

Innocence & Belief

English language
teaching materials
exploring
Greg Lake's
*I Believe in
Father
Christmas!*



Chris Walklett



Samplers available in the series:

The Final Frontier? - ELT materials based on **David Bowie's *Space Oddity***.

Fight for your Rights – ELT materials based on **Katy Perry's *Roar***.

Filthy Lucre? – ELT materials based on **Pink Floyd's *Money***.

Full coursebook

Teaching Tracks – Top Ten. *ELT materials devised from 10 top songs.*



This product is free, however if you liked these materials, you might like to make a donation to our chosen charity, Crisis – a UK based charity that assists homeless people around the UK. To make your donation, please visit the Crisis website on www.crisis.org.uk

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Innocence & Belief

English language teaching materials exploring Greg Lake's *I Believe in Father Christmas*

Innocence & Belief is a free sampler of the first in the *Teaching Tracks* series *Top Ten*. *Top Ten* offers comprehensive lesson plans through materials and ideas based on ten superbly useable, thoughtful and inspirational songs.

The *Teaching Tracks* series of mini-coursebooks/extended lesson plans is inspired by my passion for songs and their lyrics and a love of teaching English as a Foreign Language. By going beyond what's already out there, this power-book shares a range of lesson ideas based on one of the most famous *yuletide* (Christmas) songs of recent years, *I Believe in Father Christmas* by Greg Lake.

Explore the richness of the song and deliver an English lesson based on themes that include looking at the origins of Christmas but also its commercialisation. Overarching themes are on the subjects of belief and the loss of innocence.

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***Please feel free to print out the following pages (5 – 23) to give to your students**

Innocence & Belief



Student's Material

Greg Lake 🌐 *I Believe in Father Christmas*

Songwriters: Greg Lake, Peter John Sinfield & Serge Prokofieff.

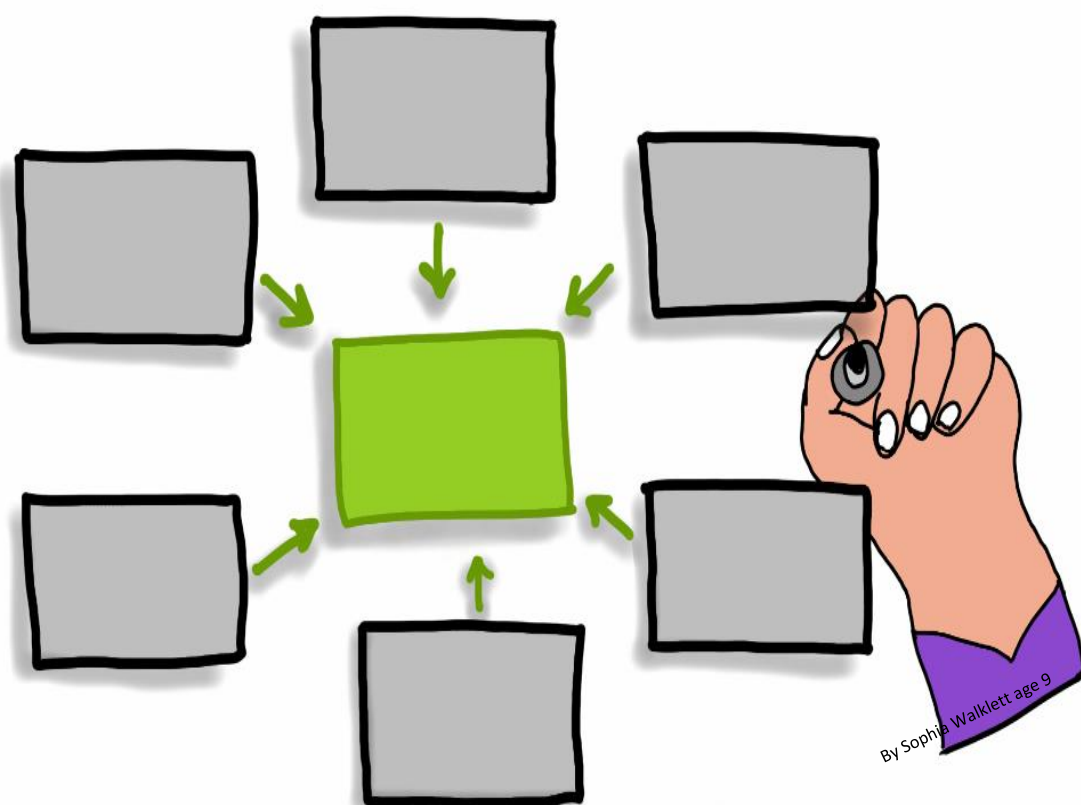
Licensed lyrics are available on Metrolyrics & Google Play Music in collaboration with Lyricfind
We recommend the artist's official site <http://www.greglake.com/>
The video can be found. The song itself is available on Google Play, Spotify, iTunes etc.

Activity 1

Speaking (i)

Christmas – associations & belief

- 1) What words or things do you associate with Christmas? Brainstorm using the mind map below.



- 2) Do you know any other words for Father Christmas?
- 3) Did you believe in Father Christmas when you were young?
- 4) Did you believe in any other myths when you were young? Tell the class about them. What were their names and what things were associated with them?

Activity 2

Reading (i)

Belief in Santa

It is often said that parents should never lie to children. However in many countries a big exception to this rule is in regards to Santa Claus - or Father Christmas as he is also known. Indeed, many parents go to great lengths to get their children to believe in the jolly, slightly **obese** man with a white beard, dressed in a red suit, often **sidestepping** children's questions on the **logistical** improbabilities involved. For example, how he manages to deliver presents to the estimated 1.9 billion children in the world within one night!

All this begs the question, why do parents continue to deceive their children in this manner? Some might say that it is to **instil** (or preserve) a sense of belief and magic. After all, isn't there something cosy and rather wonderful about Santa, Christmas and all that goes with it? But what happens when children discover that Santa doesn't exist, won't they feel as if they have been **conned**?

Kids are nothing if not curious though. They can often sense when they are being **duped** and work out for themselves that Santa isn't real. Maybe this happens at around the same time as they lose faith in the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy for example. Santa's existence might also be called into question by their **peers** or older **siblings**.

Like some other **myths**, Father Christmas is based on a real person - Nicholas of Myra (now situated in modern day Turkey), a Christian bishop who lived approximately 1800 years ago. Nicholas was by accounts a good-hearted and generous man who used his wealth to help the poor and needy, especially children. His presents to children included dropping gifts down the **chimneys** of their houses. His fame was such that he later became known as Saint Nicholas - the patron saint for children.

St Nicholas' Day (December 6th) however, has nothing to do with either Christ's birth, or even Christmas itself. Many people believe that its modern **incarnation** results from beliefs brought by Europeans migrating to the USA. This may explain the **etymology** of the name *Santa Claus* which could possibly originate from the Dutch name for St Nicholas – *Sinterklass*.

It is clear that Christmas as we now know it has evolved by incorporating **elements** from various different practices and beliefs. **Sleighs** pulled by reindeers for example were a practical way of travelling in certain countries with a cold winter climate. In addition the idea of flying reindeer could have come from **Norse** legend which relays that **Odin** flew across the sky on his eight-legged horse. After all, as

children know, before the addition of Rudolph, Santa originally had eight reindeer – Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen.

Most would agree that **perpetuating** children's belief in Santa Claus is done to create a sense of goodwill towards others and kindness through giving. Some **psychologists** however, think that by encouraging children to believe in Santa Claus, parents do more harm than good. After all, one day their child will realise that he does not exist and thus it could be argued a sense of innocence will be lost and children's sense of belief in general might suffer **irreparable** damage - something that is surely not intended by parents.

Glossary

<i>obese (adj)</i>	Overweight.
<i>sidestepping (v)</i>	To carefully avoid mentioning something delicate.
<i>logistical (adj)</i>	Involving organisation and planning.
<i>instil (v)</i>	To establish (an idea or attitude) in a person's mind.
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<i>siblings (n)</i>	A word that can mean either brother or sister.
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<i>chimneys (n)</i>	Structure from which smoke from the fireplace exits the building.
<i>incarnation (n)</i>	A person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit, or quality.
<i>etymology (n)</i>	The history of a word.
<i>elements (n)</i>	Small but significant parts of an idea.
<i>sleighs (n)</i>	Devices used to ride through snow.
<i>Norse (n)</i>	Norwegians or Scandinavians in ancient or medieval times.
<i>Odin (n)</i>	Legendary figure from Norse mythology.
<i>perpetuating (v)</i>	To make something, usually negative, continue indefinitely.
<i>psychologists (n)</i>	Someone who is trained in the study of the human mind.
<i>irreparable (adj)</i>	Cannot be repaired.

Text questions

- 1) Do you think that what parents are doing is really lying or do they do it for another reason?
- 2) Do you celebrate anything to do with St Nicholas in your culture?
- 3) Can you re-call when you first stopped believing in Father Christmas? Tell the class about it. What made you stop believing? Did this affect your belief in anything else?
- 4) Some people say that when children find out that Father Christmas is not real they are less likely to believe in the existence of God. Do you think there is any connection between a loss of belief in Father Christmas and a loss of belief in the existence of God or any other deity?



Activity 3

Speaking (ii)

Background to Christmas

As you may well know, the word Christmas originates from Christ and the word mass, meaning a religious occasion: therefore the celebration of the birthday of Jesus Christ.

What do you know of the biblical story? Share what you know. If you are unsure, use Google to find out more about it. Take notes below.

If you are from a different religion are there any special days that are celebrated in your culture? Tell the group about one of these festive days.



Activity 4

SONG

Listening (i) & Vocabulary (i)

Dictation

You are going to hear a famous song written about the subject of Christmas. There are three verses, each has 8 lines. Write down the word at the end of every line. The first line of each verse starts with the word *Christmas*.

Verse 1	<i>Christmas</i>
Verse 2	<i>Christmas</i>
Verse 3	<i>Christmas</i>

Activity 5

LYRICS

Phonetics

Rhyme schemes

Look at the first verse of the lyrics. Do any of the words at the end of the lines rhyme? Which? Check with your partner. Were your answers correct?

Do you notice a rhyme scheme (i.e. the same sound at the end of words) in the first verse?

Is it maintained in the other 2 verses?

Fill out the chart below from the lyrics and write down in phonetics the last sound of the last words in each line.

https://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/upperint/c_pronunciation/?cc=us&selLanguage=en
<https://tophonetics.com/> is a good site that translates words in phonetics.

Verse 1	ending	Verse 2	ending	Verse 3	ending
<i>Christmas</i>		<i>Christmas</i>		<i>Christmas</i>	
<i>earth</i>		<i>night</i>		<i>new year</i>	
<i>raining</i>		<i>story</i>		<i>sadness</i>	
<i>birth</i>		<i>Israelite</i>		<i>clear</i>	
<i>morning</i>		<i>Christmas</i>		<i>Christmas</i>	
<i>choir</i>		<i>eyes</i>		<i>earth</i>	
<i>smell</i>		<i>dawn</i>		<i>hell</i>	
<i>fire</i>		<i>disguise</i>		<i>deserve</i>	

Activity 6

LYRICS

Grammar

(The ghost of) Christmas past, present & future

Look through the lyrics.

What verbs are used?

Which tenses are the verbs in?

Add to the boxes below.

Past simple	Present simple	Future	Other

Activity 7

Listening (ii) & Vocabulary (ii)

Song analysis

Listen to the song again.

Discuss the following questions about the song's contents.

- 1) Does the singer believe in Father Christmas?
- 2) What words are there with a religious connection?
- 3) What is an *Israelite*? Who is the *Israelite*?
- 4) Are there any other words you don't understand?

Here are some words from the song you might not know. Using the lyrics and the song's context and a process of elimination, match up the following words 1-7 with explanations A-G below.

1) <i>Veil of tears</i> (n)
2) <i>Peal</i> (n)
3) <i>Tinsel</i> (n)
4) <i>Yawn</i> (n/v)
5) <i>Disguise</i> (n/v)
6) <i>Anguish</i> (n)
7) <i>Noel</i> (n)

A) The coloured material that decorates a Christmas tree.
B) Another word for Christmas.
C) Severe mental or physical pain/suffering.
D) A different appearance in order to conceal one's identity.
E) What you do when you are tired.
F) A series of sorrows on earth.
G) Refers to a ringing sound.

Activity 8

Vocabulary (iii) & Speaking (iii)

Connotation & your favourite line

Look through the lyrics. Write down words or phrases that have positive and negative connotations from the song.

Positive	Negative

Pick your favourite line from this song and explain why it is your favourite.



Activity 9

Speaking (iv)

Discussion – ‘Schools of Thought’



The message in this song has divided people over the years. Which of the below do you most agree with? Can you justify your choice from the lyrics themselves?

- A) Some believe that the writer is talking about loss of belief and thus that Christmas (and maybe by definition religion too) are both a con.
- B) Others say that the singer is advising people to think of the true spirit of Christmas that he is railing against the commercialisation of Christmas.
- C) Another argument is that when a child stops believing in Father Christmas they have lost their innocence.
- D) Your interpretation. Please write here:

In groups discuss your feelings about the meaning of the song.

What do you think is the **true spirit** of Christmas?

VIDEO**Activity 10****Listening (iii) & Speaking (v)**Video analysis and discussion

Read through the following questions then watch the video to see if you can answer them:

- 1) Where is the video set? Why?
- 2) What are the images of at the end? Why are these images used do you think?
- 3) Given the context of the video, how do you interpret the last line of the song?



Activity 11

Speaking (vi)

What is belief?

Which of the following definitions of **belief** do you prefer?

Belief is a state of mind in which a person thinks something without actual evidence or factual certainty...add your thoughts

Belief is a strong construction - stronger than hope. A person with belief might not be able to prove something but they know it...add your thoughts.

Another definition...add your thoughts

Discuss in groups which of these you agree most with and why.

Try to convince others of your point of view.



Activity 12

Reading (ii) & Speaking (vii)

Research – Christmas Around the World

Why is Christmas celebrated at this time of year - December 25th and thereabouts?

Read up on the current beliefs regarding Christmas on the internet and take notes. You could try this website <https://www.whychristmas.com/> for example.

Is anything you read new information to you? Did anything you read surprise you?



In this country activity

Match up the following countries with the traditions below:

Spain

Trinidad and Tobago

Germany

Latvia

Netherlands

Australia

Great Britain

Italy

In this country...

...it is believed they had the first Christmas tree.	
... a 'barbie' on the beach is a typical way to celebrate Christmas.	
... the day after Christmas is called Boxing Day – a day when food and gifts were traditionally boxed up to give to the poor.	
...they believe that Santa Claus comes from Spain.	
... children leave shoes outside of their front door for Father Christmas.	
... a witch called "La Befana" leaves children coal for children instead of presents if they have been bad.	
... they do a special dance called "Jota" which is hundreds of years old.	
... they paint their houses, hang new curtains and makes repairs in time for the festive season.	

Activity 13

Fun activities. A choice of 3.

Chain Poem / What's On My Mind game / Christmas Anagrams

Chain story or rhyming poem about Christmas

- Decide if your group is going to write a story or a poem.
- Each person takes a turn to write a line then fold over the paper, leaving one word on the next line for the next person to continue with another line or rhyme.
- When finished read back what you have written. Which group's was the best?

What's on my mind? - Recycling vocabulary

- Line up in 2 groups. The first person in the line sits on the chair at the front.
- The teacher will stick a post-it note on the first student's forehead with a word from the lesson so far.
- Other students must describe the word or expression on their classmate's forehead without using any of the words on it.
- The 2 teams race each other, when the person gets it right the next person goes. The team with the highest score wins.

Happy Christmas anagrams

- In groups make words from the phrase *Happy Christmas*.
- Which group can make the most words? Who can make the longest word?
- Can any group make a phrase using all the letters?

Activity 14
Listening (iv) & Writing
Homework - film summaries

In terms of a message about the true meaning of Christmas two of the best Christmas movies of all time are widely believed to be *It's A Wonderful Life* and *A Christmas Carol*.

For homework watch either of these and write a summary of the story. If pushed for time, pick a scene from YouTube and describe what happens in it.



Activity 15

Reading (iii)

Crisis. A UK based charity

It is widely felt that of the true meanings of Christmas is to think of those less fortunate than ourselves, read the following text on Crisis – a charity for the homeless.

End homelessness for good.

Crisis is a Charity concerned with reducing and ultimately ending homelessness in the UK. It was founded in 1967 because of the increasing number of homeless people in the UK. Although Crisis is 50 years old, they have stated that they never intended the organisation to reach this landmark, and have no intention of being in existence in another fifty; clearly hoping that the situation will be resolved well before then.

Crisis works directly with thousands of homeless people every year, providing them with the means to rebuild their lives. The organisation offers one to one support, advice and courses – the assistance extended depending on the individual's needs and situation. The help could be with finding/securing a home and settling in, acquiring new skills, finding a job, or helping individuals with their health and wellbeing. In 2016, Crisis helped 11,000 homeless people, either by providing accommodation, education or getting them into paid work.

Famous celebrities who support Crisis include comedian Jo Brand, the singer from Coldplay Chris Martin, TV presenter Jeremy Paxman, singer/songwriter Ed Sheeran and the British born heavyweight world boxing champion Anthony Joshua.

Please visit www.crisis.org.uk for more details. Please consider making a donation this Christmas.

- 1) Discuss what issues can cause homelessness?
- 2) Think what can *you* do to help in some way with this problem this Christmas?

Innocence & Belief



Teacher's Notes

Licensed lyrics are available on Metrolyrics & Google Play Music in collaboration with Lyricfind

We recommend the artist's official site <http://www.greglake.com/>

The video can be found. The song itself is available on Google Play, Spotify, iTunes etc.

A fresh approach...and the inspiration behind it

This is how it all began.

Around 2010, an idea started to brew about how to revolutionise the use of songs and song lyrics in the English language classroom. I felt what was currently on offer in coursebooks and even on the internet lacked innovation, and so I sought out ways to inject novelty and variety into its use; to break free from, what I and many others view as, a ‘same-old, same-old’ approach to the use of this resource.

Inspired by over 20 years of using songs and song lyrics in the classroom I felt it was time to share these ideas so that all EFL teachers could further exploit this resource’s potential, making its use and teacher’s lessons even more engaging. The intention of this mini coursebook and the approach in general is to challenge the existing status quo in the way this resource is employed, and by doing so guide and inspire teachers towards new and innovative ways of maximising the benefits that the use of songs and song lyrics in the language classroom offers.

A key feature of both this sampler book and all books in the *Teaching Tracks* series is the absence of gap-fill activities. The tendency I feel is that producers of materials are prone to fall into what I have dubbed the ‘gap-fill trap’. As well as the pedagogy behind gap fills being somewhat questionable, its inclusion limits, even dictates, what *can* be done and, more crucially, what *can’t* be done - severely restricting the scope of the exploitation of the material. Publishing-wise it is also problematic to include the lyrics themselves as copyright permission is required – it is though notoriously difficult to obtain.

Creating teaching and study materials without the inclusion of the full lyrics within the actual materials has, in fact, been a revelation. This freedom (from the proverbial box) made exploring the possibilities of the song, its theme, the multifarious elements of the language within the lyrics, its video and associated activities, much more satisfying with extremely innovative outcomes.

As already mentioned, due to copyright complications, the lyrics are not included within the lesson plans but they can, of course, be easily (and legally) obtained from a variety of sources; where possible, official links to these are given at the beginning of the materials. The ebook format is ideal for *Teaching Tracks* as it allows instant links to many lyric sites as well as audio sites like Spotify, and music video sites such as YouTube and Vevo.

Despite the ease of access outlined above, practitioners often seem to limit the use of songs in the classroom to that of little more than a tool to change the pace of the lesson or to create a lively, fun mood. But I think songs and their lyrics have far more to offer

than this. Songs are a multi-purpose text type, tailor-made for the language classroom. They are perfect as they are invariably concise, contain interesting everyday vocabulary, and are a really effective way of analysing grammar *in situ*. They are also, of course, great for listening, pronunciation, and phonetic work. Songs are a real-life text type, excellent for analysis of informal language like slang/colloquialisms, idioms, common usage and the like. That is not even to mention their thematic use which, if the right song is chosen, can be extensive. In short, the multi-skill based materials here and in the *Teaching Tracks* series are both content and culture rich, and crucially they are authentic too.

Please feel free to visit our website www.teachingtracks.co.uk for more information about why *Teaching Tracks* is the way forward in using songs and song lyrics in the English language classroom. Feel free to leave your comments and feedback, and to pre-order the 10-song coursebook, *Top Ten*.

Chris Walklett

Seven steps to success with Teaching Tracks materials

At *Teaching Tracks*, we believe that these materials are suitable to both experienced and novice teachers. However, to get the most from using this book, we advise reading the step-by-step guide below. By doing so both novice and experienced teachers will be able to employ songs and song lyrics in a non-formulaic way - making for a very satisfying classroom experience for teacher and student alike.

Step 1. Breathe, relax, clear your mind of your preconceptions – you are about to embark on a journey into the possibilities offered by using songs and song lyrics.

Step 2. Familiarise yourself with the song. Listen to it, sing along and maybe watch the video too. Immerse yourself in it!

Step 3. Locate the lyrics and read through them. Remember that due to issues like connected speech, the lyrics may be different from what you thought (creating what is known as *mondegreens*). So be prepared for a surprise or two.

Step 4. Think about the song's theme/s and what language emerges from it.

Step 5. Look through the 'activity breakdown' synopsis - it'll give you a good overview of the approach to the song and an idea of the linguistic possibilities emanating from it. It offers suggestions about when to first use the song, the lyrics, and the video - crucial for the logical staging of activities.

Step 6. Read through the detailed teacher's notes and think about whether you are going to use all or just some of the activities. Take time to brainstorm ideas as to how you are going to implement these activities to suit *your* students. What will *they* like? What will challenge *them*? Make the materials your own by thinking about how you would adapt them to your regular style of teaching. In other words – mix it up!

Step 7. Use with confidence. Remember you are doing something your students will love. Don't ever forget - songs are a great text type with real pedagogic purpose.

Overview of themes and learning objectives

The theme of this unit is on Christmas - the spirit of Christmas, as well as its commercialism. It also focuses on the loss of innocence and the concept of belief.

All skills are featured in this mini coursebook. There are many speaking and vocabulary activities on the above themes along with an analysis of the video. For example, the lyrics are used in a dictation activity, which leads to a look at the rhyme scheme within the song, and an analysis of the grammar therein. There are several reading activities on various related topics including the origin of Santa Claus. Three extra fun activities are included as well as a research and writing activity for homework. In addition there is an option to find out more about Crisis, a charity organisation that helps the homeless.

This sampler is free but please donate whatever you can afford to Crisis this Christmas to provide help for the homeless. See Page 41 for more details.



This project is dedicated to the writer and singer Greg Lake who died last year on December 8th 2016

Activity breakdown

Activity	Language focus	Specific focus
1	Speaking (i)	Christmas – associations & beliefs
2	Reading (i)	Where did Santa come from?
3	Speaking (ii)	Background to Christmas

Lyrics

4	Listening (i) & Vocabulary (i)	Dictation
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Song

5	Phonetics	Rhyme schemes
6	Grammar	Christmas past, present & future
7	Listening (ii) & Vocabulary (ii)	Song analysis
8	Vocabulary (iii) & Speaking (iii)	Connotation & your favourite line
9	Speaking (iv)	Discussion - Schools of Thought

Video

10	Listening (iii) & Speaking (v)	Video analysis and discussion
11	Speaking (vi)	What is Belief?
12	Reading (ii) & Speaking (vii)	Christmas Around the World
13	Fun activities. A choice of 3	Chain Poem, What's on my Mind? & Christmas Anagrams
14	Listening (iv) & Writing	Homework- film summaries.
15	Reading (iii)	Crisis. End homelessness for good

Teacher's notes

Activity 1



Speaking (i)

Christmas – associations & belief

- 1) What words or things do you associate with Christmas? Brainstorm using the mind map below. **Encourage students to brainstorm words or things associated with Christmas and jot their ideas using the mind map.**
- 2) Do you know any other words for Father Christmas? **Other words for Father Christmas: Santa Claus, Saint Nicholas and, in the US and some other countries, Kris Kringle.**
- 3) Did you believe in Father Christmas when you were young? **Open ended question.**
- 4) Did you believe in any other myths when you were young? Tell the class about them. What were their names and what things were associated with them? **Examples may include Easter Bunny or the Tooth Fairy or others from their culture.**

Activity 2

Reading (i)

Belief in Santa

It is often said that parents should never lie to children. However in many countries a big exception to this rule is in regards to Santa Claus - or Father Christmas as he is also known. Indeed, many parents go to great lengths to get their children to believe in the jolly, slightly **obese** man with a white beard, dressed in a red suit, often **sidestepping** children's questions on the **logistical** improbabilities involved. For example, how he manages to deliver presents to the estimated 1.9 billion children in the world within one night!

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<i>psychologists (n)</i>	Someone who is trained in the study of the human mind.
<i>irreparable (adj)</i>	Cannot be repaired.

Text questions

For open-ended questions, encourage discussion and sharing of ideas.

- 1) Do you think that what parent is doing is really lying or are they doing it for another reason? **The concept of white lies could emerge here.**
- 2) Do you celebrate anything to do with St Nicholas in your culture?
- 3) Can you re-call when you first stopped believing in Father Christmas? Tell the class about it. What made you stop believing? Did this affect your belief in anything else?
- 4) Some people say that when children find out that Father Christmas is not real they are less likely to believe in the existence of God. Do you think there is any connection between a loss of belief in Father Christmas and a loss of belief in the existence of God or any other deity?

Activity 3

Speaking (ii)

Background to Christmas

As you may well know, the word Christmas originates from Christ and the word mass - meaning a religious occasion: therefore the celebration of the birthday of Jesus Christ

What do you know of the biblical story? Share what you know. If you are unsure, use Google to find out more about it. Take notes below

If you are from a different religion are there any special day that is celebrated in your culture? Tell the group about one of these festive days.

- 1. Group discussion with whole class feedback. Encourage students to share/pool their knowledge of Christmas and to share any of their own special religious days/festivals in their culture.**

Activity 4

SONG

Listening (i) & Vocabulary (i)

Dictation

You are going to hear a famous song written about the subject of Christmas. There are three verses, each has 8 lines. Write down the word at the end of every line. The first line of each verse starts with the word *Christmas*.

Play the song, one verse at a time and allow students to note the last word of each line. Allow some time for them to compare notes.

Verse 1	<i>Christmas, earth, raining, birth, morning, choir, smell, fire.</i>
Verse 2	<i>Christmas, night, story, Israelite, Christmas, eyes, dawn, disguise.</i>
Verse 3	<i>Christmas, new year, sadness, clear, Christmas, earth, hell, deserve.</i>

Activity 5

LYRICS

Phonetics

Rhyme schemes

Look at the first verse of the lyrics. Do any of the words at the end of the lines rhyme? Which? Check with your partner. Were your answers correct?

Do you notice a rhyme scheme (i.e. the same sound at the end of words) in the first verse? **Rhyming scheme in the first verse: A, B, C, B, C, D, E, D. Note, in all the verses. Note - line 7 has two internal rhymes.**

Is it maintained in the other 2 verses? **Yes, the rhyme scheme in the last two the same as above. Albeit in the last verse the last D is a half rhyme – earth/deserve.**

Fill out the chart below from the lyrics and write down in phonetics the last sound of the last words in each line. If you are not sure use a phonemic chart such as;

https://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/upperint/c_pronunciation/?cc=us&selLanguage=en
<https://topphonetics.com/> is a good site that translates words in phonetics.

Verse 1	ending	Verse 2	ending	Verse 3	ending
Christmas	krɪsməs	Christmas	krɪsməs	Christmas	krɪsməs
earth	ɜ:θ	night	naɪt	new year	nju: jɪə
raining	reɪnɪŋ	story	sto:ri	sadness	sædnɪs
birth	bɜ:θ	Israelite	ɪzriəlɪt	clear	klɪə
morning	mɔ:nɪŋ	Christmas	krɪsməs	Christmas	krɪsməs
choir	kwaɪə	eyes	aɪz	earth	ɜ:θ
smell	smel	dawn	dɔ:n	hell	hɛl
fire	faɪə	disguise	dɪs'gaɪz	deserve	dɪ'zɜ:v

Activity 6

Grammar

(The ghost of) Christmas past, present & future

Look through the lyrics.

What verbs are used? Which tenses are the verbs in? Add to the boxes below.

Past simple	Present simple	Future	Other
Said Kept Sold Told Believed Looked Woke Saw	Remember Wish Let Was Leave Get Deserve	Will be (future)	Be (infinitive)

Activity 7

Listening (ii) & Vocabulary (ii)

Song analysis

Play the song and encourage discussion about its meaning.

- 1) Does the singer believe in Father Christmas? **Not anymore.**
- 2) What words are there with a religious connection? ***Peace on earth, Virgin birth, silent night* (it's also the title of a famous Christmas carol) *Israelite, hallelujah, Noel, heaven, hell.* Go through any unknown meanings.**
- 3) **(If not already covered by the above)** What is an *Israelite*? **Someone from Israel** Who is *the Israelite*? **Jesus Christ.**
- 4) Are there any other words you don't understand? **Some might well be in the glossary below, so avoid those until you do the next activity.**

Here are some words from the song you might not know. Using the lyrics and its context, match up the following words 1-7 with explanations A-G below. **Match up exercise. Encourage students to work out the meanings from the lyrics' content and match up the following words with explanations. If there are others they don't know tell them or get them to work out from context.**

1. <i>Veil of tears</i> (n)	A series of sorrows on earth. (F) *
2. <i>Peal</i> (n)	Refers to a ringing sound. (G)
3. <i>Tinsel</i> (n)	The coloured material that decorates a Christmas tree. (A)
4. <i>Yawn</i> (n/v)	What you do when you are tired. (E)
5. <i>Disguise</i> (n/v)	A different appearance in order to conceal one's identity. (D)
6. <i>Anguish</i> (n)	Severe mental or physical pain/suffering. (C)
7. <i>Noel</i> (n)	Another word for Christmas. (B)

***Veil** spelt this way in the lyrics, refers to a veil worn by a bride and also by a widow (at a funeral). However, in some forms of Christianity, when the phrase is spelt *vale of tears* it means the trials of life that are left behind when one dies & enters heaven. This may be beyond the level or interest of your students but if interested they could try to work out the significance.

Activity 8

Vocabulary (iii) & Speaking (iii)

Connotation & your favourite line

Look through the lyrics. Write down words or phrases that have positive and negative connotations from the song. **Encourage students to identify their favourite line in the song and discuss.**

Words or phrases from the song with positive or negative connotations

Positive	Negative
<i>Peace on earth</i> <i>Christmas tree smell</i> <i>Eyes full of fire</i> <i>Excited eyes</i> <i>Hopeful</i> <i>Brave</i> <i>Road be clear</i> <i>Heaven</i>	<i>Raining</i> <i>Disguise</i> <i>Sold me</i> <i>Anguish</i> <i>Pain</i> <i>Sadness</i> <i>Tears</i> <i>Hell</i>

Are there any words or expressions where the words where the connotation could be either positive or negative depending on context e.g. *fairy story, silent night*.

Pick your favourite line from this song and explain why it is your favourite.

Activity 9

Speaking (iv)

Discussion – ‘Schools of Thought’

You could explain here what a ‘school of thought’ is, e.g. a different way of looking at something.

The message in this song has divided people over the years as. Which of the below do you most agree with? Can you justify your choice from the lyrics themselves?

- A) Some believe that the writer is talking about loss of belief and thus that Christmas (and maybe by definition religion too) are both a **con**
- B) Others say that the singer is advising people to think of the true spirit of Christmas that he is **railing** against the commercialisation of Christmas.
- C) Another argument is that when a child stops believing in Father Christmas they have lost their innocence.
- D) Your interpretation. Please write here (in the box):

In groups discuss your feelings about the meaning of the song.

What do you think is the true spirit of Christmas?

Open ended questions – encourage discussion in groups/pairs and whole class feedback.

VIDEO

Activity 10

Listening (iii) & Speaking (v)

Video analysis and discussion

Play the video. There doesn't seem to be an official source on YouTube but to find the original version with Greg Lake in it, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPm6CheT6rs&t=16s>

- 1) Where is the video set? **In the desert, possibly in the Middle East or North Africa. Why? Perhaps because it is a similar setting to the original setting.**
- 2) What are the images of at the end? **War - the Vietnam War to be exact, it was still raging in Christmas 1974 and didn't end until 1975. Why are these images used do you think? They may refer to what is happening in the song.**
- 3) Given the context of the video, how do you interpret the last line of the song? **Perhaps within context of the video that if we make war we deserve to have a bad time at Christmas or wider perhaps - that if we are bad we deserve what is coming to us.**

Activity 11

Speaking (vi)

What is belief?

Which of the following definitions of *belief* do you prefer?

Belief is a state of mind in which a person thinks something without actual evidence or factual certainty...add your thoughts

Belief is a strong construction - stronger than hope. A person with belief might not be able to prove something but they know it...add your thoughts.

Another definition...add your thoughts

Discuss in groups which of these you agree most with and why. Try to convince others of your point of view. **Open ended group discussion with a focus on sharing and convincing others of different point of view.**

Activity 12

Reading (ii) & Speaking (vii)

Research – Christmas Around the World

Why is Christmas celebrated at this time of year - December 25th and thereabouts?

The origins of festivities around this time pre date the current traditions. The pagan celebration *Deus Sol Invictus* was observed on Dec 25. Saturnalia – a pagan winter festival is from 17-23 December. It is unknown exactly when Jesus was born but a notional date of December 25th was set to mark his birthday by the Christian Church.

Read up on the current beliefs regarding Christmas on the internet and take notes. You could try this website <https://www.whychristmas.com/> for example.

There are various activities to try with the students.

...it is believed they had the first Christmas tree. Latvia
... a 'barbie' on the beach is a typical way to celebrate Christmas. Australia
... the day after Christmas is called Boxing Day – a day when food and gifts were traditionally boxed up to give to the poor. Great Britain
...they believe that Santa Claus comes from Spain. Netherlands
... children leave shoes outside of their front door for Father Christmas. Germany
... a witch called “La Befana” leaves children coal for children instead of presents if they have been bad. Italy
... they do a special dance called “Jota” which is hundreds of years old. Spain
... they paint their houses, hang new curtains and makes repairs in time for the festive season. Trinidad & Tobago

Activity 13

Fun activities. A choice of 3.

Chain Poem / What's on my Mind game / Christmas Anagrams

Chain story or rhyming poem about Christmas

Give a piece of a paper to each group, each person writes one line then fold over leaving the last word on the next line for continuity or rhyming purposes.

- Decide if your group is going to write a story or a poem.
- Each person takes a turn to write a line then fold over the paper, leaving one word on the next line for the next person to continue with another line or rhyme.

e.g.

.....

Day

.....

Play

- When finished read back what you have written. Which group's was the best?

What's on my mind? - Recycling vocabulary

Use words recycled from this lesson plan.

- Line up in 2 groups. The first person in the line sits on the chair at the front.
- The teacher will stick a post-it note on the first student's forehead with a word from the lesson so far.
- Other students must describe the word or expression on their classmate's forehead without using any of the words on it.
- The 2 teams race each other, when the person gets it right the next person goes. The team with the highest score wins.

Happy Christmas Anagrams

- In groups make words from the phrase *Happy Christmas*.
- Which group can make the most words? Who can make the longest word?
- Can any group make a phrase using all the letters?

Activity 14

Listening (iv) & Writing

Homework - film summaries

In terms of a message about the true meaning of Christmas two of the best Christmas movies of all time are widely believed to be *It's A Wonderful Life* and *A Christmas Carol*.

For homework watch either of these and write a summary of the story. If pushed for time, pick a scene from YouTube and describe what happens in it.

If pushed for time, pick a scene from YouTube and describe what happens in it.

Activity 15

Reading (iii)

Text - Crisis. A UK based charity. End homelessness for good.

Crisis is a Charity concerned with reducing and ultimately ending homelessness in the UK. It was founded in 1967 because of the increasing number of homeless people in the UK. Although Crisis is 50 years old, they have stated that they never intended the organisation to reach this landmark, and have no intention of being in existence in another fifty; clearly hoping that the situation will be resolved well before then.

Crisis works directly with thousands of homeless people every year, providing them with the means to rebuild their lives. The organisation offers one to one support, advice and courses – the assistance extended depending on the individual's needs and situation. The help could be with finding/securing a home and settling in, acquiring new skills, finding a job, or helping individuals with their health and wellbeing. In 2016, Crisis helped 11,000 homeless people, either by providing accommodation, education or getting them into paid work.

Famous celebrities who support Crisis include comedian Jo Brand, the singer from Coldplay Chris Martin, TV presenter Jeremy Paxman, singer/songwriter Ed Sheeran and the British born heavyweight world boxing champion Anthony Joshua.

- 1) Discuss what issues can cause homelessness?
- 2) Think what can *you* do to help in some way with this problem this Christmas?

Teaching Tracks - Teachers' Feedback Form

I hope the lessons were a success and we look forward to hearing your thoughts about them. Please take a moment to fill out the form and send it back to chriswalklett@teachingtracks.co.uk

It's a straightforward Yes/No form with the option for you to add more detail as appropriate.

Name: [Your Name]

Email and/or other contact: [Your email address and phone number]

PRESS PLAY ▶

Were the materials easy for **you and your students** to use?

☐ Yes ☐ No Explain: [Explanation]

Did you supplement the materials Do you think the materials need supplementing? ? .

☐ Yes ☐ No Explain: [Explanation]

Please clarify which materials/activities you used (please say 'all' if applicable) or you didn't use.

[Comments]

Were the synopsis and the teaching instructions easy to use?

☐ Yes ☐ No Explain: [Explanation]

Was it a problem that the units were not level specific? At what level did you use these materials?

☐ Yes ☐ No Level used at: [Suggestions]

Were the reading passages useful?

☐ Yes ☐ No Explain: [Explanation]

Please include any other comments or suggestions that you'd like to share.

[Comments or suggestions]

■ THANK YOU!

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank Carol Samlal for her patience and hard work with the copyediting and the illustrations. It takes someone to have faith in a project to make it work and she has certainly provided all this and more.

Jean Theuma, Sandra Vida and Lana Duka Zupanc for feedback at various stages of developing lesson plans. IATEFL, UK and Slovenia, ELTAM Macadeonia, and ELT Council Malta for allowing me to present on related subjects over the years.

Some illustrations were thought up by my lovely daughter Sophia.

About the author

Chris Walklett has been using music, songs and song lyrics in the classroom for many years dating back to his very first lesson in the mid-1990s. Music and its educational use is a subject that's dear to his heart, and it formed his choice for his MA Linguistics dissertation, 'The use of and attitudes to songs and song lyrics in coursebooks'. In 2015 he gave a TEDx Talk on a related topic and has had numerous appearances at IATEFL and other ELT conferences all over the UK and Europe. He runs an engaging Facebook group – Creating Uses for Songs and Song Lyrics for like-minded teachers. To find out more please visit www.teachingtracks.co.uk

Teachers have had the following to say about *Teaching Tracks* materials:

“materials were clear and straightforward”

“perfect for an integrated skills lesson”

“lots of discussion was generated”

“very good materials...well planned”

“the students enjoyed and felt motivated by it”

“the material was well staged”

“the target language is well scaffolded”

“they learnt a lot of new vocabulary”

“a good build up to listening to the song”

“the material can be easily exploited”

“teaching instructions were very clear and easy to use”