

Describing British and Japanese Xmas and New Year

Brainstorm descriptions of a (usual/ traditional) Japanese and British or American Xmas and New Year into the table on the next page, particularly the differences.

Use these categories to help with the brainstorming task above:

- Food and drink
- Decorations
- Religion and superstitions (good luck and bad luck)
- Sports and games
- Gifts and cards
- Arts and media
- Clothes
- Spending time together (parties etc)

Put the cards that you are given into the two columns matching the two categories in the table. Some things might happen in both places, but all should clearly be more common or more traditional in one place or the other.

Hints:

- If it's not very common and/ or traditional in Japan, it must be for the other column, and vice versa
- There should be the same number (29) in each column
- You should be able to put at least some of them into pairs by topic

Check your answers with an un-cut-up version of the worksheet. Is anything surprising? Are any important things missing?

Describing British and Japanese Xmas and New Year roleplays

Imagine one of you is Japanese and the other people are from the UK or US. You are seeing each other (again) for the first time since the Xmas/ New Year holiday, so ask each other about the break. Imagine you know very little about Xmas and New Year traditions in the other person's country, and so ask for more info about things you don't understand (even if you really do understand them).

Do the same, but this time speaking for a couple of minutes then smoothly finishing the chat, for example to get down to business or move on and talk to someone else.

(Traditional/ Typical) Japanese Xmas and New Year	(Traditional/ Typical) British or American Xmas and New Year

Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers

Japanese Xmas and New Year	British Xmas and New Year
Send New Year postcards	Send Christmas cards
Watch television singing competition show on New Year's Eve	Watch the Queen's speech in the afternoon on Christmas Day
Traditional games and sports (e.g. a kind of badminton with wooden bats)	Often go for a walk as a family after Xmas dinner
A kind of long distance relay race is televised every year	Unlike most of Europe, many football matches held and televised
The most common Xmas meat is fried chicken (often from KFC)	Most common Xmas meat is roast turkey (with stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce, etc)
The most filling New Year food is chewy rice cake	The most filling Christmas food is roast (and sometimes mashed) potatoes
New Year vegetables include black beans, seaweed and bamboo shoots	Christmas vegetables include Brussel sprouts, parsnips and roasted carrots
New Year foods tend to be for good luck or because little extra preparation is needed	Xmas foods ones that were still available in winter like root vegetables and dried fruit
Hot sweet red beans with chewy rice cake eaten in January	Hot pudding with brandy sauce, custard, fresh cream, or ice cream eaten for Xmas
Drink something called "sweet rice wine", actually a non-alcoholic drink, usually hot	Drink a drink called eggnog (egg liqueur) or mulled wine (hot wine with spices)

Christmas cake is often a sponge with cream and strawberries	Christmas cake is usually a heavy dried fruit cake with marzipan and white icing
Packaged snacks (sometimes shaped like Xmas stockings) bought and given to kids	Everyone eats snacks (tins of chocolates, sugared almonds, chocolate coins, etc)
Make your own chewy rice cake by pounding sticky rice with a wooden mallet	Take the shells off your own nuts with a nutcracker
Eat mashed chestnuts and whole chestnuts around New Year	Eat nuts and dried fruit such as Brazil nuts, walnuts, dates and figs around Christmas
Give cash in little envelopes, only to kids	Give presents, in stockings or under the Xmas tree, to both adults and children
Visit to a temple or shrine to pray for the first time of the year	Go to church for a carol service or (candlelit) midnight mass
Boyfriends and girlfriends spend Xmas together, e.g. having a romantic meal	Families spend Christmas together at home
Especially in shops, Xmas decorations replaced by New Year ones on Dec. 25 th	Christmas decorations must be taken down by 6 January, or it is bad luck
End of the year “forget the year party” with colleagues, usually in a bar	End of the year Christmas party with colleagues, often actually in the office
Sometimes dress in traditional clothes to visit a temple or shrine around New Year	Wear party hats (from inside Christmas crackers) on Christmas day
Decorate the house with the “7 lucky gods” and the animal representing the (new) year	Decorate the house with fairy lights, tree, nativity scene, tinsel, baubles, wreath, etc

Decorate the house with pine branches and pine cones for New Year	Decorate the house with (real or plastic) holly and mistletoe for Christmas
New Year's Eve is a family time.	New Year's Eve is a time to go out partying (e.g. clubbing) with your friends.
Welcome the New Year by eating (greyish) buckwheat noodles	Welcome the New Year by linking hands and singing "Auld Lang Syne"
A lot of New Year superstitions, e.g. a slip of paper with your fortune for the next year	Some Xmas superstitions, e.g. good luck for getting the coin in the Xmas pudding
Most museums etc closed for a few days around New Year	No shopping, trains, buses etc on Xmas Day, and taxis three times the normal price
Beethoven's Ninth popular around New Year	Most people know the words to many Xmas songs, including Xmas carols
Shops play traditional music around New Year	Carol singers sometimes go from house to house singing Xmas songs
Shops sell especially packaged bags of discount goods in the New Year	Some people sleep outside shops to get the biggest bargains in the January Sales

Choose one of the things below and describe it without saying any part of its name until your partner guesses what you are talking about. Do they agree with your description?

Japanese Xmas and New Year vocabulary	British and American Xmas and New Year vocabulary
● amazake ● bounenkai ● daruma ● dondo-yaki ● ekiden ● fukubukuro ● fukuwarai ● hakama ● hanetsuki/ hago-ita ● hatsumode ● joya-no-kane ● kadomatsu ● karuta ● kazunoko ● kimono ● konbu ● kouhaku uta-gassen ● kurikinton ● kuro-mame ● mochi ● mochi-tsuki ● nenga-jo ● omikuji ● (o-)sechi-ryori ● (o-)shiruko ● (o-)toshi-dama ● (o-)toso ● (o-)zoni ● saru-doshi ● shichi-fuku-jin ● strawberry "short cake" ● sugoroku ● tai ● takenoko ● toshi-koshi-soba	● advent calendar ● Auld Lang Syne ● baubles ● brandy sauce ● bread sauce ● Brussel sprouts ● candlelit service ● (Xmas) carol ● chestnuts ● chocolate coins ● Christmas crackers ● cranberry sauce ● custard ● date ● eggnog ● fairy lights ● fig ● goose ● gravy ● holly ● marzipan ● midnight mass ● mistletoe ● mulled wine ● nativity (scene) ● nut roast ● nutcrackers ● office party ● parsnip ● raisin ● roast ● stuffing ● sugared almonds ● The Queen's speech ● tinsel ● turkey ● walnuts ● winter ale ● wreath ● Xmas log ● Xmas pudding ● Xmas tree