

# Christmas Symbols

**1** Before you read Work with a partner.

- Do you have anything 'Christmassy' in your house?

**2** Reading Read the following text, and fill in the spaces using a word from the box below.

We are all familiar with many of the symbols of Christmas. But how much do you know about their origins?



**The Christmas Tree**

The tradition of a decorated Christmas tree goes back to the sixteenth century. In German towns, different kinds of fruit and <sup>1</sup>..... were hung on trees for children to take on Christmas Day. This tradition then spread from central Europe to the USA in the nineteenth century. In the UK, Christmas trees became popular after a magazine published a <sup>2</sup>..... of Queen Victoria's decorated tree.

**Christmas Cards**

Christmas cards were first sent in the UK in the nineteenth century. Originally, they showed pictures of spring, and not winter or religious scenes. More than 700 million cards are sent in the UK every year. However, this number is now decreasing because the growth of <sup>3</sup>..... and Internet 'E-Cards'.



**Santa Claus**

Santa has perhaps one of the best-known faces in the world! Originally, his name was 'Nicholas', and he was a Bishop in fourth-century Turkey. He was famous for his kindness. His popularity spread from the Netherlands to the United States in the seventeenth century. The modern 'Santa' with red clothes and a white beard was created by an American <sup>4</sup>..... in 1863.

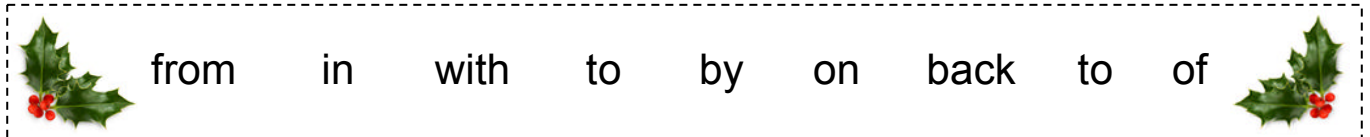


Choose From

- email
- cartoonist
- candies
- drawing

**3** According to the text, are these sentences true or false? Correct the false ones.

1. Hanging things on Christmas trees is a modern tradition.
2. Fewer people in the UK are sending Christmas cards than before.
3. Bishop Nicholas always wore red clothes.

**4** Language Check Choose the correct preposition for each space.

1. The tradition goes ..... the sixteenth century.
2. Decorations were hung ..... trees.
3. The tradition spread ..... central Europe ..... the USA.
4. Santa has one ..... the best-known faces ..... the world.
5. The modern Santa ..... red clothes was created ..... an American cartoonist.

**5** Discussion Work in small groups.

- Do you know the origin of any other Christmas traditions?
- Does anything unique happen in your country at Christmas?
- Do you think that Christmas is too commercial?
- Is Christmas the most important celebration in your country?
- Your questions!

