

British traditions Used to practice

Do you think the Xmas and New Year traditions below are common present habits in the UK, or have they changed? Choose one thing below and make a sentence about how popular you think that is now and how that has changed, then your teacher will tell you how accurate that statement is.

British Xmas traditions to make “used to” and/ or Present Simple statements about

- All public transport stopping on Xmas Day.
- Buying a live goose or rabbit and feeding it up during December to kill it for Xmas.
- Buying real Xmas trees.
- Children going caroling (= go from house to house singing Xmas songs).
- Cooking a whole turkey.
- Going to church on Xmas Day.
- Going to midnight mass (= a special church service on the night of Xmas Eve).
- January sales starting in January.
- Keeping a Xmas pudding for up to 12 months so that the taste becomes richer.
- People sitting down to watch the Queen giving a speech on Xmas Day.
- Putting a special “Yule log” (= piece of wood) on the fire.
- Putting stockings in front of the fireplace.
- Saying “Father Christmas” instead of “Santa/ Santa Claus”.
- Saying “Merry Christmas”.
- Shops closing on Xmas Day.
- Sleeping outside shops to get the best bargains in the January sales.
- Spending Xmas Day with their families.
- Xmas dinner being made from winter foods that are easy to preserve without a fridge.

Make similar statements about other British traditions which you know about.

Do the same with the topics on the next page.

Possible British traditions to make “used to” and/ or Present Simple statements about

- Bad food
- Being able to know someone’s social class from how they speak
- Being polite
- Being reserved (= not showing your real feelings)
- Brick houses
- DIY (= do it yourself, decorating and fixing your own house)
- Disliking garlic
- Drinking lots of tea
- Drinking warm beer
- Eating a Sunday roast (for example roast beef and roast potatoes)
- Eating fish and chips
- English breakfast
- Few “English restaurants”
- Fog in London
- Football hooliganism
- Fox hunting
- Gardening
- Having high tea (= tea and cakes or scones at three o’clock)
- Playing cricket
- Rarely speaking foreign languages
- Traditional dancing
- Watching fireworks on the fifth of November
- Wearing bowler hats

Discuss any changes (or not) in similar traditions in your country.