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Advent Calendar 2011





Today is the first of December and if you have been studying or working a lot now is the time to reward yourself with a little something sweet.... what would you like? What would you give to your best friend? (It could be , but doesn't have to be, a chocolate bunny like this.)



Today is the 2nd December

- In the UK and the USA we hand stockings up in preparation for Christmas. These are then filled with small presents to be opened on Christmas Day morning. Do you have traditions associated to pieces of clothing in your country?





How do we know that the nativity scene on the left is probably not in the UK?

- Christmas, of course, is religious feast, and it is a popular time to go to church. How do you celebrate the religious side of Christmas? Or, if you are not a Christian, do you have a similar festival?



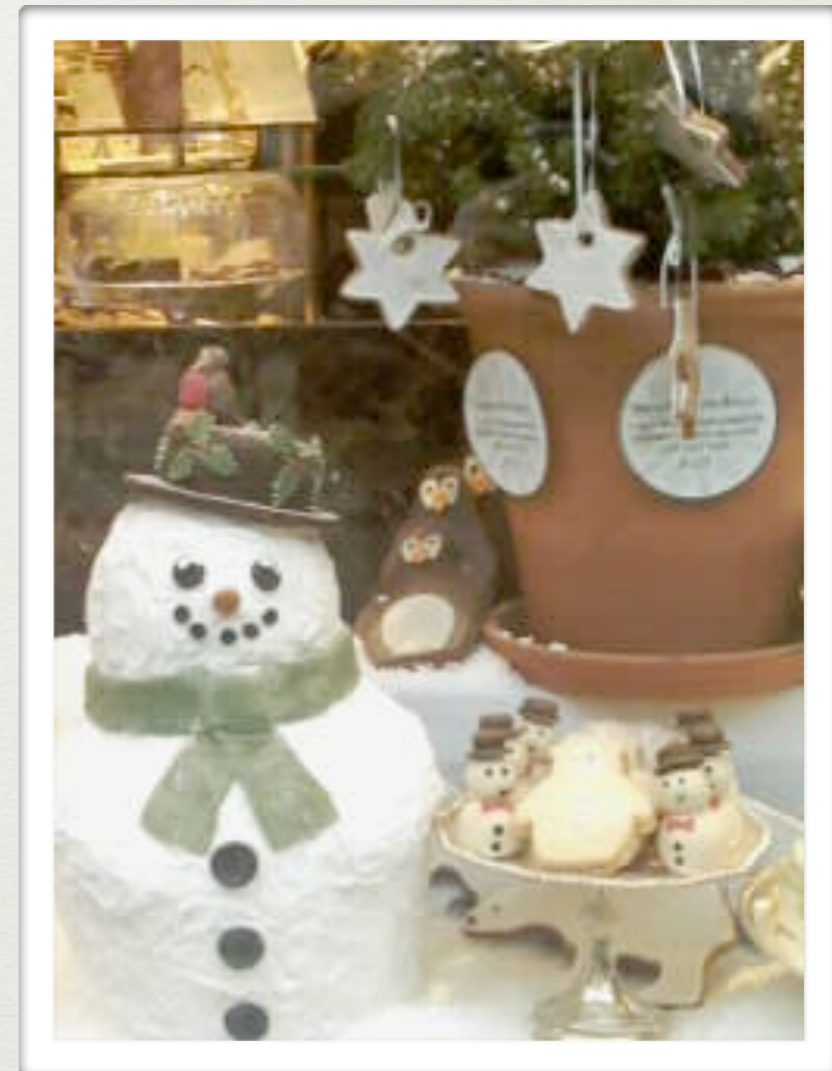
Christmas Landscapes

- This is the sort of traditional image we have of the countryside at Christmas time in Anglo Saxon countries. What does it look like in your part of the world at this time of year?



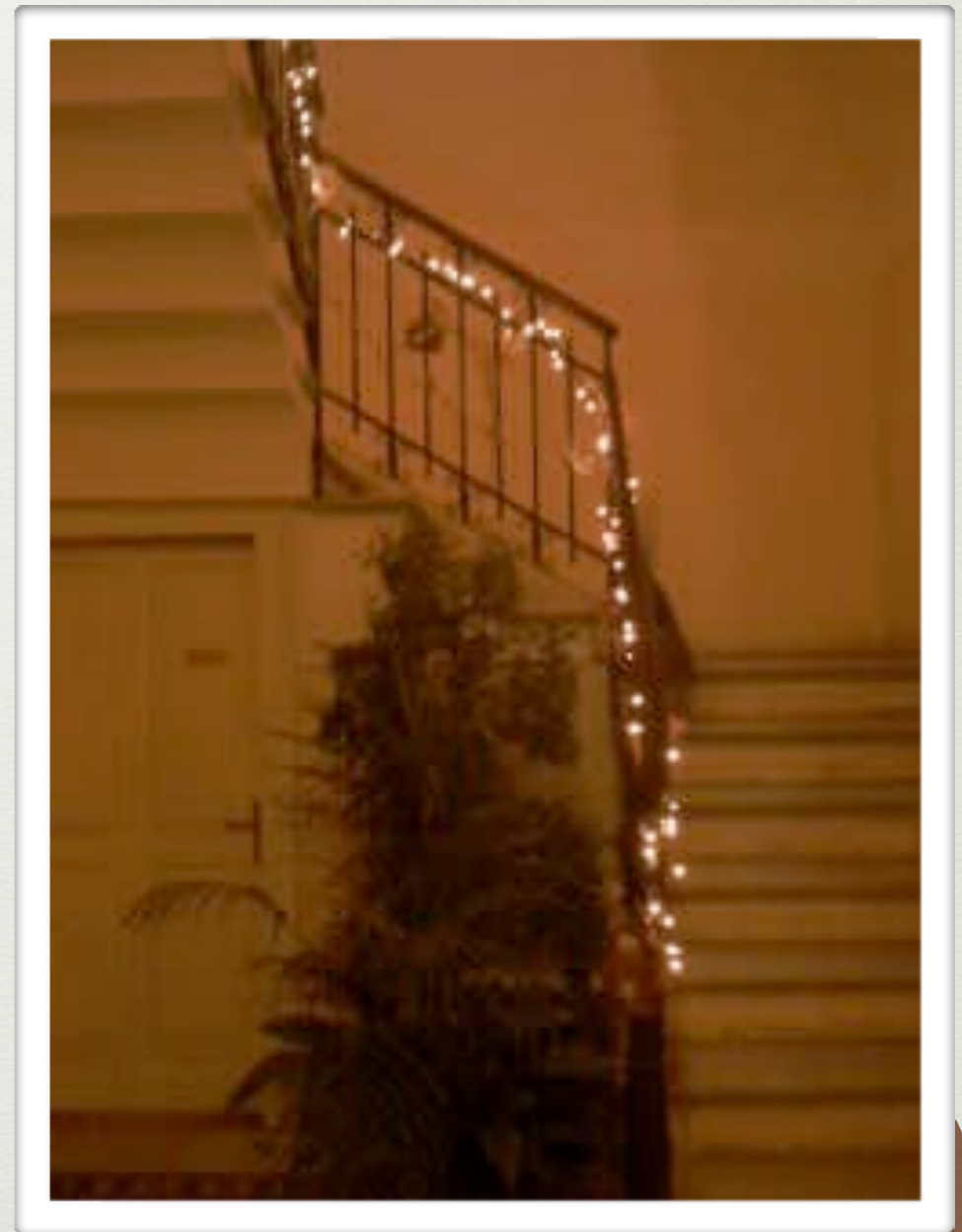
The Commercial side of the Festival

- This is how one well known British teashop that also sells wonderful cakes and biscuits decorated its window one year at Christmas. How do shops decorate their windows in your country at this time of year?



Decorating Public Spaces

- Some people decorate the outsides of their houses as well as the inside. This is the entrance to my block of flats and we decorate the stairs. Do you do anything similar where you live?



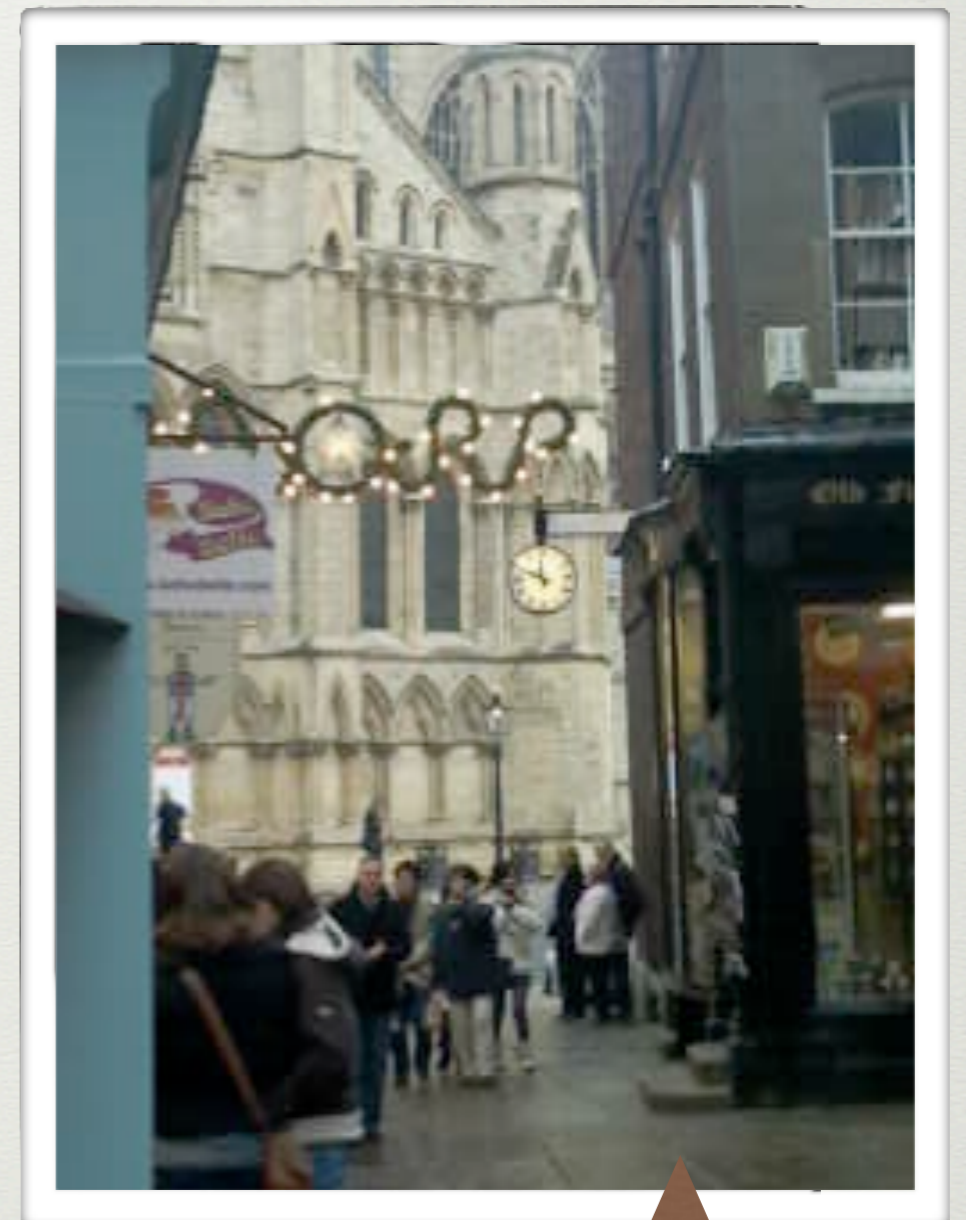
Decorating the inside of the house

- We also decorate the insides of our houses. This predates the Christmas festivities and goes back to older times when people used candles and fire to bring some light into the long winter nights. How do you bring warmth and light into your winter?



Christmas towns and cities

- This is a picture of York, a city which is very pretty at this time of year, with its winding streets, festive lights and lively atmosphere. Can you think of a city or town that you think is particularly nice in the winter or at Christmas?



Food and drink

- Food and drink, of course, is an essential part of the Christmas celebrations: turkey, mince pies, Christmas pudding as well as mulled wine. What food and drink do you associate with this time of year?



Home or Away

- Some people make the most of the holidays at Christmas to go away and escape from the cold, dark winter days? What about you do you like a traditional family Christmas or would you like to jet off to an exotic destination?



2 Christmas Angels

- You normally find angels on top of the Christmas tree but in Verona we even have them in front of the Arena. The question is what do you have to do to become an angel? What are the qualities of your guardian angel?



And what about advent?

- The word advent comes from Latin and refers to the “coming” of the new “king”. During December we build up a feeling of expectancy as we wait for the big day. What do you like best about this countdown to Christmas?



Christmas Markets and Mulled Wine

- Christmas markets are another well known feature of this time of year. They were originally designed to sell decorations for Christmas but these days you can buy all kinds of things. Can you think of a Christmas (or similar) market and one memorable thing that you have bought there?



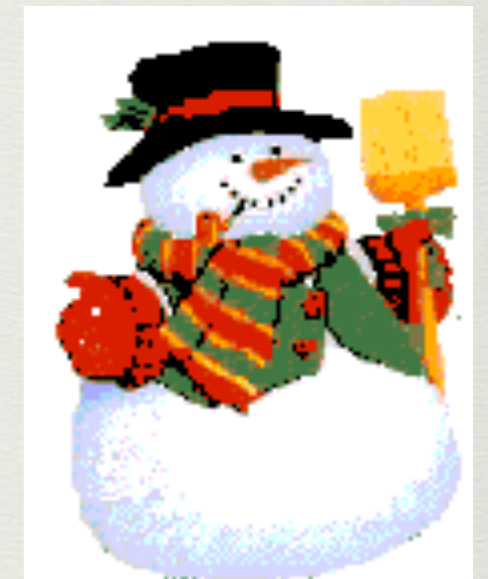
Christmas Presents

- And another important feature of Christmas is the presents. Where would we be without those? One very curious cat is desperate to open her present! What is the best, or the worst present you have ever been given?



Snow and snowmen

- We don't get so much snow these days, although every year tends to surprise us. Have you ever made a snowman, or had a snowball fight? What "snow games" do you like (or would you like) to play?



Santa Claus

- Well, it wouldn't be Christmas without him would it? Whatever you call him: Father Christmas, Santa Claus or Saint Nick, he's at the centre of it all, but there are other characters associated with these winter festivities too. Do you know any other ones? Who is your favourite?



Santa's helpers

- Of course, Santa would never manage to get everything ready in time and deliver the presents if he didn't have some helpers and here are two of them: one of his trusty elves and the reindeer with the red nose. Do you know his name? What other animals are associated with Christmas?



The Christmas Tree

- The Christmas tree is traditionally an evergreen symbolising eternal green and growth even in the middle of winter. What other plants do you know of that are associated with Christmas?



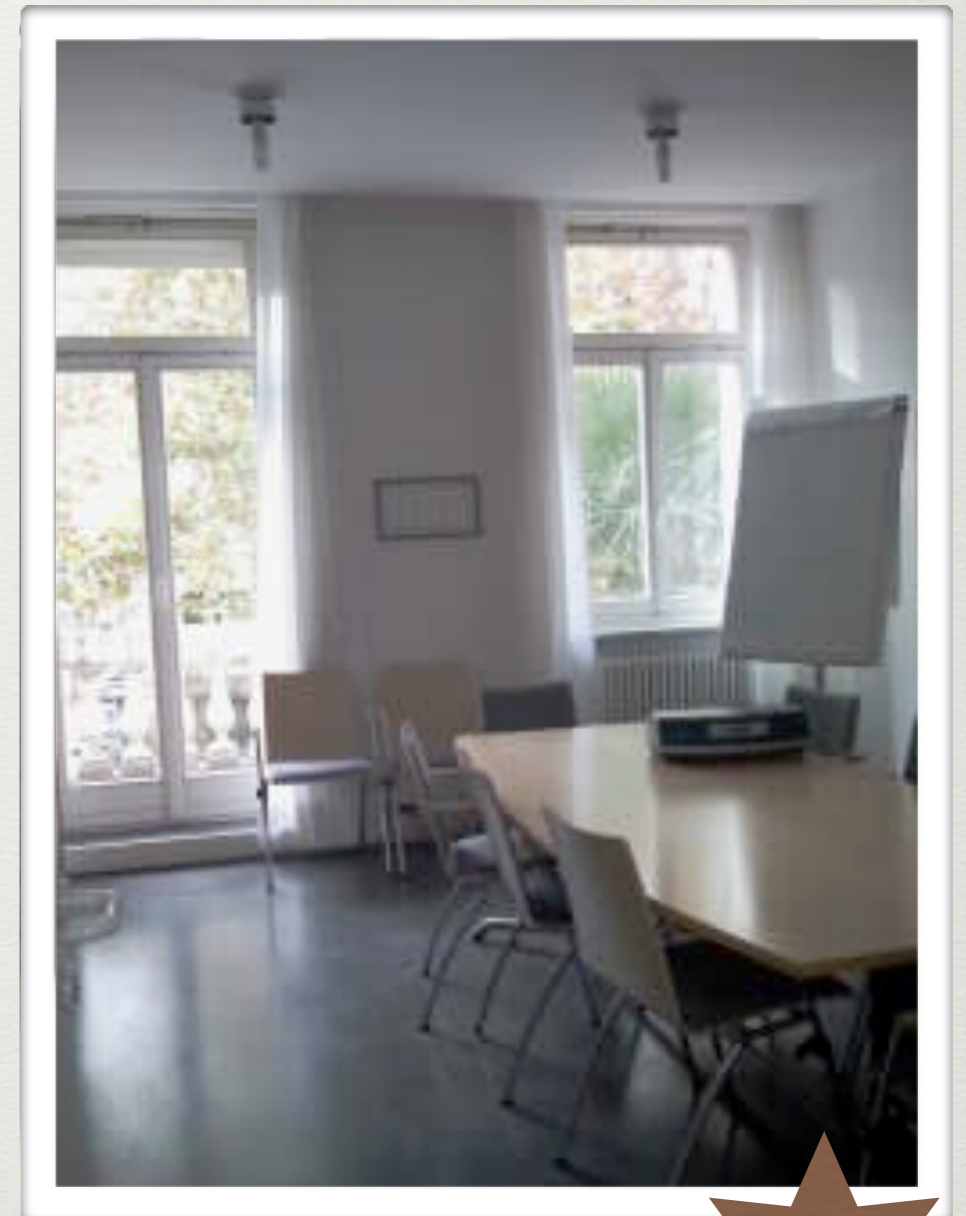
Bells and music

- Bells ring out to tell us that the new baby has been born, to bring us the good news, but Christmas is a time of singing too. We all love Christmas Carols. Do you know any? Which one is your favourite?



Empty classrooms and offices

- Christmas is a holiday time so classrooms and some offices are empty, so what do we do instead? How do you spend the Christmas days: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day? Do you have any family traditions?



Flying away on Santa's sleigh

- And if you could fly away on Santa's magical sleigh, where would you like it to take you? What would you do when you got there, and how long do you think you would stay?



The best present

- Christmas is all about giving presents as well as receiving them so what is the best present you are going to give, or have given in the past? Why? What sort of present do you not like giving people?



The Best Christmas room

- Some people perhaps go a bit too far with their decorations! How would you describe the perfect room to celebrate Christmas in? What and who would be there with you? What would you be able to see from the window?



...And finally, it has arrived.

- Yes, today is the 24th December and in many countries, especially in the north of Europe, tonight's Christmas celebrations are the most important ones. In the UK the big day, however, has still to come... the 25th December is Christmas Day. Which is the most important day in your country's winter celebrations?

Image credit: Richard Smith at geograph.org.uk

