**МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ НОВГОРОДСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ**

Областное автономное профессиональное образовательное учреждение «Старорусский агротехнический колледж»

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Исследовательская работа по английскому языку.

***Тема: «Рождество в Великобритании: обычаи и традиции»***

Выполнили: Самсонова Татьяна и

Шевера Никита – студенты I курса,

специальность 38.02.04.«Коммерция»

Руководитель: Андреева С.С. –

преподаватель английского языка

г. Старая Русса

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# Introduction

We have been studying English from the 2nd form. We study it with great pleasure. We’d like to learn more about Great Britain, its customs and traditions, about cultural and social life of the British people. We can tell confidently that the educational complex has not given an exact, bright picture of cultural and social life of the United Kingdom. We know when and how we celebrate Christmas in our country; and we have become interested how the British people celebrate Christmas, what customs and traditions connected with this holiday there are. We have decided to find more information on this theme. Besides we think that our work will help other pupils to prepare for examinations on the English language, it will help to extend their knowledge on this theme.

Before starting the work on this problem we spent a questionnaire with the students (см. приложение). The results of the questionnaire show that very few students know about Christmas, its history, customs and traditions.

**The purpose:**

The basic purpose of the scientific-practical work is the creation of the file of materials for students on the theme “Christmas in Great Britain: customs and traditions” which can be used in different fields of activity and exactly in preparation to examinations on the English language, and to find and develop a material about customs and traditions which are connected with Christmas celebration.

Proceeding from this purpose we have formulated ourselves such **tasks:**

1. To carry out questioning among students on revealing interest on a problem of scientific-practical work.
2. To collect, observe, search, systematize and describe all found material which will be interesting to students, which will expand their horizon (mental outlook), and will raise interest of students to studying of the English language.
3. To create a work, that can help students to become well-prepared to exams.

The basic **methods**:

1. Investigating.
2. Searching.
3. Selective.
4. Systematizing.

## The birth of Jesus Christ (the history of Christmas).

On the 25th of December people in many countries celebrate Christmas. And what is Christmas? The word “Christmas” comes from the words “Christ’s Mass” that is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. This holiday means the beginning of the New Year and the new life. For many people it is the most important festival of the year. It is time of love and happiness. On this day people celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Holy Bible contains two accounts which describe the events surrounding Jesus’ birth – the Gospel of Matthew, namely Matthew 1:18, and the Gospel of Luke, specifically Luke 1:26 and 2:40. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. His heavenly Father was Holy Spirit and his earthy parents were Mary and Joseph. The birth took place in a stable – the place, where animals lived. It was the only place Mary and Joseph could find when they came to Bethlehem. When Jesus was born Mary “wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn” (KJV). After the Baby was born the angel told Mary to name Him Jesus. All of sudden many more angels appeared and sang a beautiful song to God. Shepherds from the fields surrounding Bethlehem were told of the birth by angels, and they were the first to see the Child. In the Bible it is also said that three wise men, they were kings, visited the infant Jesus in the stable. Their names were Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar. In a land far away from Judea they saw a new star in the sky. They understood a new star meant someone special was born. They decided to follow the star and to find the Baby. They wanted to give Him wonderful gifts and to worship Him. Their trip was long. The wise men went their way, and the star which they had seen in the east went on before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was. They came into the cave and saw the Baby and His Mother – Mary. How happy they were! The wise men fell down and worshiped Him. They gave the Child presents – gold, frankincense and myrrh. The tradition of giving each other presents on Christmas Day appeared in those old days.

## 3. Christmas celebration in Great Britain.

## 3.1. Christmas decorations.

For most British families Christmas is the most important festival of the year. This is the day when many people are travelling home to be with their families on Christmas Day. If you try to catch a train on the 24th of December you may have difficulty in finding a seat.

There are a lot of traditions connected with Christmas. In general, people get prepared for this holiday very carefully. They decorate their houses in the traditional way. Christmas trees are set up in houses, in the streets and churches. They are always decorated with fairy lights, angels and small toys. In addition, little packets with nuts, candies and special biscuits are hung on the tree. The Germans are believed to be the first to use the Christmas tree in their celebrations and Martin Luther was the first to place a star on the top of the tree. This star represents the star which appeared over the stable in which Christ was born. From Germany the custom was introduced to Britain while Queen Victoria ruled the country. It happened in the 19th century. In 1832 the future Queen Victoria wrote about her delight to have a Christmas tree, hung with lights, ornaments and presents placed round it. After her marriage to her German cousin Prince Albert, by 1841 the custom became more widespread throughout Britain. An image of the British royal family with their Christmas tree at Windsor Castle created a sensation when it was published in the Illustrated News in 1848.

Besides the Christmas tree, holly and mistletoe are used to decorate the house. Branches of holly are put up behind pictures and mistletoe is hung over doors, so the young people have a chance to kiss the girls under it, plucking each time a red berry from the mistletoe. It is said that the girl who was not kissed under it at Christmas would not get married that year.

Every year a beautiful Christmas tree stands on Trafalgar Square. People of Norway send a Christmas tree to people of Great Britain every year. This is an old tradition. Norwegian people do it in thanks for Britain’s support during the Second World War. The tree is cut down at the end of November. It must be 50-60 years old. It comes to Britain by the sea and already decorated in Norwegian style and with 500 lights.

There is always a nice skating rink in the centre of the capital. A lot of people come to enjoy the Christmas decorations and to skate.

We must say that the practice to decorate house at Christmas has a long history. In the 15th century it was recorded that in London it was the custom at Christmas for every house and all the parish churches to be “decked with holm, ivy, bays and whatsoever the season of the year afforded to be green”. The heart-shaped leaves of ivy must symbolize the coming to earth of Jesus, while holly was seen as protection against pagans and witches, its thorns and red berries held to represent the Crown of Thorns worn by Jesus at the crucifixion and the blood he shed.

The traditional colors of Christmas are green and red. White, silver and gold are also popular. Red symbolizes the blood of Jesus, which was shed in his crucifixion, while green symbolizes eternal life, and in particular the evergreen tree, which does not lose its leaves in winter.

The outside of houses may be decorated with lights and sometimes with illuminated sleighs, snowmen and other Christmas figures. Other traditional decorations include bells, candles, candy canes, stockings, wreaths and angels. Candles displayed in each window mean that Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the ultimate light of the world.

Different types of decorations developed across the Christian world, dependent on local tradition and available resources. The first commercially produced decorations appeared in Germany in the 1869s, inspired by paper chains made by children.

## 3.2. Gift giving.

The following tradition connected with Christmas is gift giving. This tradition is based on the tradition associated with St. Nicholas, and the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh which were given to the Baby Jesus by the wise men.

So, before Christmas all the departments stores and shops are crowded, everybody is choosing a present. In general, people get prepared for this holiday very carefully. Family members wrap up their gifts and leave them at the bottom of the Christmas tree to be found on Christmas morning.

Children believe that Santa Claus gives presents to them. On the eve of Christmas children hang their stockings, so that Santa Claus could put presents into them: oranges, sweets, nuts and if the child didn’t behave properly Santa Claus can put there a piece of coal as punishment.

Santa Claus got his name from a man known as Saint Nicholas. Nicholas was Bishop of Myra, in modern day Turkey, during the 4th century. Among other saintly attributes, he was noted for the care of children, generosity, and the giving of gifts. He gave his wealth to the poor and often to children. His feast on December 6 was celebrated in many countries with the giving of gifts. By the 13th century, Saint Nicholas was well-known in the Netherlands, and the practice of gift-giving in his name spread to other parts of central and southern Europe. At the Reformation in 16th – 17th century Europe, many Protestants changed the gift bringer to the Christ Child or Christkindl, corrupted in English to Kris Kringle, and the date of giving gifts changed from December 6 to Christmas Eve.

The modern popular image of Santa Claus, however, was created in the USA, and particular in New York. Following the American Revolutionary War, some of the inhabitants of New York City sought out symbols of the city’s non-English past. New York had originally been established as the Dutch colonial town of New Amsterdam and the Dutch Sinterklaas tradition was reinvented as Saint Nicholas. In 1809 the New York Historical Society convened and retroactively named Sancte Claus the patron saint of Nieuw Amsterdam, the Dutch name for New York City. In 1863 the artist named Nast drew a new image of “Santa Claus”. By the 1880s, Nast’s Santa had evolved into the robed, fur clad, form we now recognize, perhaps based on the English figure of Father Christmas.

Father Christmas, a jolly, well nourished, bearded man who typified the spirit of good cheer at Christmas, predates the Santa Claus character. He is first recorded in early 17th century England, but was associated with holiday merrymaking and drunkenness rather than the bringing of gifts. In Victorian Britain his image was remade to match that of Santa.

## 3.3. Christmas carols.

Carol singing is an essential part of Christmas. No church or school is without its carol service. Carols may be traditional or with some variations that express different feelings. Every year, in the weeks before Christmas, people in Britain wait for the knock on the door followed by a quick bellow of ***Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.*** Of course, sometimes it is sung very well, other times you open the door and children look at you hopefully after singing just two lines of a well known Christmas carol. To enforce the work ethic in children, many people stand and insist they get at least one whole carol before parting with money. This can be a sacrifice if the kids aren’t musically gifted. In earlier times it was very common for carol singers to go out in organized groups, particularly those led by the vicar or choir master. This still happens today but it’s less common for them to go door to door to sing to individuals outside their homes. They usually choose a busy shopping street when people are doing their Christmas shopping so they can raise money for charity. These singers are usually good and know how to sing carols all the way through. Traditionally carol singers were given festive food like mince pies but now they expect and get small sums of money.

The tradition of carol singing goes back to medieval times. The first specifically Christmas hymns for Christians that we know appeared in fourth century Rome. Latin hymns such as ***Veni redemptor gentium***, written by Ambrose, archbishop of Milan, were austere statements of the theological doctrine of the Incarnation in opposition to Arianism. ***Corde natus ex Parentis (Of the Father’s love begotten)*** by the Spanish poet Prudentius (d. 413) is still sung in some churches today.

In the ninth and tenth centuries the Christmas ***“Sequence”*** or ***“Prose”*** was introduced in North European monasteries, developing under Bernard of Clairvaux into a sequence of rhymed stanzas. In the twelfth century the Parisian monk Adam of St. Victor began to derive music from popular songs, introducing something closer to the traditional Christmas carol. In the thirteenth century, in France, Germany, and particularly, Italy, under the influence of Francis of Assisi a strong tradition of popular Christmas songs in the native language developed.

Christmas carols in English first appeared in a 1426 work of John Awdlay, a Shropshire chaplain, who listed twenty five “caroles of Cristemas”, probably sung by groups of ‘wassailers’, who went from house to house. The songs we know specifically as carols were originally communal songs sung during celebrations like harvest tide as well as Christmas. It was only later that carols begun to be sung in church, and to be specifically associated with Christmas.

Today carols are regularly sung at Christian religious services. Some compositions have words which are clearly not of a religious theme, but are often still referred to as “carols”. For example, the sixteenth century song **“A Bone, God** **Wot!”** appeared as a wassailing song, but it is described in the British Library’s Cottonian Collection as a Christmas carol.

It is often difficult to draw a distinction between a Christmas carol and a Christmas song. **The Concise Oxford Dictionary** defines a carol as a “religious song … associated with Christmas”.

Several different Christmas episodes, apart from the birth of Jesus itself, are described in Christmas carols, such as: The Annunciation, for example “Gabriel’s Message”; The Annunciation to the shepherds, for example “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks”; The Adoration of the shepherds , for example the Czech carol “Nesem Vam Noviny” (translated into English as “Come, All Ye Shepherds”); The Star of Bethlehem, for example, “Star of the East”; The Visit of the Magi, for example “We Three Kings”. In addition, some carols describe Christmas-related events which are of a religious nature, but not directly related to the birth of Jesus.

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## 3.4. Christmas dinner.

On Christmas morning the family traditionally opens their presents and prepares for a big feast which typically is served just after midday. The table gleams with the best china and glassware, and at every place on the table there is a cracker. The meal begins with a toast, followed by the popping of the crackers. The dinner usually consists of roast turkey (also other poultry such as goose, chicken, duck, capon or pheasant are alternatives), sometimes with roast beef or ham. There is also cranberry sauce or redcurrant jelly, bread sauce, roast potatoes (sometimes also boiled or mashed), vegetables (usually boiled or steamed), Brussels sprouts, parsnips and carrots, Christmas pudding (or plum pudding), sometimes mince pies of trifle on the table. We must say that the turkey appeared on Christmas tables in England in the 16th century, and popular history tells of King Henry VIII being first English monarch to have turkey for Christmas. At first, in medieval England, the main course was either a peacock or a boar. The tradition of turkey at Christmas rapidly spread throught England in the 17th century, and it also became common to serve goose which remained the predominant roast until the Victorian era. A famous Christmas dinner scene appears in Dickens’ **A Christmas Carol** (1843), where Scrooge sends Bib Cratchitt a large turkey.

I think it’s very important to say some words about Christmas pudding. It has its origins in medieval England. Many households have their own recipe for Christmas pudding, some handed down through family’s generations. At that time people thought that “the pudding should be made on the 25th Sunday after Trinity, that it be prepared with 13 ingredients to represent Christ and the 12 apostles, and that every family member stir it in turn from east to west to honour the Magi and their supposed journey in that direction”. Recipes for plum puddings appear mainly in the 17th century and later. Despite the name “plum pudding”, the pudding contains no actual plums due to the pre-Victorian use of the word “plums” as a term for raisins. There are several traditions associated with the British Christmas pudding. One is “Stir-up Sunday”, the last Sunday before Advent, when every member of the family took a turn to stir the pudding and made a silent wish. It got its name from the Collect (prayer) for that Sunday which says:”Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen”. Another tradition is that an old silver sixpence or three penny bit was stirred in the pudding and whoever got it on Christmas Day would come into money. Nowadays, it’s more likely to be a 5, 10 or 50 pence piece. In these more hygienic times, people often wrap it in foil before putting it into the pudding mixture. It is customary to serve pudding with a white sauce or brandy butter.

After the meal the members of the family sit down in front of the television for traditional Christmas speech of the British Monarch. In the afternoon they exchange visits with neighbors other family members.

## The Questionnaire

The questions:

1. Do you know when Christmas is celebrated in Europe?
2. Do you know whose birthday is celebrated on Christmas?
3. Do you know what country gave us the tradition to decorate the Christmas tree?
4. Do you know when the custom of decorating Christmas trees with candles and presents was introduced in Britain?
5. Do you know where the most famous Christmas tree stands in London? Whose present is it?
6. Do you know what they call Father Frost in the west? Where does he live?
7. Do you know how Santa Claus enters houses to give children Christmas presents and where he puts them?
8. Do you know what the traditional Christmas colours are?
9. Do you know when the custom of sending Christmas Cards to friends, colleagues and relatives appeared?
10. Do you know what the traditional Christmas food is?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Группа №117**  **(12 чел.)** | **Группа №105**  **(8 чел.)** | **Группа №217**  **(11 чел.)** |
| 1. 3 – да, 9 – нет | 3 – да, 5 - нет | 6 – да,5 - нет |
| 1. 5 – да, 7 - нет | 7 – да, 1 - нет | 4 – да, 7 - нет |
| 1. 3 – да, 9 - нет | 3 – да, 5 - нет | 11 - нет |
| 1. 5 – да, 7 - нет | 8 - нет | 11 - нет |
| 1. 12 - да | 3 – да, 5 - нет | 3 – да, 8 - нет |
| 1. 11 – да, 1 - нет | 7 – да, 1 - нет | 11 - да |
| 1. 12 - да | 8 - да | 9 – да,2 - нет |
| 1. 5 – да, 7 - нет | 5 – да, 3 - нет | 11 - нет |
| 1. 3 – да, 9 - нет | 8 - нет | 11 - нет |
| 1. 9 – да, 3 - нет | 5 – да, 3 - нет | 11 - да |

## Conclusion

In our opinion working out this problem we have received additional knowledge about Christmas in Great Britain and customs and traditions which are connected with celebrating of Christmas. It has helped us to expand our lexical stock and our general outlook. It has raised our interest to Great Britain and to studying of the English language. We have found interesting information about some customs and traditions. And the educational complex doesn’t contain this information.

We think that this work will be useful not only for students, but also for teachers preparing for out-of-class actions on language or educational, facultative classes. We hope this work will broaden the students’ vocabulary and mental outlook, perfect their knowledge of the English language.

## Supplementary material

**Christmas song**

Once upon a Christmas song,

Everybody sang along,

You’d see the joy on every face,

And the world it seemed a happier place,

These songs brought us together.

Good time memories forever,

Now I know what they mean,

And what they’ve given to me,

I’d have never believed,

Because we’d be singing them,

Over and over, and over again,

Every December they get in our heads,

Turn them up, play them loud,

Every Christmas should be the same,

Singing them over and over, and over and over again.

They say they’re good for the soul,

But someone tell me I don’t know,

Why no one seems to write them any more,

So the only way to settle the score,

Is to all make way for a new one,

That keeps the heart of the old one,

With a little bit of festive cheer,

And you’ll know when Christmas is near,

When this record appears, once a year,

You’ll be singing this over and over, and over again.

Every December you’ll hear it and say,

Turn it up, play it loud,

Every Christmas should be the same,

Singing it over and over, and over and over again,

It’s getting in your head,

It’s getting in your head,

And if you’re not singing it all night,

You’d be telling a lie,

You’ll be singing this over and over, and over again,

Every December you’ll hear it and say,

Turn it up, play it loud,

Every Christmas should be the same,

Singing it over and over, forever and ever again, over and over, and over again.

**Jingle Bells or One Horse Open Sleigh (оригинал James Pierpont)**

Dashing through the snow

In a one-horse open sleigh,

Over the fields we go,

Laughing all the way;

Bells on bob-tail ring,

Making spirits bright,

What fun it is to ride and sing

A sleighing song tonight,

O [Chorus 2x:] Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!

O what fun it is to ride

In a one-horse open sleigh

A day or two ago,

I thought I’d take a ride,

And soon Miss Fanny Bright

Was seated by my side;

The horse was lean and lank;

Misfortune seemed his lot;

He got into a drifted bank,

And we, we got upset.

O [Chorus 2x:] Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!

O what fun it is to ride In a one-horse open sleigh

A day or two ago,

The story I must tell

I went out on the snow

And on my back I fell;

A gent was riding by

In a one-horse open sleigh,

He laughed as there I sprawling lie,

But quickly drove away,

O [Chorus 2x:] Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!

O what fun it is to ride

In a one-horse open sleigh

Now the ground is white

Go it while you’re young,

Take the girls tonight

And sing this sleighing song;

Just get a bob-tailed bay

Two-forty as his speed

Hitch him to an open sleigh

And crack! you’ll take the lead,

O [Chorus 2x:] Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!

O what fun it is to ride In a one-horse open sleigh[.](http://novyy-god.ru/jingle-bells-tekst-na-anglijskom-perevod-pesni-na-russkij/)

## Vocabulary

The Holy Bible – Святая Библия

Jesus Christ – Иисус Христос

The Gospel of Matthew – Евангелие от Матфея

The Gospel of Luke – Евангелие от Луки

Bethlehem – Вифлеем

Judea – Иудея

stable – конюшня, хлев

manger – ясли, кормушка

angel – ангел

to worship – поклоняться

frankincense – ладан

myrrh – мирра

holly – падуб

mistletoe – омела

holm – каменный дуб

ivy – плющ

bays – лавровый венок

pagan – язычник

thorn – шип, колючка

crucifixion – распятие (*на кресте*)

wreath – венок, гирлянда

the ultimate light – истинный свет

bishop – епископ

robed, fur clad – меховой кафтан, пальто

jolly – весёлый, праздничный

sacrifice – жертва, жертвоприношение

hymn – гимн

archbishop – архиепископ

austere – строгий, суровый

theological doctrine – богословское учение

incarnation – воплощение

stanza – строфа, станс

The Annunciation – Благовещение

The Adoration – поклонение

cracker – тонкое сухое печенье

popping of the crackers – хрустя печеньем

redcurrant jelly – желе из красной смородины

parsnip – пастернак

Brussels sprouts – брюссельская капуста

mince pie – сладкий пирожок

trifle – бисквит, пропитанный вином и залитый сбитыми сливками

peacock – павлин

boar – хряк

Trinity – Троица

to stir – мешать, размешивать, взбалтывать

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