UK but there are growing worries about their effect on the environment. People are starting to question whether the plastic **5) t _ _ _ _** and the **6) g _ _ _ w _ _ _** wrap used on the outside can be recycled, and, more importantly, whether anyone really needs a dozen tiny plastic toys which only hold a child's interest for a minute or two. In addition, a renewed interest in home crafts has seen people taking on holiday projects like cracker-making in the weeks before Christmas, creating custom sets of crackers to reflect their family's interests.
- E. If you want to make your own crackers at home, here's how. You will need: Christmas paper, a ruler, scissors, the inside cardboard part of some toilet paper rolls (3 per cracker), tape, 12 inch snaps (you can buy these from special stores or online), string or wool, and whatever contents and decorative ribbons and **7) b _ _ _** you want to use.
- F. Step 1: measure and cut a 12 x 8 inch rectangle of Christmas paper. Step 2: take three toilet paper rolls and place them along the long side of the paper and roll it up. Tape the paper in place with the rolls inside. Step 3: place your snap inside the rolled paper and toilet paper rolls. Step 4: pull out one of the outer toilet paper rolls slightly to create a gap between it and the middle roll. Then tie the gap with string or wool and remove the outer toilet paper roll. Step 5: add whatever contents you like. Step 6: repeat step 4 at the other end of the cracker. Step 7: glue the snap to the inside of the paper on both sides - this makes it easier to pull the cracker. Step 8: decorate the outside of the cracker however you like. You can even add a name if the cracker is meant for someone special.
- There's no reason why your homemade crackers can't look as good as those from **8) p _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _** stores - but they won't cost as much!

Sources: *Victoriana Magazine, YouTube*



Match the five items in bold in the article with their meanings.

1. recognized as the person/people who did something good: _____
2. organized in the same way that they continued: _____
3. saw or noticed something that others may not have seen: _____
4. relating to one topic: _____
5. feeling very happy or excited: _____

Answer these questions in pairs.

1. How easy do you think it will be to make your own crackers?
2. Have you answered the questions you had after watching the video?
3. What other questions about crackers do you have? Where could you find the answers?

6

Design challenge

Work in pairs or small groups. Choose one of the options in the box and design a set of six different themed crackers for them.

pet owners / people who are concerned about the environment / children aged 5-12 /
crackers from a prestigious store or brand in your town or country / couples /
crackers that reflect current events / foodies - people who love good food and drink /
bookworms / your own idea

You should say how the crackers will look and what will go inside them. Note that each cracker should contain a different prize. However, you don't need to plan the jokes and the hats are always the same, although you might want to say what color they are. How much do you think this box of crackers will cost?

Explain your ideas to the class. The class will choose the design that best suits the groups they are designed for.



7

Optional extension

Christmas crackers are famous for containing really cheesy jokes. The worse the jokes are, the more people enjoy them. Match the questions to the answers to make Christmas jokes.

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|--|--|
| 1. How did Santa meet his wife? | a. The elf-abet. |
| 2. What do Santa's helpers learn at school? | b. Mince-spies. |
| 3. What falls at the North Pole but never gets hurt? | c. Snow |
| 4. What time is it when the clock strikes 13? | d. Santa Paws. |
| 5. Who brings presents to pets? | e. It flu over his head! |
| 6. Who did Santa find hiding in the bakery at Christmas? | f. Because it's so much easier to write a book on paper. |
| 7. Why didn't the sick guy get the joke about Covid? | g. At the snowball, it was love at frost sight! |
| 8. Why is it a bad idea to write a book on reindeer? | h. Time to go shopping for a new clock. |

Match each joke with one of the themes you could design crackers for in the last activity.

Which joke do you think is the cheesiest?