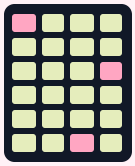
ACTIVITY 1 · A1-A2 · 15 min · pairs or groups

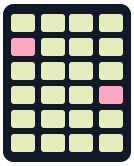
Weird Advent Calendars

An advent calendar has 24 small doors, one for each day from December 1 to 24. Today they are not only chocolate.

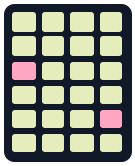
1 Read about the six calendars. Which ones would you like? Tick two.



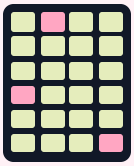
The Coffee Calendar
Behind each door: a small bag of coffee from a different country
$45



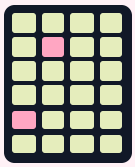
The Noodle Calendar
Behind each door: a pack of instant noodles
$30



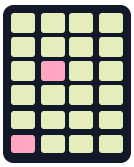
The Dog Calendar
Behind each door: a treat for your dog
$20



The Candle Calendar
Behind each door: a tiny candle with a different smell
$38



The Science Calendar
Behind each door: a small experiment for the kitchen table
$35



The Sock Calendar
Behind each door: one sock. After 24 days, you have 12 pairs!
$28

2 Talk with your partner and agree. Then write the calendar and one reason.

WE CHOOSE	CALENDAR	WHY?
The funniest calendar		
The best gift for a friend		
The one I'd buy for myself		
A waste of money		

GIVE YOUR OPINION
I think the … calendar is funny.
For me, the best one is …

AGREE
I agree.
Me too.
You're right.

DISAGREE POLITELY
Maybe, but …
I'm not sure.
I see, but I think …

SAY WHY
It's cheap / expensive.
It's useful.
My friend loves …

3 Invent your own calendar. Then tell the class about it.

Our calendar is called _____.

Behind each door there is _____.

It costs _____. It is perfect for _____ because _____.

Free for classroom use. Share the link, not the file: esllaboratory.com

ACTIVITY 2 · A2-B1 · 10 min · two teams

Christmas Food Taboo

Sixteen Christmas dishes from Europe and the Americas, plus four empty cards for dishes from home.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Make two teams and cut out the cards.
2. Take a card. Describe the dish to your team. Don't say the dish or the three words.
3. Your team has one minute to guess as many dishes as they can. A player from the other team watches your card.
4. Fill in the four empty cards with dishes from your country.

Useful: It's a kind of … · It's made with … · You eat it on … · It tastes sweet / salty · People in … love it.

roast turkey UK, USA DON'T SAY × bird × chicken × oven	**mince pies** UK DON'T SAY × fruit × small × cake	**Christmas pudding** UK DON'T SAY × cake × fire × dark	**eggnog** USA, Canada DON'T SAY × egg × milk × drink
cranberry sauce USA, UK DON'T SAY × red × sauce × turkey	**candy cane** everywhere DON'T SAY × sweet × red × stick	**roasted chestnuts** Europe DON'T SAY × nut × street × hot	**panettone** Italy DON'T SAY × Italian × bread × cake
stollen Germany DON'T SAY × German × bread × sugar	**bûche de Noël** France DON'T SAY × French × chocolate × cake	**turrón** Spain DON'T SAY × Spanish × almonds × sweet	**tamales** Mexico DON'T SAY × Mexican × corn × leaf
bacalhau Portugal DON'T SAY × Portuguese × fish × salt	**rabanadas** Portugal, Brazil DON'T SAY × bread × egg × fried	**ponche navideño** Mexico DON'T SAY × hot × fruit × drink	**pierogi** Poland DON'T SAY × Polish × dumplings × potato
Your dish: DON'T SAY	**Your dish:** DON'T SAY	**Your dish:** DON'T SAY	**Your dish:** DON'T SAY

ACTIVITY 3 · A2-B1 · 20 min · pairs

The Gift Budget

Five people, one budget. Every gift needs a reason that your partner agrees with.

1 You and your partner have **$100** for five presents. Look at the gift shop.

THE GIFT SHOP			
$8 a scented candle	**$6** warm socks	**$25** a board game	**$18** a cookbook
$45 wireless earbuds	**$10** a funny mug	**$15** a house plant	**$20** a cinema gift card
$12 a box of chocolates	**$14** a phone case	**$22** a wool scarf	**$16** a 1,000-piece puzzle

2 Agree on one gift for each person and say why. You can buy the same thing twice. Don't spend more than $100.

FOR	GIFT	PRICE	WHY? USE A WORD FROM THE BOX.
your boss		$	
your neighbor		$	
your teenage nephew		$	
your best friend		$	
you!		$	
Total		$	We have $_____ left.

WORDS FOR GIFTS

useful · practical · personal · cozy · fun · safe · boring · generous · cheap · thoughtful

USEFUL

- Let's get … for …
- How about …?
- That's too expensive.
- It's a safe choice.
- We have … dollars left.

3 Write a gift tag for two of your presents.

To: _____
I chose this for you because
From: _____

To: _____
I chose this for you because
From: _____

4 Compare with another pair. Which present is the most thoughtful? Which is the safest?

ACTIVITY 4 · A2-B1 · 15 min · groups of three

Awkward Questions at the Family Table

A role play about polite answers to nosy questions. It is a game: nobody talks about their real family.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Work in threes. One student is a relative and takes a relative card. The other two are guests and use the guest card.
2. The relative asks a question. A guest answers politely, without really answering it, and changes the subject.
3. Guests get a point for every polite escape. The relative gets a point for every real answer. After four questions, change roles.

Aunt Carmen

She notices everything.

1. So, are you seeing anybody special?
2. When are you getting married?
3. Is that a new haircut? Interesting...
4. Why didn't you bring dessert this year?

Uncle Frank

He gives advice nobody asked for.

1. Are you still at that little company?
2. When are you going to buy your own place?
3. Why do you work so late every day?
4. Still doing that English course? Say something in English!

Cousin Mia

She always needs a favor.

1. Why don't you visit more often?
2. Did you see my photos? Why didn't you like them?
3. Can I borrow your car this weekend?
4. Can you help me move apartments on January 2?

The guests

Be polite. Don't answer the question!

SAY NO POLITELY

I'd rather not talk about that tonight.
Let's leave that for another day.

GIVE A SHORT ANSWER

Not yet, but thanks for asking!
We'll see!

CHANGE THE SUBJECT

That reminds me, did you try the dessert?
Anyway, how's your new garden?

MAKE A JOKE

Ask me again next year!
That's top secret!

PLAYER	POLITE ESCAPES	REAL ANSWERS

+ Write one more nosy question that relatives ask in your country. Then try it on your group.

ACTIVITY 5 B1-B2 15 min · pairs

Guess the Country

Ten real Christmas and winter traditions. Some sound invented, but all of them are true.

1 **Read a card to your partner. Your partner guesses the country from the box. Then swap.**

Austria · Catalonia, Spain · Colombia · Finland · Iceland · Italy · Japan · Sweden · the Czech Republic · the Philippines

1 Every December, a town builds a giant goat out of straw. In many years, it has burned down before Christmas.

COUNTRY: _____

2 On Christmas Eve, people give each other books, and then they spend the night reading them.

COUNTRY: _____

3 The Christmas season starts in September. You can hear Christmas songs in shops for four months.

COUNTRY: _____

4 Many families buy a live fish a few days before Christmas and keep it in the bathtub.

COUNTRY: _____

5 Many families go to the sauna on Christmas Eve before dinner.

COUNTRY: _____

6 On the night of January 5, an old woman on a broomstick brings sweets to good children and coal to naughty ones.

COUNTRY: _____

7 On December 5, people dressed as a scary creature with horns walk through the streets.

COUNTRY: _____

8 Children feed a wooden log with a face for two weeks. On Christmas, they hit it with sticks, and it "gives" them sweets.

COUNTRY: _____

9 On the night of December 7, people put candles and paper lanterns in their windows and on the streets.

COUNTRY: _____

10 Christmas Eve is a romantic night. Couples go out for a special dinner, a bit like Valentine's Day.

COUNTRY: _____

11 A tradition from my country:

_____

_____

COUNTRY: _____

12 A tradition from my country:

_____

_____

COUNTRY: _____

2 **Write a tradition from your country on cards 11 and 12, but don't write the country. Can the class guess it?**

Answers 1 Sweden · 2 Iceland · 3 the Philippines · 4 the Czech Republic · 5 Finland · 6 Italy · 7 Austria · 8 Catalonia, Spain · 9 Colombia · 10 Japan

ACTIVITY 6 · B1-B2 · 20 min · two teams

The Regifting Debate

Regifting means giving a present you got to another person. Some people call it recycling. Others call it rude.

THE QUESTION

Is it OK to give away a present you received?

1 **Make two teams. Team A is for regifting and Team B is against it. Read your arguments and add one of your own.**

Team A: For

1. A gift is meant to be used. If I never use it, regifting is just recycling.
2. It saves time and money in the busiest month of the year.
3. The new owner might love it. Now two people are happy.
4. Keeping things you will never use wastes space in your home.

OUR OWN ARGUMENT:

Team B: Against

1. A gift was chosen for you. Giving it away says it didn't matter.
2. You can get caught, and that's very embarrassing.
3. A regift isn't personal. People can usually tell.
4. It's kinder to say thank you and give it to charity.

OUR OWN ARGUMENT:

2 **Debate in three rounds: one minute each to open, two minutes each to answer back, thirty seconds each to finish.**

OPEN	ANSWER BACK	INTERRUPT POLITELY	FINISH
In our opinion, ... Our first point is ...	That's true, but ... I see your point. However, ...	Sorry, can I just say ...? Can I come in here?	To sum up, ... That's why we believe ...

3 **Now forget your team. What would you really do? Discuss each case and write your decision.**

Your colleague gave you a scented candle last year. This year, you are her Secret Santa.

Your aunt knitted you a bright orange scarf. Your best friend loves orange.

You won a coffee machine in the office raffle. You already have one.

4 **As a class, agree on three rules for regifting. Start each one with *Always* or *Never*.**

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____