



A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

Citizenship

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Nowadays, Christmas is a time when the shops are full of people buying presents, Christmas lights hang in the streets, and people have parties where they eat lots of food. However, lots of the Christmas traditions we take for granted originated in Victorian times (1837-1902) when the Industrial Revolution made people richer than before. One famous author, Charles Dickens, wrote a short novel called 'A Christmas Carol', where a mean businessman is shown his life by three different ghosts and convinced to change his ways and become kind and generous. In real life, the factories allowed people to have two days of holiday for Christmas, which led to the creation of Boxing Day (26th December) as it was the day working people opened boxes containing Christmas gifts of money from their employers. The invention of the postal service meant that people could send Christmas cards for the first time, and Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, introduced the Christmas tree to England from Germany. Christmas crackers were invented in 1846 and originally contained sweets – but the inventor added a joke, toys, a paper hat, and an explosion to make more people want to buy them!



Match the words with a synonym:

presents

to convince

originated

employer

to take for granted

creation

to accept without question

started

to persuade

invention

boss

gifts

Read the text again and answer the questions:

1 What do people do at Christmastime nowadays?

2 Who was Charles Dickens?

3 When is Boxing Day?

4 What do Christmas crackers usually contain?

5 Why did the inventor of Christmas crackers change what was inside?

6 How did the Industrial Revolution affect people's Christmas celebrations?



Discuss with a friend, teacher, or your class

Christmas is a Christian festival. Do you think it's okay for other people to celebrate it?

Do you know any other religious festivals that take place in winter?

There is a story that Santa Claus only gives presents to good children. How does Santa Claus decide who is good and who is bad? Is this fair?



Challenge!

Find out about the history of a festival tradition from your country and make a poster or explain it to your class.

