

BBC Learning English  
6 Minute English  
19 December 2013  
*Festive feelings*



**Rob:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English, I'm Rob...

**Finn:** ...and I'm Finn, hello – and a merry Christmas to you all!

**Rob:** Thanks for that festive **greeting** Finn. Yes, many people around the world are getting ready to celebrate Christmas, including me...

**Finn:** ...and me Rob! For me, it's the time of year when we don't have to go to work, we eat and drink lots and, of course, we get presents. So, Rob, what have you got me?

**Rob:** Wait and see Finn – I haven't wrapped it yet! Don't forget Christmas is also a time for *giving* presents too. We'll be finding out what Christmas means to other people soon and using some vocabulary connected to **the festive season** – another way of saying 'the Christmas period'. But let's start with a question.

**Finn:** Yes, the question is: what have you bought me for Christmas?

**Rob:** No Finn, it's not! We know Christmas is full of **traditions** – events and activities that started a long time ago and now happen every year. Well, in Germany it's traditional to lock a room before Christmas. So Finn, do you know what happens in that room? Is it...

- a) used to prepare the Stollen cake, a moist bread filled with fruit.
- b) where the tree is decorated, and presents placed underneath.
- c) in olden days it was used to breed a turkey for the Christmas feast.

**Finn:** To breed a turkey! Very interesting! But I think Stollen cake is German so I'm going to say a) where they made the Stollen cake.

**Rob:** OK - I'll let you know the answer later on. So let's talk more about Christmas and what it means to different people. For some people it's a religious occasion.

- Finn:** Some people believe this is when Jesus Christ was born – so it's a sort of birthday celebration. People might go to a church service and sing **carols** – those are the traditional Christmas songs.
- Rob:** Other people like to just **let their hair down** – or have a good time – because it is the middle of the cold, dark winter – although not everywhere.
- Finn:** Indeed. It's the middle of the summer in Australia, so some people celebrate with a barbeque on the beach.
- Rob:** But I quite like it being cold and dark here in the UK – it feels special decorating the house with lights and candles. And it's a good excuse for staying indoors and eating and drinking!
- Finn:** I guess the thing that most people do at Christmas is **catch up** with friends and family. Well, that's what I do.
- Rob:** Me too. Well, let's find out what Christmas means to other people. Listen out for the words they use to describe their feelings.
- Man 1:** *I suppose Christmas is a time where I feel hopeful for what lies ahead; feel thankful for what I have both materially received and also for the good times that we've had; and then joyous I suppose, as well.*
- Woman:** *Relaxed, happy, fat!*
- Man 2:** *Three words to describe Christmas I suppose is: family first of all; holidays, going back home, and thirdly, I suppose, community, getting together, usually at home, in the pub with friends from around the neighbourhood and that sort of thing. So those are the three words that describe Christmas.*
- Rob:** Some interesting words there. The first man said he felt **hopeful** – so, he's feeling good about what lies ahead in the future.
- Finn:** And he felt **thankful** – grateful for what he had received. He felt thankful for the material things he has and he's also thankful for all the good times he's had. I'll drink to that!
- Rob:** Ha! That's something you can say to mean you agree with what someone says. Another word he used was **joyous** – meaning full of happiness.

**Finn:** We also heard from other people using positive words like happy and relaxed. Someone said they felt fat – probably because of **stuffing themselves** with food.

**Rob:** Someone else said, to them, Christmas meant family and going home for a holiday too. And they said **community**.

**Finn:** A community is a group of people who have common interests, and often because they live in the same area – the same neighbourhood.

**Rob:** And he said a good place for the community to come together is at the pub – that's a very British place where you can **socialise** over a drink or two. I think I might head to the pub now Finn.

**Finn:** A good idea Rob. But what about the answer to today's question first?

**Rob:** Ah yes. Earlier I asked you if you knew what happens in a room that in German tradition is locked before Christmas. Is it to...?

- a) prepare the Stollen cake, a moist bread filled with fruit.
- b) decorate the tree, and put presents underneath.
- c) in olden days, to breed a turkey for the Christmas feast.

**Finn:** And I said a) it's where they prepare the Stollen cake.

**Rob:** It's a nice idea but you are wrong.

**Finn:** Was it the turkey?

**Rob:** No, the room is actually locked just to decorate the tree and put presents underneath.

**Finn:** Really?!

**Rob:** Quite a nice tradition anyway. By the way, here's your present. Happy Christmas!

**Finn:** *(unwrapping)* Thanks Rob... it's a dictionary.

**Rob:** Yes, it could come in useful. It's the thought that counts!

**Finn:** Thank you Rob. Yes I need to improve my vocabulary!

**Rob:** Well, that's it for this 6 Minute English. Please check out our website at [www.bbclearningenglish.com](http://www.bbclearningenglish.com). And join us again next week for more 6 Minute English.

**Both:** Bye.

## Vocabulary and definitions

greeting	friendly message usually sent at a special occasion
the festive season	the Christmas period
traditions	old customs that happen regularly and have become the usual
carols	old and well-known songs sung at Christmas
let their hair down	enjoy themselves / have a good time
catch up	talk to people you haven't seen for a long time
hopeful	believing something good will happen
thankful	grateful for something
joyous	feeling of happiness
stuffing themselves	eating lots of food
community	a group of people who have common interests, and/or live in the same area
socialise	spend time with people you like

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