ACTIVITY 1 · PAST SIMPLE · A1-A2

Lucía's Last December

Alone, then in pairs · 20 minutes · Answers on page 7

Regular verbs add **-ed**: *finish* → *finished*. Irregular verbs change: *go* → *went*, *buy* → *bought*. Questions and negatives use **did** + the base verb: *Did you go? I didn't go.*

A Choose a verb from the box. Write it in the past simple.

VERB BOX

open · eat · go · cook · put · buy · be (not) · make · come · look · bake · finish

Last December was busy for Lucía. On December 1, she [1] _____ the lights up on her balcony, and her son [2] _____ a paper star for the tree. On the 20th, she [3] _____ work early and [4] _____ to the Christmas market with her friend Pilar. They [5] _____ hot chocolate and [6] _____ at the lights for two hours. On Christmas Eve, the whole family [7] _____ to her apartment. Her mother [8] _____ fish, and Lucía [9] _____ a cake. It [10] _____ perfect, but everybody [11] _____ it. In the morning, the children [12] _____ their presents.

B Your last December. Finish the sentences.

Last December, I went to … _____

I bought … for … _____

On December 24, I … _____

The best moment was when … _____

I didn't … _____

C In pairs: ask and tick. Answer *Yes, I did* or *No, I didn't*.

Did you send any cards?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Did you buy a present online?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Did you go to a Christmas market?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Did you cook a big dinner?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Did you eat too much?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Did you travel to see family?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Did you work between Christmas and New Year?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Did you stay up past midnight on December 31?	☐ Yes	☐ No

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ACTIVITY 2 · FUTURE FORMS · A2-B1

The Week Between Christmas and New Year

Alone, then in pairs · 20 minutes · Answers on page 7

Booked, with a time or a ticket
present continuous
He's seeing the dentist at 11.

Plan, an idea you decided before
be going to
He's going to clean the apartment.

Decision, made right now
will
I'll take the bus, then.

A This is Leo's planner. Write one sentence for each day.

DAY	LEO'S NOTE	YOUR SENTENCE
Sat 26	PLAN Idea: start running again	*He's going to start running again on Saturday.*
Sun 27	BOOKED Train to Kraków, 8:15 (ticket bought)	
Mon 28	BOOKED Dentist, 11:00	
Tue 29	PLAN Idea: clean the apartment, finally!	
Wed 30	BOOKED Dinner with Mia, 20:00 (table booked)	
Thu 31	PLAN Idea: make soup for the party	

B Plans change. Decide what to do now with *will*.

1. **It's snowing, and the train to Kraków is canceled.**
   I'll take the bus, then.
2. **Mia calls on the 30th. She's ill and can't come to dinner.**
3. **Your sister forgot to buy anything to drink for New Year's Eve.**
4. **The dentist calls on the 28th. The appointment is at 15:00 now, not 11:00.**

C Your week. Write two things that are booked and two plans.

In pairs. Ask: *What are you doing on the 31st? Are you going to …?* Find one plan you both have.

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ACTIVITY 3 · COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES · A2-B1

Three Ways to Spend Christmas

Alone, then in pairs · 20 minutes · Answers on page 7

Short adjectives add **-er / -est**: *cheap, cheaper, the cheapest*. Long ones use **more / the most**: *more expensive*. Watch out: *good, better, the best · bad, worse, the worst · far, farther, the farthest*.

	Home in the city	A mountain cabin	A beach hotel
Cost for four people	€400	€1,400	€2,600
Travel time	none	3 hours by car	11 hours by plane
Temperature	4°C	-8°C	29°C
Cooking	you cook everything	you cook some meals	no cooking
Wi-Fi	good	bad	very good
People around you	12 relatives	your family only	300 guests

A Compare two options. Write one sentence.

1 the cabin / home (expensive) *The cabin is more expensive than staying at home.*

2 home / the hotel (cheap) _____

3 the hotel / the cabin (far) _____

4 the cabin / home (cold) _____

5 the hotel / home (busy) _____

6 the cabin / the hotel (Wi-Fi, bad) _____

B Which option is the …? Write one sentence.

7 expensive *The beach hotel is the most expensive.*

8 cold _____

9 hot _____

10 easy to get to _____

11 far _____

C Rank these from 1 (the best part of December) to 6. Then compare with a partner.

☐ a Christmas market ☐ a quiet evening at home ☐ the office party

☐ the big family dinner ☐ the first snow ☐ December 31 at midnight

For me, the first snow is better than the office party. The best part is …

ACTIVITY 4 · MODAL VERBS · B1-B2

Dear Holly: A Holiday Problem Page

Alone or in pairs · 25 minutes · Answers on page 7

should / ought to: good advice. **must**: a strong rule or strong advice. **have to**: it is necessary. **mustn't**: don't do it! **don't have to**: it isn't necessary, you can choose. No *to* after must and should: *You must go.*

Dear Holly,

Every December I spend too much. Last year I put €900 on my credit card and paid it back in April. This year I want to be careful, but my family expects big presents. What should I do?

Marek

Dear Holly,

My husband's parents are staying with us for a whole week over Christmas. They're lovely, but our apartment is small and I work from home until the 23rd. How can I survive?

Ana

Dear Holly,

Our team is doing Secret Santa with a €20 limit, and I picked my boss. I don't know her well. Do I have to buy something serious, or is a funny gift OK?

Daniel

A You are Holly. Answer one letter in four sentences. Use three modals from the box.

MODALS

should · shouldn't · ought to · must · have to · don't have to · could · might want to

Dear _____ ,

B Circle *mustn't* or *don't have to*.

1. It's Secret Santa, so you (**mustn't / don't have to**) buy a present for everybody. You buy one.
2. The limit is €20. You (**mustn't / don't have to**) spend €60 on one present.
3. The cake is a surprise. You (**mustn't / don't have to**) tell Grandma about it.
4. Dinner is at my parents' house this year, so we (**mustn't / don't have to**) cook.
5. The office is closed on the 24th, so I (**mustn't / don't have to**) go to work.
6. The kids are asleep. You (**mustn't / don't have to**) make any noise with the presents.

In pairs. Swap your answers to the letters. Whose advice is more useful, and why?

ACTIVITY 5 · CONDITIONALS · B2-C1

The Christmas Eve That Went Wrong

Alone, then in pairs · 25 minutes · Answers on page 7

> Tom and Elena hosted Christmas Eve dinner for ten people. Tom forgot to buy the fish on the 23rd, so he went to the market on the morning of the 24th. The line was an hour long, so he came home late. To save time, Elena turned the oven up to the maximum, and the potatoes burned. The smoke alarm went off and woke the baby. In the end, they ordered pizza for everybody. Now pizza on Christmas Eve is their family tradition.

Third conditional, an unreal past: *If + had + past participle, would have + past participle.* **Second conditional**, an unreal present or future: *If + past simple, would + verb.* No *would* in the if part.

A Finish the chain. Each result is the next condition.

1. **If Tom hadn't forgotten the fish,**
   he wouldn't have gone to the market on the 24th.
2. **If the line hadn't been so long,**
3. **If he had come home on time,**
4. **If Elena hadn't turned the oven up,**
5. **If the potatoes hadn't burned,**
6. **If the smoke alarm hadn't gone off,**

B Answer in a full sentence: *If my guests arrived early, I'd …*

7. **What would you do if your guests arrived two hours early?**
8. **What would you do if a relative gave you a present you really didn't like?**
9. **What would you do if you could skip the big family dinner this year and nobody would mind?**
10. **What would you do if the turkey was still frozen at 10 a.m. on December 24?**

C C1: a past cause with a result now. Write two mixed conditionals.

If the potatoes hadn't burned, pizza wouldn't be their tradition now.

ACTIVITY 6 · HOLIDAY CARD GRAMMAR · B1-B2

Fix the Card

Alone or in pairs · 15 minutes · Answers on page 7

A Each message has one mistake. Underline it and write the message again, correctly.

1 Congratulations with Christmas, dear Olga!

2 Best wishes from the Smith's!

3 See you in Christmas, I hope!

4 Thanks for the card! Same for you!

5 I hope you have a wonderful holidays.

6 All the best for the 2027!

7 Our office is closed in December 25.

8 Looking forward to see you in January.

B Write a card to a colleague in three lines. Use two phrases from the box.

PHRASES FOR HOLIDAY CARDS

Wishing you a merry Christmas · Season's greetings · Have a restful break · All the best for 2027 · Looking forward to working with you in the new year · Happy holidays

In pairs. Swap cards and check your partner's grammar with the answers on page 7.

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ANSWER KEY

Check Your Answers

PAGE 1 · A

1 put, 2 made, 3 finished, 4 went, 5 bought, 6 looked, 7 came, 8 cooked, 9 baked, 10 wasn't, 11 ate, 12 opened

B and C: your own answers.

PAGE 2 · A AND B

1. He's going to start running again on Saturday.
2. He's taking the 8:15 train to Kraków on Sunday.
3. He's seeing the dentist at 11:00 on Monday.
4. He's going to clean the apartment on Tuesday.
5. He's having dinner with Mia at 8 p.m. on Wednesday.
6. He's going to make soup for the party on Thursday.

Sample answers: 2 I'll stay at home and order food. 3 I'll go to the shop now. 4 I'll go in the afternoon, then.

PAGE 3 · A AND B

1. The cabin is more expensive than staying at home.
2. Home is cheaper than the hotel.
3. The hotel is farther than the cabin.
4. The cabin is colder than home.
5. The hotel is busier than home.
6. The Wi-Fi in the cabin is worse than in the hotel.
7. The beach hotel is the most expensive.
8. The mountain cabin is the coldest.
9. The beach hotel is the hottest.
10. Home is the easiest to get to.
11. The beach hotel is the farthest.

Further and the furthest are also correct in 3 and 11.

PAGE 4 · B

1 don't have to, 2 mustn't, 3 mustn't, 4 don't have to, 5 don't have to, 6 mustn't

A: your own answer. Check: no *to* after should or must.

PAGE 5 · A

1. If Tom hadn't forgotten the fish, he wouldn't have gone to the market on the 24th.
2. If the line hadn't been so long, he wouldn't have come home late.
3. If he had come home on time, Elena wouldn't have turned the oven up.
4. If Elena hadn't turned the oven up, the potatoes wouldn't have burned.
5. If the potatoes hadn't burned, the smoke alarm wouldn't have gone off.
6. If the smoke alarm hadn't gone off, it wouldn't have woken the baby.

B and C: your own answers. Check the form: if + past perfect, would have + past participle.

PAGE 6 · A

1. **Merry Christmas, dear Olga!** English doesn't use congratulations for holidays.
2. **Best wishes from the Smiths!** A family name in the plural has no apostrophe.
3. **See you at Christmas, I hope!** At Christmas for the season, on Christmas Day for the day.
4. **Thanks for the card! Same to you!** Same to you and You too answer a wish.
5. **I hope you have wonderful holidays.** Holidays is plural, so no a. (Or: a wonderful holiday.)
6. **All the best for 2027!** No the before a year.
7. **Our office is closed on December 25.** On for dates and days, in for months and years.
8. **Looking forward to seeing you in January.** Look forward to + -ing.