

# CHRISTMAS

Christmas is an annual Christian holiday that is held on December 25<sup>th</sup>. This is a day of celebration for the birth of Jesus. The word "Christmas" means "Mass of Christ," later shortened to "Christ-Mass." It is believed that Christ was not born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, this date was chosen to coincide with Pagan Roman celebrations. Christmas became a national holiday in the United States in 1870. There are many traditions and symbols that are associated with Christmas.

Santa Claus is a huge part of the Christmas celebrations. Santa is also known as St. Nicholas, Father Christmas, Grandfather Frost, and Kris Kringle. Santa is believed to bring gifts to good girls and boys on the night before Christmas (December 24<sup>th</sup>). The tradition of naughty children getting a lump of coal in their stockings comes from Italy. Santa Claus has nine reindeers, their names are: Comet, Cupid, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Donner, Blitzen, and Rudolph. Some people say that the Christmas season officially begins when Santa arrives at the end of the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade. Many people decorate their homes during this time with a Christmas tree. Decorating Christmas trees originated in Germany during the 16th century when Christians would bring decorated trees into their homes. Christmas trees were first decorated with food such as fruits. Some people even decorate their whole front yard with lights and encourage people to walk past them at night to enjoy them.

Christmas is a celebration of family and the birth of Jesus Christ.

## HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

Mon  
Dec 6  
In Class

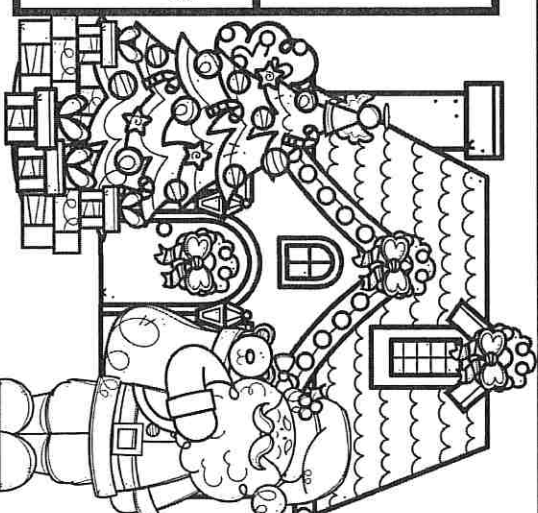
READ THE STORY 2 TIMES AND MARK ANY IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU READ.

### WHEN?

Date the holiday is celebrated.

### WHY?

Why is it celebrated on this date?



### FACTS ABOUT THE HOLIDAY

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### WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?

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# CHRISTMAS READING COMPREHENSION

READ THE PASSAGE TWO TIMES BEFORE RESPONDING BELOW. MAKE SURE TO PROVE WHERE YOU FOUND YOUR ANSWER.

COMPARE: HOW IS THIS HOLIDAY SIMILAR & DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CELEBRATIONS?

SIMILAR	DIFFERENT

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite thing about this holiday celebration?

2. What would it be like for you to celebrate Christmas?

WHAT CONNECTION CAN YOU MAKE WITH THIS HOLIDAY? (TEXT-TO-TEXT, SELF, WORLD)

MAKING CONNECTIONS

# HANUKKAH

Hanukkah (also spelled Chanukkah) is a Jewish celebration that honors a victorious battle for religious freedom. Hanukkah is also known as the Festival of Lights. Hanukkah is celebrated around the world for eight days and eight nights. The days to celebrate Hanukkah change because this holiday follows the lunar cycle. The word Hanukkah in Hebrew means "education." Rabbis and Jewish educators try to instill in their congregants and students the notion that the holiday celebrates Jewish continuity.

During the eight nights, Hanukkah is celebrated with traditional food, prayer, and lighting of the menorah. A Hanukkah menorah has nine candles, a candle for each of the nights along with a helper candle. Each night of Hanukkah, an additional candle is placed on the Menorah from right to left, and then lit from left to right. During Hanukkah, which is about family time, families eat latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiot (jelly donuts), or other foods which are fried in oil, to celebrate and commemorate the miracle of the Festival of Lights. On the last night, all the candles are lit. Children play games, sing songs, and exchange gifts.

Mon  
Dec 6  
HW

## HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

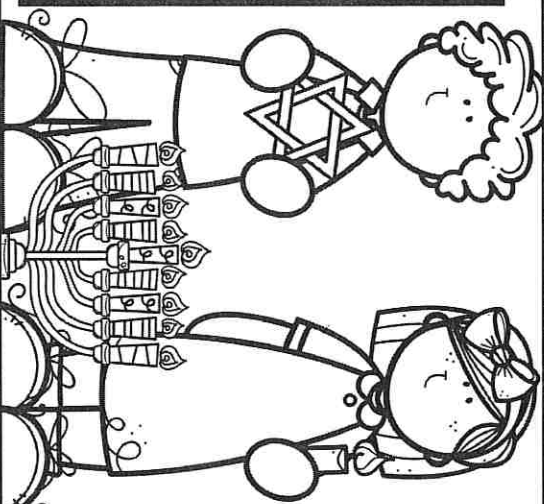
READ THE STORY 2 TIMES AND MARK ANY IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU READ.

### WHAT?

What else is Hanukkah known as?

### WHEN?

Date the holiday is celebrated.



### FACTS ABOUT THE HOLIDAY

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### WHAT IS HANUKKAH?

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# HANUKKAH READING COMPREHENSION

READ THE PASSAGE TWO TIMES BEFORE RESPONDING BELOW. MAKE SURE TO PROVE WHERE YOU FOUND YOUR ANSWER.

COMPARE: HOW IS THIS HOLIDAY SIMILAR & DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CELEBRATIONS?

SIMILAR	DIFFERENT

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite thing about this holiday celebration?  
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2. What would it be like for you to celebrate Hanukkah?  
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WHAT CONNECTION CAN YOU MAKE WITH THIS HOLIDAY? (TEXT-TO-TEXT, SELF, WORLD)

MAKING CONNECTIONS

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# LAS POSADAS

In Mexico and in many parts of Central America, people celebrate Las Posadas during the nine days prior to Christmas. This special Christmas tradition begins on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December. The word "posadas" means "inn" or "lodging." This festival celebrates and reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for shelter as they travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem during the days prior to Christ Jesus' birth.

To celebrate the festival of the posadas, people go from door to door. As part of the reenactment, they knock on doors searching for a place where Joseph and Mary could stay. As they knock on door, they sing holiday songs and carry lanterns and a nativity scene. A child is also chosen to be dressed as an angel and leads the procession. These processions can sometimes be held in churches or within the streets of the villages.

When they reach the spot where the nativity scene will be placed, they celebrate it by having a big feast. They celebrate the posadas for nine nights. An essential part of the Las Posadas party is a piñata for the children. This piñata is usually in the shape of a star. It represents the star that guided the three kings on the night Jesus was born. This holiday is a wonderful and fun tradition that reminds us of the Christmas spirit.

Tues  
Dec 7  
HW

## HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

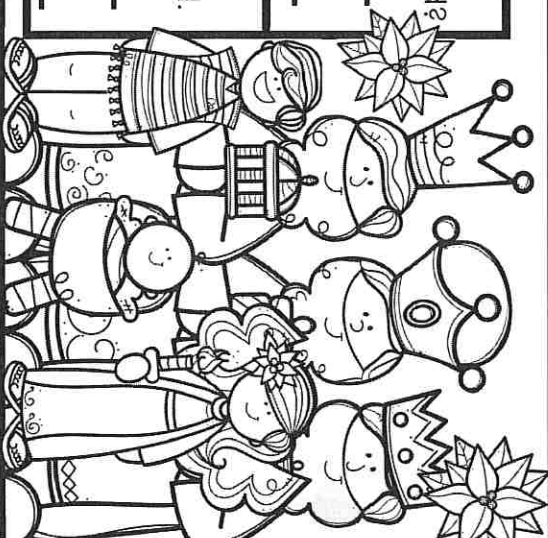
**READ THE STORY 2 TIMES AND MARK ANY IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU READ.**

### WHERE?

Where is this holiday celebrated?

### WHEN?

Date the holiday is celebrated.



### FACTS ABOUT THE HOLIDAY

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### WHAT IS LAS POSADAS?

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# LAS POSADAS READING COMPREHENSION

READ THE PASSAGE TWO TIMES BEFORE RESPONDING BELOW. MAKE SURE TO PROVE WHERE YOU FOUND YOUR ANSWER.

**COMPARE: HOW IS THIS HOLIDAY SIMILAR & DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CELEBRATIONS?**

SIMILAR	DIFFERENT

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite thing about this holiday celebration?
2. What would it be like for you to celebrate Las Posadas?

**WHAT CONNECTION CAN YOU MAKE WITH THIS HOLIDAY? (TEXT-TO-TEXT, SELF, WORLD)**

**MAKING CONNECTIONS**

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# DIWALI

India's most important holiday of the year is Diwali. It is celebrated in October or November of each year. The festival gets its name by placing the lights outside everyone's homes (Deepa) these light are clay lamps (Avali). This festival is as important to Hindus as the Christmas holiday is to Christians. Diwali originated as a harvest festival. It marks the last harvest of the year. Indians celebrate this holiday by worshipping Lakshmi along with family gatherings, glittering clay lamps, festive fireworks, strings of electric lights, bonfires, flowers, and sharing of sweets.

Diwali is a five-day Festival of Lights celebration. On the first day of Diwali, people consider it lucky to spring clean their homes and shop for gold or kitchen utensils. On the second day, people decorate their homes with clay lamps. They also create design patterns with colored powder or sand called *Rangoli*. The third day is the main day of the festival when families gather together for [*Lakshmi Puja*]. They pray to Goddess Lakshmi and then have mouth-watering feasts, and fireworks. The fourth day is the first day of the new year when friends and relatives visit one another with gifts and best wishes for the season. On the last day of Diwali, brothers visit their married sisters who welcome them with love along with a lavish meal.

*Weds  
Dec 8  
HW*

## HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

**READ THE STORY 2 TIMES AND MARK ANY IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU READ.**

**WHAT?**

What did Diwali originate as?

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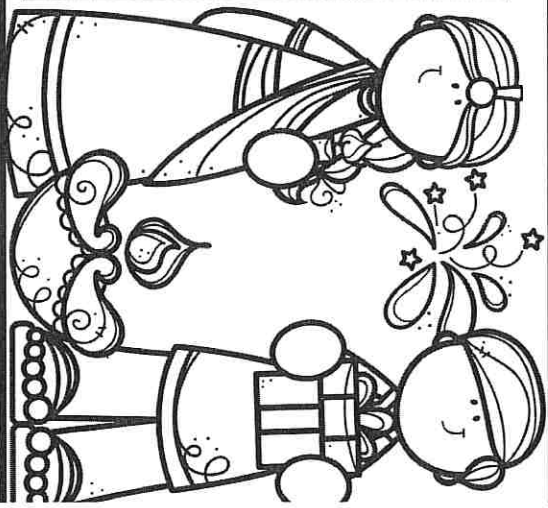
**WHEN?**

Date the holiday is celebrated.

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**FACTS ABOUT THE HOLIDAY**

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**WHAT IS DIWALI?**

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# DIWALI READING COMPREHENSION

READ THE PASSAGE TWO TIMES BEFORE RESPONDING BELOW. MAKE SURE TO PROVE WHERE YOU FOUND YOUR ANSWER.

COMPARE: HOW IS THIS HOLIDAY SIMILAR & DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CELEBRATIONS?

SIMILAR	DIFFERENT
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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite thing about this holiday celebration?  

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2. What would it be like for you to celebrate Diwali?  

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WHAT CONNECTION CAN YOU MAKE WITH THIS HOLIDAY? (TEXT-TO-TEXT, SELF, WORLD)

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

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# LA BEFANA

The legend of La Befana is traced back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. La Befana is a nice old witch lady with a big red nose and a slight hunch, dressed in a jacket of colorful patches. She flies on her broomstick every year on the night between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of January. Legend has it that on the 12<sup>th</sup> night of Christmas (January 5<sup>th</sup>) the 3 Wise Men, on their search for baby Jesus, asked "La Befana" to join them in their quest. She declined the offer but later changed her mind. She went looking for the 3 Wise Men but couldn't find them. Therefore, every year on that night she travels to every house in Italy in search of the baby to bring gifts.

That is why she carries a big bag on her back, full of sweets, which La Befana will use to fill the stockings the children have left by their chimneys. The kids who have been well-behaved in the past year will find sweets and chocolates in their stockings on the day of the Epiphany [January 6<sup>th</sup>]. Those who have not behaved well will also get a few lumps of coal in their stockings. However, everyone loves La Befana. Similar to the Santa Claus tradition, many of the children will write notes to "La Befana" and even leave some food and wine for her. After her arrival, there are many parties, and Italians will celebrate going from house to house. They celebrate their close bonds with family and friends. This is also the song many children will sing for her:

**The Befana comes by night**

**With her shoes all tattered and torn**

**She comes dressed in the Roman way**

**Long live the Befana**

## HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

Thurs  
Dec  
9 AM

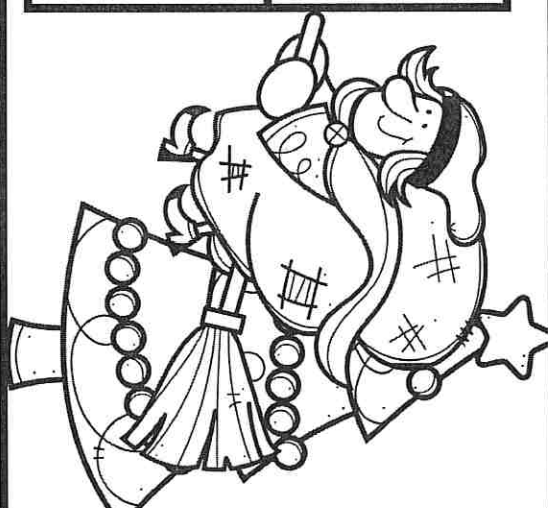
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### WHERE?

Where is this holiday celebrated?

### WHEN?

Date the holiday is celebrated.



### FACTS ABOUT THE HOLIDAY

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### WHAT IS LA BEFANA?

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# LA BEFANA READING COMPREHENSION

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COMPARE: HOW IS THIS HOLIDAY SIMILAR & DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CELEBRATIONS?

SIMILAR

DIFFERENT

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite thing about this holiday celebration?
2. What would it be like for you to celebrate La Befana?

WHAT CONNECTION CAN YOU MAKE WITH THIS HOLIDAY? (TEXT-TO-TEXT, SELF, WORLD)

MAKING  
CONNECTIONS

# CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA

Imagine a surfing Santa, and kangaroos instead of reindeers. This is how the children of Australia celebrate their Christmas. In Australia, Christmas is celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>. This celebration take place over their summer season.

Many of the same Christmas traditions that you already know about are celebrated, however, Australians celebrate Christmas with a fun Australian summer theme. Australians hang wreaths on their front doors and participate in Christmas carols on Christmas Eve. Many of the Australian Christmas carols have Australian wording. Australians also decorate their houses with "Christmas Bush," a native Australian tree with small green leaves and colored flowers. You will also see the popular poinsettia plants used as decorations.

If you are lucky enough to celebrate Christmas in Australia, be ready to celebrate it at the beach, or maybe at a campsite. You might even spy Santa surfing the waves of the Great Barrier Reef.

# HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

Friday  
Dec 18  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

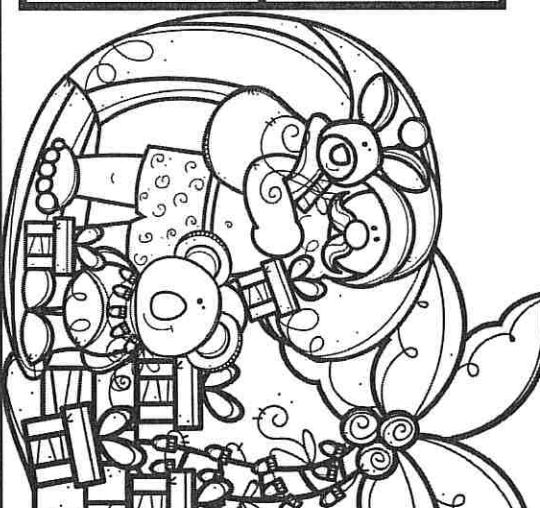
READ THE STORY 2 TIMES AND MARK ANY IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU READ.

## WHERE?

Where is this holiday celebrated?

## WHEN?

Date the holiday is celebrated.



## FACTS ABOUT THE HOLIDAY

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## WHAT IS CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA?

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# CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA READING

READ THE PASSAGE TWO TIMES BEFORE RESPONDING BELOW. MAKE SURE TO PROVE WHERE YOU FOUND YOUR ANSWER.

COMPARE: HOW IS THIS HOLIDAY SIMILAR & DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CELEBRATIONS?

SIMILAR	DIFFERENT

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite thing about this holiday celebration?  
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2. What would it be like for you to celebrate Christmas in Australia?  
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WHAT CONNECTION CAN YOU MAKE WITH THIS HOLIDAY? (TEXT-TO-TEXT, SELF, WORLD)



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