Приложение 4

**1. Presents**

**Christmas stocking**

The tradition of hanging stockings by the fireplace was originated from the story about St. Nicholas. The story comes from the 1800's, when the father of three young maidens could not afford a dowry for his daughters to be married. From his castle, St. Nicholas heard of the poor misfortune of the maidens, and secretly threw three bags of gold coins down their chimney. It is said that the gold coins landed in the girls' stockings, which were hanging in the fireplace to dry.

**Christmas presents**

According to the Bible, three Magi (wise men from the east) came to visit the newborn Jesus. These wise men brought gifts to offer to the child. Gift giving at Christmas is recognized by many as a remembrance of this event and is intended to remind believers of God's gift to them in the form of his son, Jesus Christ. Christmas presents represent generosity, love and the gift of giving.

**2. People**

**Santa Claus**

The most popular traditional character of Christmas is St. Nicholas, now better known as Santa Claus or Father Christmas. He had long been the patron saint of children. Santa Claus lives at the North Pole. On December 24th, Christmas Eve, he rides in a sleigh pulling by eight reindeer and delivers presents to children all around the world, he leaves them inside the stockings.

**People**

Christmas is a joyful religious holiday when Christians around the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. An angel appeared to shepherds and three Magi and told them that a Savior had been born to Mary in a stable in Bethlehem. Three kings gave the Child presents - gold, frankincense and myrrh.

**3. Symbols**

**Candy cane**

The origin of the candy cane dates back to the late 1800's. The candy cane is Christmas symbol. First, the colour white symbolizes the purity and sinless nature of Jesus. Next the red colour symbolizes the blood of Jesus before His death on the cross for mankind. When you look at the crook on top, it looks like a shepherd's staff. If you turn it upside down, it becomes the letter J symbolizing the first letter in Jesus' name.

**Reindeer**

Rudolph's story is a popular Christmas story. One Christmas Eve Santa Claus was having a lot of difficulty making his flight around the world because it was too foggy. When Santa went to Rudolph's house to deliver his presents he noticed the glowing red nose in the darkened bedroom. He asked Rudolph to lead the sleigh, Rudolph accepted and returned home a hero for having helped Santa Claus. Santa has eight reindeer that magically pull his sleigh through the sky.

**Wreath**

The wreath is a pagan symbol of eternity. The circular shape of the Christmas wreath represents life never ending circle and the interconnection of all things. The pagans believed the wreaths would protect them from evil spirits and bring good luck.

**4. Meal**

**Christmas pudding**

The history of pudding has its roots in the medieval times. It should be made on the 25th Sunday after Trinity, and prepared with 13 ingredients to represent Christ and the 12 apostles, every family member stirs it in turn from east to west to honor the Magi and their supposed journey in that direction. There is a tradition to put coin in a Christmas pudding, it was a silver sixpence. People believed that the person who found the coin in his portion of pudding would have good fortune throughout the New Year.

**Mince pie**

Mince Pies, were originally filled with meat, such as lamb, rather than a dried fruit mix as they are today. They were also first made in an oval shape to represent the manger that Jesus slept in as a baby, with the top representing his swaddling clothes. A custom from the middle ages says that if you eat a mince pie on every day from Christmas to Twelfth Night (6th January) you will have happiness for the next 12 months!

**5. Plants**

**Holly**

People believed that holly had magical powers, holly was often placed over the doors of homes to drive evil away. Greenery was also brought indoors to freshen the air and brighten the mood during the long, dreary winter. Also, legend said that holly sprang from the footsteps of Christ as he walked the earth. The pointed leaves were said to represent the crown of thorns Christ wore while on the cross and the red berries symbolized the blood he shed.

**Christmas tree**

The tradition of putting up and decorating Christmas trees started in Germany. It is believed that Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, was walking through a forest one Christmas night, he noticed the stars glittering through the branches of fir trees. This gave him the idea of putting up a candlelit Christmas tree in his home. German soldiers brought this tradition to the US . The Christmas tree represents hope and the desire for a good harvest.

**Mistletoe**

Two hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Druids used mistletoe to celebrate the coming of winter. They used it to decorate their homes. Scandinavians thought of mistletoe as a plant of peace and harmony. They associated mistletoe with their goddess of love, Frigga. The custom of kissing under the mistletoe probably derived from this belief.