

Labor Gakuen Newsletter

Christmas 2024

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CHRISTMAS EVENTS



December 13th (Fri) 13:30 - 15:30

A special 2-hour lesson all about Christmas with Mark.

December 20th (Fri) 15:45 - 17:15

The Labor Christmas Party - have fun and meet some new people at the party. Bring something to eat and bring your smile! Eat, drink and play some Xmas games...

You can reserve your spot for these from December the 2nd (Mon)

Did you know? Christmas is celebrated on different dates throughout the world. For many Christians December the 25th is the most important day but for some Christian groups January 6th or 7th is the main day.



Christmas Puddings (Justin)



Making a Christmas pudding is a traditional part of Christmas in England.

- **Origins** - The origins of the Christmas pudding go back to **medieval** England. Early recipes were more **savoury**, containing meat, root vegetables, and spices. It lasted a long time without going bad!
- **Modern ingredients** - A Christmas pudding is typically made with dried fruit, candied fruit peel, citrus zests, a dense sponge cake, spices like cinnamon and ginger, and some brandy or rum. Some people use suet, a type of beef fat, instead of butter.
- **Preparation** - Traditionally, Christmas pudding is boiled in a pudding cloth, but today it's usually steamed in a bowl. It is often made in November to improve the flavour. The pudding may be served with a **sprig** of holly. At the table some people pour flaming brandy on the pudding.
- **Traditions** - There are several traditions associated with Christmas pudding, including:
 - **Stirring**: The ingredients are traditionally stirred from east to west by family members before steaming.
 - **Wishes**: Each family member makes a secret wish while stirring.
 - **Trinkets**: A trinket, often a sixpence, is traditionally included in the pudding. Whoever finds the coin is thought to have good fortune in the coming year.
- Christmas pudding is also known as plum pudding, figgy pudding, and frumenty.
- **Cooking time** - A typical pudding can take over 6 hours to steam. It is important to check the water level frequently.
- **Interesting fact** - A lot of children don't like Christmas puddings because they have a strong taste (over 50% of the ingredients are dried fruit and nuts).
- **Around the world** - Australians and South Africans also enjoy Christmas Puddings, even though it is summer there. Other countries have their own special desserts, such as *stollen* in Germany and *pavlova* in New Zealand.
- **Recipes** - There are many recipes on the internet, but they often have a lot of ingredients and take a long time to cook. But if you like cooking, why not give it a try!



Vocabulary

Origin: start

Medieval: the Middle Ages in Europe from the 5th to 15th centuries

Savoury: salty or spicy food, not sweet

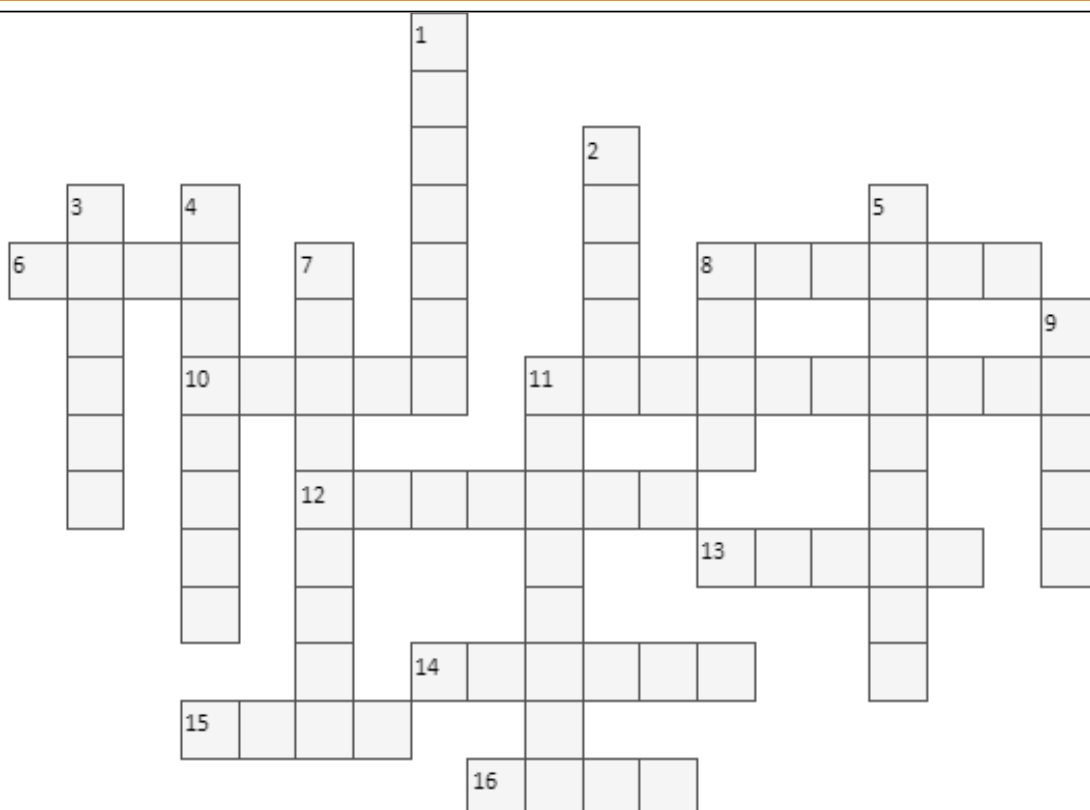
Sprig: a small piece of a plant - a twig

Trinket: a small, cheap item of jewelry or a small ornament.



Did you know? In British English 'pudding' means a cooked sweet dish served as dessert, or just 'dessert'. In American English or Japanese a pudding is a custard-like dessert. A pudding can also be a sweet or savoury steamed dish made with flour, like a Christmas pudding or steak and kidney pudding.

Justin's Christmas & New Year Crossword



Across

6. Present given during the holidays
8. Vehicle used by Santa in the snow
10. Santa _____
11. Promise to improve in the new year
12. Popular dessert in England: Christmas _____
13. Celebration for New Year's Eve
14. Circular decoration made of leaves
15. Another word for Christmas
16. Decorated plant for Christmas

Down

1. Sweet treats left for Santa
2. 2025 is the year of the _____
3. Bright decorations for homes
4. Hanging item for small gifts
5. Plant under which people kiss
7. Sparkling drink for celebrations
8. White flakes that fall in winter
9. Heavenly figure often on top of trees
11. Animal that pulls Santa's sleigh



Christmas Crossword Hints!

(The answers are on the next page)



Christmas Trees (Kris)

Where does the tradition of Christmas trees come from?

- 16th century: German **Lutherans** began decorating evergreen trees with apples, nuts, and adding candles to recreate the night sky.
- 18th century: The Christmas tree became more popular in Europe, especially among the **nobility**.
- 19th century: The Christmas tree was introduced to England and **popularized** by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. A photo of the royal family in front of a Christmas tree is said to have **influenced** Americans into **acquiring** the custom.
 - 1950s and 1960s: Aluminium and plastic trees were mass produced.
- Today: Artificial trees are widely popular, especially in countries where fresh trees are hard to find.

Extra facts

- In some countries, evergreen trees were believed to keep away evil spirits, illness, witches, and ghosts.
- In 1901, Theodore Roosevelt tried to stop the practice of having Christmas trees because he was concerned about **deforestation**.

Vocabulary

Lutherans: A type of Christianity which follows the ideas of Martin Luther.

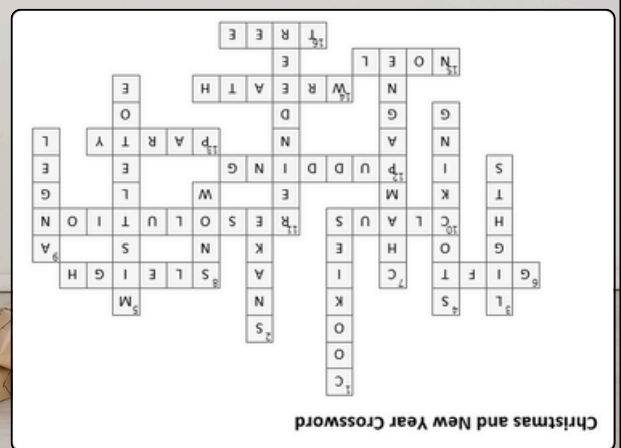
Nobility: High ranking people, like Princes, Dukes and so on.

Popularized: to make popular

Influence: to have an effect on

Acquire: to get or receive.

Deforestation: Loss of forests by being cut down.





A Christmas Carol

by Charles Dickens



Ebenezer Scrooge was a miserly old man who only cared about money. He lived alone in a cold, dark office, counting his wealth and ignoring the needs of others. On Christmas Eve, as he sat counting his coins, his cheerful nephew, Fred, invited him to Christmas dinner.

"Bah, humbug!" Scrooge grumbled. "Christmas is a waste of time. Go away."

That night, as Scrooge prepared for bed, he was visited by the ghost of his old partner, Jacob Marley. Marley's ghost was wrapped in rattling chains and appeared in a mist. He warned Scrooge that if he didn't change his ways, he would suffer a fate like Marley's— to wander the earth in chains forever.

"You will be visited by three spirits tonight," Marley said before vanishing into the mist.

The first spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Past, appeared in a glow of warm light. It took Scrooge on a journey through his own life, showing him his childhood and early years. Scrooge saw that he used to have a kind heart, full of joy and generosity. But as he grew older, he became consumed with greed, losing his friends, his love, and his happiness.

The second spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Present, showed Scrooge the joy of the holiday in the present day. They visited the humble home of Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's underpaid clerk, where Bob's son, Tiny Tim, was sick and frail. The Cratchit family had little, but they celebrated Christmas with love and warmth. Scrooge was moved by the sight of Tiny Tim's hopeful character, and he began to feel remorse for his selfishness.

Finally, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come appeared, a silent figure wearing black. It showed Scrooge his own grave, cold and unvisited. Scrooge realized that if he didn't change his ways, he would die alone, unloved, and forgotten.

The idea of Tiny Tim's death, should things stay the same, haunted him.

Scrooge woke up on Christmas morning, knowing that he had been given a second chance. He immediately set out to make things right. He bought a feast for the Cratchit family, paid for Tiny Tim's medical care, and became a beloved figure in his community.

From that day on, Scrooge was a changed man. He embraced the true spirit of Christmas—love, generosity, and kindness—and lived a life full of joy and compassion, especially toward those who needed it most.

And every Christmas, Tiny Tim, who survived thanks to Scrooge's change of heart, would raise a glass and say, "God bless us, every one!"



Study Tip: When reading for new vocabulary, try reading one page and guessing the meanings of any new words based on context. Then check in a dictionary. Finally write the new word in a new sentence to help you remember it.

New Year's Resolutions (Mark)



According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a New Year's resolution is: "a promise that you make to yourself to start doing something good or stop doing something bad on the first day of the year."

On Jan 1st 2025 hundreds of millions of people will make a New Year's resolution. The beginning of the year in many Western cultures signifies the end of the old and the beginning of the new, and offers a fresh start for people to change their lives for the better.

Typical resolutions include losing weight, quitting smoking, starting exercising, or finding a new job. These are great ideas, but the only problem with New Year's resolutions is that they are really hard to keep. Most people give up within one or two months. But, for those few who do stick to their promises, the New Year is a time for the start of a better life.

Now, am I making any New Year's resolutions for 2025? You bet I am! More than one actually, but I am going to keep those secret for now.

How about you?

What resolutions could you make? How can you make your life better than it is today? And, more importantly, will you stick to your promises?

As 2024 fades into history and 2025 beckons, I wish you a Great Christmas and a Happy New Year!
All the best for 2025!

Study Tip: If you want to get faster at reading, don't worry about new words. Don't worry about what the sentences mean. Just read without stopping. And then read it again. And again! If possible read it out aloud (speak it). If you use a stopwatch you can see yourself getting faster!



New Year's Day Fun Facts



- **The history of New Year's celebrations:** The first New Year's celebrations date back 4,000 years. The Babylonians celebrated the new year during the first new moon in late March.
- **The origins of New Year's Day as January 1st:** The date of New Year's Day was chosen in honor of Janus, the Roman god of beginnings. Pope Gregory XIII established January 1 as New Year's Day in 1582.
- **New Year's traditions:** Some New Year's traditions include eating leafy greens for prosperity, eating black-eyed peas for good luck, seeing the first sunrise, and singing "Auld Lang Syne".
- **New Year's resolutions:** About 45% of Americans make New Year's resolutions, but 25% give up by the second week of January. Common resolutions include losing weight, getting organized, and saving money.
- **New Year's Eve ball drop:** The New Year's Eve ball drop in Times Square began in 1907 after city leaders banned fireworks. The current ball is 3.6m in diameter, weighs 5000kg, and is covered with 2,688 Waterford Crystals.
- **New Year's Eve celebrations:** Samoa is one of the first places to celebrate New Year's Eve, while American Samoa is among the last.

