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## Episode #071

### Christmas in the U.S.

Hi, everyone!

I'm Georgiana, founder of [SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](https://speakenglishpodcast.com).  
My mission is to help YOU to speak English fluently and confidently.

In today's episode:

- I'll talk about how Americans celebrate Christmas and how I used to enjoy Christmas time when I was a kid.
- Later, you'll practice vocabulary, and above all, you'll improve your spoken English with a funny mini-story.

Awesome! Let's get started!

## Multi-Cultural Christmas

In the **U.S.**, every 25th of December people celebrate Christmas in many unique ways because of its **multi-cultural nature**.

The modern, **commercialized Christmas** began to emerge in the **19th century** with the new custom of **buying gifts for children**.

Many of the Christmas holiday activities differ from family to family. It often depends on the **cultural heritage** of the family members.

Some of the customs are like ones in the UK, France, Italy, Poland, and Mexico.

A typical celebration of **Christmas Day** in **America** combines Irish, Austrian, Polish and Belgian traditions.

Despite the variety of cultures, most Americans agree that Christmas is a **family time**. For many families, Christmas is the one time of year when all family members, come together to eat, drink and spend a great time together.

The **Christmas tree** plays a vital part in the holiday tradition. They became popular in the United States in the **19th century**.

Sometimes families collect ornaments from more than one generation. The **Christmas trees** are always **decorated with lights** and the more, the better.

On the morning of December 25th, Christmas **gifts appear under the tree**.

Legend tells that **Santa Claus** lands his reindeer and sleigh on the roof and comes down the chimney.

**Food** plays an essential part in the **American Christmas**.

American families serve a variety of menus for Christmas dinner. A **standard Christmas** dinner usually includes turkey, dressing, potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, veggies, salad, and some dessert.

### **Shopping**

Even weeks before Christmas Day, many people **decorate** their homes and gardens with **lights, Christmas trees** and much more.

That's why, Christmas shopping became vitally significant to some retailers. In fact, Christmas has expanded into a "Season" of its own.

Still, Christmas season is about far more than shopping. For many Americans, it's a period of general goodwill and an occasion for charitable and volunteer work.

When I was a kid, I loved the idea of receiving gifts for Christmas, just like any other kid.

But what I cherished the most was spending time with my family.

My cousins and I would spend all day singing Christmas carols and eating plenty of delicious food.

How about you? Tell me how you celebrated Christmas when you were a kid.

## **Mini Story**

(Practice your Speaking)

Now, let's move on to the next section.

Here, I'll use the **Question & Answer** technique. This is the perfect lesson if you want to speak English automatically.

Let's see how it works:

- I'll give you some information. (A phrase or two).
- I'll ask simple questions.
- After each question, there will be some seconds of silence: it's your turn to answer the question!  
Just try to give an easy and short answer, not a complex one.
- After you answer, I'll give you a correct answer.

This process will continue, and little by little, I'll be telling you a story using questions and answers.

Let's get started!

**Last year, shopping for Christmas presents had become too exhausting for granny.**

**Did shopping for Christmas become exhausting for granny?**

Yes. Shopping for Christmas became exhausting for granny last year.

**Was granny excited or exhausted?**

Exhausted. Granny wasn't excited. She was exhausted.

**Granny thought that shopping for presents was exciting. Right?**

No. No. Granny didn't think that shopping for presents was exciting. She thought it was exhausting.

**Who felt exhausted? Granny or mommy?**

Granny. Not Mommy. It was granny who felt exhausted.

**When did shopping become exhausting for granny? Yesterday?**

Not yesterday. Last year. Shopping became exhausting for granny last year.

**So, she came up with an idea. She would send checks to everyone in the family instead of buying presents.**

**What did granny do? Come up with an idea or buy presents?**

She came up with an idea. Granny didn't buy any presents.

**Would granny send checks to her family members?**

Yes. Her idea was to send checks to her family instead of buying gifts.

**What would granny do instead of shopping for Christmas presents?**

She would send checks to everyone.

**Who would send checks? Dad?**

No. No. Not dad. Granny. Granny would send checks instead of buying presents.

**On each card, she wrote, "Buy your own Christmas present!" and mailed to her family members.**

**Did granny write on each card "I wish you a Merry Christmas?"**

No. No. She didn't write "I wish you a Merry Christmas." Granny wrote, "Buy your own Christmas present!"

**Was it mom who mailed the Christmas cards?**

No. Not mom. Granny. She mailed the Christmas cards.

**What did granny write on each card?**

She wrote, "Buy your own Christmas present!"

**Who did granny mail? Her family members or her dogs?**

Her family members. Not her dogs. Her dogs can't read.

**After the holidays, granny noticed she had received very few cards in return.**

**When did granny notice that she received very few cards? Before or after the holidays?**

After the holidays. Granny noticed she received very few cards after the holidays. Not before.

**How many cards did granny receive in return? A few or a lot?**

A few. Not a lot. Granny received very few cards in return.

**Did granny receive only a few presents?**

No. No. She received very few cards not presents.

**What did granny notice after the Christmas holidays? That she got robbed?**

No. Granny didn't notice that she got robbed. She noticed that she received very few cards in return.

**Puzzled, she went to her room and started to write to her relatives to ask what had happened.**

**Was granny certain or was she puzzled?**

Puzzled. Granny was puzzled. She was really confused. Not certain.

**Where did she go? To her room or the bar?**

To her room. She went to her room. Not to the bar! 😄😄😄

**Did she write to her friends or her relatives?**

Not her friends. Granny wrote to her relatives.

**Why did granny start to write to her relatives?**

To ask what had happened. She wanted to know what had happened.

**But as she cleared off her cluttered desk she became aware of something terrible.**

**Did granny clear off her cluttered desk or did she add more things on the desk?**

Granny didn't add more things on the desk. She cleared her desk.

**Was the desk cluttered or clean?**

Not clean. The desk was cluttered.

**Did she become aware of something wonderful or terrible?**

Not wonderful. She became aware of something terrible.

**Who became aware of something terrible?**

Granny. She became aware of something terrible.

**It turned out that granny forgot to include the checks with the Christmas cards. What a disaster!**

**What did granny forget to include together with the Christmas cards? Money or checks?**

Checks. Not money. Granny forgot to include the checks.

**Who forgot to include the checks? Grandpa?**

Not grandpa. Granny. She forgot to include the checks.

What a funny story! Last year granny wanted to try something new at Christmas. She decided to send checks instead of Christmas presents. However, after the holidays she realized that she forgot to include the checks. So, she immediately sent new Christmas cards and this time she made sure to enclose the checks.

Ok! Awesome! It's the end of this short lesson.

Can you see how many questions you can answer? It's like talking to another person in English. Now imagine a whole story told this way. It's incredible how much you can learn using this method.

Go to [Courses.SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](https://Courses.SpeakEnglishPodcast.com)

and continue practicing your spoken English with stories.

Before finishing this episode, I would like to wish you a

*Merry Christmas* 🌲  
*Happy New Year!*

I'll be back soon with  
new exciting episodes!  
Take care! Bye! Bye!



*Georgiana*

founder of [SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](https://SpeakEnglishPodcast.com)