

Did you know?

## DYK? Modern Christmas traditions



**Forget the turkey, the carols and the Christmas tree; now it's all about the ads, the jumpers and the Christmas number one.**

Over the past few years the talk at the beginning of November has all been about the Christmas TV ads from the big department stores like Marks and Spencer,

and John Lewis and also from supermarkets such as Sainsbury, Tesco and Lidl. They are short films full of wonder.

This year, the Lidl ad stars a deadpan teddy bear, Marks and Spencer food has popular comedy duo French and Saunders, Tesco has a Christmas party ad (poking fun at party political broadcasts), Sainsbury's goes for a medieval banquet starring popular TV personality Alison Hammond, Asda has Will Ferrell reprising his ELF role in a local Asda store. But what about the big one? The one which has everyone talking throughout Advent? It's the John Lewis one, of course. Often a multi-million pound production which is always moving and amazing in equal measures – and which can sometimes rocket the accompanying musicians to heady heights. But this year, it is much more downbeat, focusing on raising awareness about children in care with a melancholy backing track.

And talking of music, what is going to be Christmas number one? Since the singles charts began in 1952, there has of course always been a Christmas number one. The Beatles had three consecutive number ones from 1963 to 1965, but competition for the top spot began in earnest back in 1973 – nearly 50 years ago! Slade's 'Merry Christmas Everybody' and Wizzard's 'I wish it could be Christmas every day' battled it out for the top slot. (Slade won.) Queen, Wings, Cliff Richard, Michael Jackson, Spice Girls (3 consecutive years) and Westlife are amongst the artists who have reached the coveted number one Christmas slot. This century, reality television stars dominated the first decade; subsequently there have been charity records: The Justice Collective for example in 2012 who raised money for charities involved with the Hillsborough disaster. From 2018 to 2021 YouTuber Ladbaby had the number one slot, raising money for the Trussell Trust, a food charity. The title of their winning hit last year was 'Sausage rolls for everyone' featuring Ed Sheeran and Elton John. Serious, sad, funny, profound: Christmas number ones have included all these qualities over the years.

## Did you know?

Way back in 2001, you may remember seeing Colin Firth in the role of Mark Darcy in 'Bridget Jones's Diary' wearing a horrendous (or wonderful, depending on your point of view) Christmas jumper: a roll neck sweater with a giant reindeer's head knitted into the front. Over the past 20 years, more and more people have adopted the fashion trend and in the last few years there has been an exponential increase in the sale of these jumpers – a staggering 12 million jumpers were sold in the UK in 2019. A seasonal exuberance or a marker of poor taste?

So get ready for Christmas and settle down in your Christmas sweater, watch the Christmas ads and listen to the Christmas number one.

If you would like to watch last year's UK number one 'Sausage rolls for everyone' featuring Ed Sheeran and Elton John, then just look for it on the internet. (You'll see they are wearing Christmas jumpers!)

And sit back for a couple of minutes to enjoy the [John Lewis Christmas advert](#) for 2022. Quite a tear-jerker.

If you would like to use these modern traditions as a topic in the classroom then we have provided you with two activities at A1 and above.



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# Did you know?

## Teacher's notes

### My Christmas jumper

Students are going to design their very own Christmas jumper.

- Ask students what clothes people wear at Christmas.
- On the board write *Christmas jumper* and ask students what this means. Explain that it is a *Weihnachtspulli*, a sweater decorated with Christmas or winter-style designs.
- Show the picture with the Christmas jumper from page 2 of this document.
- Elicit the words of some of the designs that could go on a Christmas jumper, for example: *Christmas puddings, Christmas tree, Father Christmas, penguins, polar bears, reindeers, robins, snowflakes, snowmen, stars, stockings.*
- Draw an outline of a sweater on the board and then label the sleeves, cuffs, neck, body.
- Hand out a copy of worksheet 1 with the outline of a sweater to each student or hand out worksheet 1. Allow five minutes for them to design their jumper.
- Ask each student to present their sweater to the other students describing the motifs they have used.
- Vote for the best sweater.

Did you know?

Worksheet 1

# My Christmas Jumper



## Did you know?

### Teacher's notes

#### Top of the pops - Christmas number ones

- Make a copy of **Top of the pops - Christmas number ones** one for each student.
- On the board write *Last Christmas by Wham*. Ask students if they know this song. You could sing a couple of lines if you want.
- Ask students when it was a hit. (December 1984) Ask students if it was number one at Christmas in the UK. (No, it wasn't.)
- Tell students they are going to find out about some UK Christmas number ones.
- Hand out copies of **Top of the pops - Christmas number ones** one to each student and ask them to work alone and then compare their answers with a partner. Help with any unknown language.
- Check answers together. **Key:** 1 alphabet, 2 Christmas, 3 born, 4 know, 5 Merry, 6 little, 7 Liverpool, 8 Grandma, 9 grass, 10 always
- Encourage students to listen to one of the songs – or agree on one song to listen together. Did they like? Why/not?
- Why not try: [Christmas Alphabet](#) by Dickie Valentine? You can see the lyrics in the drop down menu so students can sing along.
- You could then ask students to think of their own Christmas alphabet.

# Top of the pops

## Christmas number ones

Complete these Christmas number one song titles using the words in the box.

alphabet always little born Christmas  
Liverpool Grandma grass know Merry

- 1 *Christmas* \_\_\_\_\_ by Dickie Valentine (1955)
- 2 *Lonely this* \_\_\_\_\_ by Mud (1974)
- 3 *When a child is* \_\_\_\_\_ by Johnny Matthis (1976)
- 4 *Do they* \_\_\_\_\_ *it's Christmas?* by Band Aid (1984)
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ *Christmas, everyone* by Shakin' Stevens (1985)
- 6 *Two* \_\_\_\_\_ *boys* by Rolf Harris (1969)
- 7 *Long haired lover from* \_\_\_\_\_ by Little Jimmy Osmond (1972)
- 8 *There's no one quite like* \_\_\_\_\_ by St Winifred's School Choir (1980)
- 9 *Green, green* \_\_\_\_\_ *of home* by Tom Jones (1966)
- 10 *I will* \_\_\_\_\_ *love you* by Whitney Houston (1992)

Which songs would you like to hear? Find one and listen to it.

Did you like it? Tell the other students about your song.

