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***listening comprehension***

1. **1.30** How do women react to Christmas, what’s the men’s responsibility and what challenges do they face?

2. **3.20** Explain all the issues surrounding the scissors and cello tape.

3. **4.28** Who are gliders?

4. **6.17** In what way is Christians’ attitude towards food different from other religions and why?

5. **8.47** What are the traditions we follow at Christmas even though we don’t like them?

6. **10.05** What is so special about Christmas day?

7. **11.15** Describe the days following Christmas day?

8. **end** What helps people move around after a big Christmas dinner?

***CAE reading and use of English*** *Part 1 – multiple choice*

The world’s weirdest Christmas traditions

## 1. Japan - All I want for Christmas is… KFC

Forget the Christmas turkey. For many Japanese, traditional Christmas dinner is Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Due to a combination of tiny Japanese ovens and a clever marketing **operation / movement/ campaign / strive** convincing locals that fried chicken is a traditional American Yuletide feast, reservations have to be made to eat at a KFC on Christmas Day.

During the run-up to Christmas, Colonel Sanders statues outside KFC’s Japanese outlets wear Santa gear. The chicken is served in special holiday packaging.

Demand is such that an online service has been created: order your Xmas Family Bucket in advance and have it delivered.

## 2. Norway - Hide your broom

Norwegians believe that Christmas Eve coincides with the arrival of evil spirits and witches. It is only logical then, that Norwegian householders hide all their brooms before they go to sleep.

After all, nothing **spoils / impair / harm / indulge** Christmas quicker than finding your broom in broken pieces at the foot of a tree, trashed by some joy-riding witch.

## 3. Caracas, Venezuela - Get your skates on

In the week leading up to Christmas, Venezuelans attend a daily church service called Misa de Aguinaldo (Early Morning Mass).

In the capital, Caracas, it is customary to travel to the church service on roller skates.

Indeed, so **global / widespread / all-embracing / comprehensive** is the practice, many roads in the capital are closed until 8am to provide Christmas worshippers with a safe passage.

## 4. Austria - Facing your Christmas demons

In Austria, St Nicholas has an evil counterpart called Krampus. He is the bad cop to St Nick’s good cop, a demon-like creature with one task: to punish bad children before Christmas.

Men dressed in devil costumes roam the streets, carrying chains and a basket for abducting especially bad children and **conveying / hauling / towing / propelling** them to hell.

It's certainly one way to keep the kids off the streets.

## 5. Catalonia, Spain - Pooping their way through Christmas

Welcome to the **bizarre / foolish / kinky / erratic** Catalan tradition of caga tió or 'defecating log'.

Locals in Catalonia create a character out of a log, drawing a face on it and giving it a hat. Then they spend a fortnight 'feeding' it fruit, nuts and sweets.

On Christmas Eve, the entire family beats the log with sticks and sings a traditional song that translates to 'if you don't crap well, i'll beat you with a stick' until the log excretes all its treats.

They also decorate their nativity scenes with small, pooping, ceramic caganers (figurines). Usually well-known characters, the figurines always have their pants around their ankles.

## 6. Sweden - Yule love this giant goat

This unusual tradition at least has a lengthy history. Its origins begin in the 11th century, with a mentioning of a 'man-sized' goat figure that accompanied Saint Nicholas. Now, it's got a lot bigger.

Cities across Sweden construct 'Yule Goats' at the beginning of advent every year, with the most famous being in Gävle, a staw structure that often reaches a **grand / solid / hefty /whopping** 40 feet.

Unfortunately, it does attract people who want to turn it into a giant bonfire, and the display has been sadly destroyed around 36 times since 1966.

## 7. Guatemala - How clean is your house?

In Guatemala, cleanliness really is next to Godliness. Locals believe that the devil and other evil spirits live in the dark, dirty corners of your home.

Therefore, they spend the week before Christmas sweeping up, collecting rubbish and then piling everything in a huge **bundle / heap / load / bunch** outside. Finally, an effigy of the devil is placed on top and the whole thing is set on fire.

It's called La Quema del Diablo, the 'Burning of the Devil'. The idea for Guatemalans is to burn all the bad from the previous year and start a new year from out of the ashes.

## 8. Ukraine - Deck the halls with… spider’s webs?

In addition to the standard tinsel, fairy lights and baubles, Ukrainians like to throw an artificial spider and web on the tree as well.  The tradition has its origins in an old tale of a poor woman who couldn't afford to decorate her tree and woke on Christmas morning to discover a spider had covered it in a glorious, sparkling web. It’s for good luck. It's not about poor housekeeping.

## 9. Portugal - Dining with deceased relatives

During consoda, the traditional Christmas feast in Portugal, families sometimes set extra places at the dining table for deceased relatives. It's thought that the practice will ensure good fortunes for the household. In some areas **crumbs / specks / shreds / traces** are left on the hearth as well. And you thought feeding all your living relatives was hard enough.

## 10. Italy - Where Santa’s little helper is an old witch

Unable to conclusively prove the existence of Santa, the Vatican decided to throw its weight behind something they'd had countless **company /relation / commerce / dealings** with: an old witch called La Befana who delivers presents to kids in Italy. The story goes that the three wise men invited the witch to accompany them to see the baby Jesus. She said she was too busy and the legend was born.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have any strange traditions in your family?

2. Do you remember the time stopped believing in Santa? How did you feel?

3. What is the biggest waste of money during Christmas?

4. What do you dislike about Christmas?

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