

A Stress-free Christmas

1

Warm Up

What do you like most about Christmas?

2

Language Building

These expressions are in the reading passage below.
Can you match the two halves?

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| to look | walk |
| to shop | season |
| delivery | topic |
| an invigorating | online |
| a controversial | forward to something |
| the festive | times |



3

Reading Read the text and fill in the blanks from the list below.

Are you looking forward to Christmas? It is, of course, a time of great happiness. Busy families get together, and children are excited (we hope) by their presents.

However, for some people, Christmas can be a difficult time, as Jennifer, a housewife, explains.

"I find Christmas really stressful. Every year my family comes to stay at our house. I have to cook all the time and I never have the chance to relax."

So how can we reduce the stress of Christmas? The answer is preparation.

- The crowds are terrible at Christmas, so ¹..... and shop online! Be sure to use reputable websites. Don't forget to check delivery times at Christmas.
- ²..... . If you have relatives staying, make sure they help you. Your house isn't a hotel! Why not ask them to help with the cooking, or do the washing up?
- ³.....! It's a good idea to spend some time outdoors everyday. How about going for an invigorating walk in the afternoon instead of just watching TV? You'll feel refreshed and much less stressed.
- ⁴.....! If the turkey is overcooked, it doesn't matter. Avoid controversial topics at the dinner table.

Christmas will never be one hundred percent stress-free. However if you ask for help, and plan ahead, you can enjoy the festive season more!

Missing Words: **delegate** | **keep calm** | **plan ahead** | **get out of the house**

4 Comprehension **Ask and answer the questions with a partner.**

1. Why is Jennifer so busy at Christmas?
2. Why is online shopping a good idea?
3. Should we ask for help at Christmas?
4. Why should we go for a walk?
5. What kinds of topics should we avoid?

5 Vocabulary Building **Fill in the spaces with an expression from exercise two.**

1. I'm feeling sleepy after that enormous lunch. I think we need
2. No – don't talk to me about politics. Talk about sport! It's not
3. Parking is so expensive! I think it's easier to stay at home and
4. I enjoy I can see all my family and I don't have to go to work.
5. It's only two more weeks! I'm really seeing my relatives next week.
6. It's really busy at Christmas, so are often quite late.

6 Speaking **Look at the expressions below.**

Advice & Suggestions

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Be sure to...</i> | <i>Why not</i> | <i>Why don't you</i> |
| <i>Don't forget to</i> | <i>It's a good idea to</i> | |
| <i>How about</i> | <i>Avoid</i> | <i>You could</i> |

Work with a partner. Do you have any advice for suggestions for these festive problems?

- ★ I don't get on with my mother-in-law! ★
- ★ My parents stay at my house for too long. ★
- ★ Buying lots of presents is really expensive. ★
- ★ My nephews and nieces are really noisy. ★
- ★ I always eat and drink too much at Christmas! ★

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Teaching Notes

Target Structure:	Advice and Suggestions
Vocabulary:	Christmas
Level:	Lower-Intermediate +
Time:	40 minutes
Preparation:	None

Suggested Teaching Method

- 1 The first exercise introduces the topic. Students can work in pairs. Don't spend too long here. There are discussion topics at the end of the worksheet.
- 2 Students can work alone and check in pairs. Go through the answers with the group.
- 3 You may like to pre-teach some additional vocabulary to take the stress out of the reading passage! Suggestions include: get together / reputable websites / delegate.

Students can read the passage and fill in the blanks with a word or phrase from the list beneath the text. Have students check their answers with a partner. Go through the answers with the group. You could take the opportunity to answer any pressing vocabulary queries.

- 4 Students can work in pairs asking and answering the questions. Go through the answers with the group.
- 5 You can choose whether to allow students to refer to the vocabulary from exercise two. Students can work in pairs. Go through the answers with the group.
- 6 Present the target language where necessary. Choose one of the problems (or a different one) as an example, and elicit some suggestions using the target language.

To maximise student talking time, it's best to put students in pairs, or small groups. Assign new pairs, if possible. Students can discuss the problems, using the target language as much as possible. While the students are speaking, monitor the conversations, but try not to interrupt. When the discussion comes to a close, elicit some suggestions for each problem.

The answer key is on the next page.

Answer key (Other answers may be possible.)

- 2**
- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| to look | forward to something |
| to shop | online |
| delivery | times |
| an invigorating | walk |
| a controversial | topic |
| the festive | season |

- 3**
1. plan ahead 2. delegate 3. get out of the house 4. keep calm

- 4**
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Why is Jennifer so busy at Christmas? | Her family comes to stay and she has to cook. |
| 2. Why is online shopping a good idea? | The crowds (in the shops) are terrible at Christmas. |
| 3. Should we ask for help at Christmas? | Yes, we should. |
| 4. Why should we go for a walk? | It's invigorating. / You will feel refreshed. |
| 5. What kinds of topics should we avoid? | We should avoid controversial topics. |

- 5**
1. I'm feeling sleepy after that enormous lunch. I think we need an invigorating walk!
 2. No – don't talk to me about politics. Talk about sport! It's not a controversial topic!
 3. Parking is so expensive! I think it's easier to stay at home and shop online!
 4. I enjoy the festive season. I can see all my family and I don't have to go to work.
 5. It's only two more weeks! I'm really looking forward to seeing my relatives next week.
 6. It's really busy at Christmas, so delivery times are often quite late.

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