

Welcome to the December Activities Pack

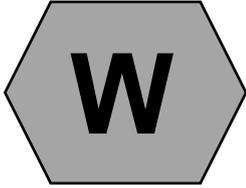


Below are a mixture of activities and ideas, some are harder than others.
Feel free to choose the ones you like the look of or give them all a try!

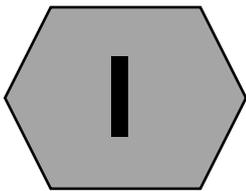
Please use the 'talking point' boxes to think or talk about the subjects covered.

Blockbusters

Can you work your way through this Winter blockbuster?



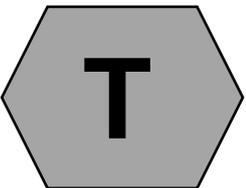
What 'W' is an arrangement of leaves and flowers, typically hung on a door?



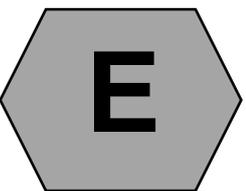
What 'I' is a dwelling made of snow?



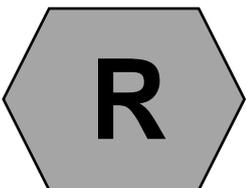
What 'N' is another word for birth?



What 'T' is a type of decorative material that mimics the effect of ice, consisting of thin strips of sparkling material attached to a thread?



What 'E' is a supernatural creature of folk tales, typically represented as a small, delicate, elusive figure in human form with pointed ears, magical powers, and a capricious nature?



What 'R' did my true love give to me on the fifth day of Christmas?

Talking point: Can you have a go at making your own Blockbuster? Start by choosing a word, writing each letter of that word down in a vertical line. Then think of a word starting with each letter. Then come up for a question for each word.

December Facts

The month of December gets its name from “decem” the Latin for 10, as December was the 10th month in the ancient Roman calendar.

December brings the least sunshine of all months to the UK. In December 1890, Westminster saw none at all!

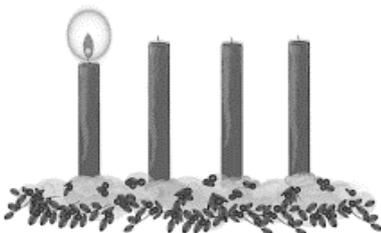


In the United States, National Cookie Day is celebrated on 4 December. Other snacks celebrated this month include pie, cotton candy, chocolate brownies, cocoa, and cupcakes!



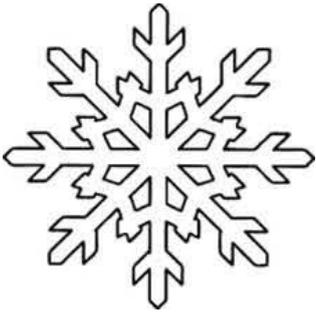
The weather in December in the Northern Hemisphere is similar to the weather in June in the Southern Hemisphere.

The first Sunday of Advent is more likely to fall in November than December.

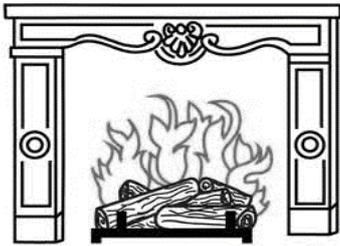


At the North Pole, the Sun does not rise in December; whilst at the South Pole, it does not set.

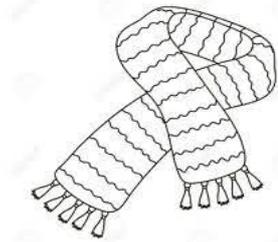
Fill in the blanks



___ O ___ L ___



___ R ___ E



___ C ___



___ L ___



___ O ___

December Sayings & Rhymes

December changeable and mild,
The whole winter will remain a child.

Thunder in December presages fine weather.

Frost on the shortest day is said to indicate a severe winter.

December cold, with snow, brings rye everywhere.

Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat,
Please put a penny in the old man's hat;
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do,
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you!

A Chubby Snowman
A chubby little snowman
Had a carrot nose.
Along came a bunny,
And what do you suppose?
That hungry little bunny,
Looking for some lunch,
Grabbed that snowman's nose,
Nibble, nibble, crunch

I made myself a snowball
As perfect as can be.
I thought I'd keep it as a pet,
And let it sleep with me.
I made it some pyjamas
And a pillow for it's head.
Then last night it ran away,
But first - It wet the bed

Talking point: What do you think these weather sayings mean?
Which other sayings do you know?

Winter treats Word Scramble!

Can you unscramble these Winter treats?

ULMDLNEEWI

ATEHOTCHOCOL

KEYURT

GAIERNEDBRG

NCINAMON

YELUGOL

PRUOTSS

PMIEIENC

FUITRKACE

Talking point: What do you like to eat in the winter? Do you have a family recipe you like to follow?

Sudoku

The goal is to fill the rest of the 9x9 grid with single-digit numbers 1 through 9 with the following basic restrictions: A number can only be used once in each row, column, and 3x3 cell.

			2	6		7		1
6	8			7			9	
1	9				4	5		
8	2		1				4	
		4	6		2	9		
	5				3		2	8
		9	3				7	4
	4			5			3	6
7		3		1	8			

Talking point: Do you celebrate a winter holiday? Have you ever had carol singers knock on your door or have you ever taken children out carol singing?

Wordsearch

W U R R N B D V O R H V G P N
F W E U Y L Z S I P R X N R Y
C Q T V Z Y N I B M X G I E M
Z G N U D O L X B B S C T S S
O B I D W W G M Z N L W A E H
I Y W B E X O O L E B M K N W
E T A L O C O H C T O H S T Q
L L V Q V J E A P X R K E S E
L F X M A E L M A A U C C L C
R O B I N P L M B Z E U I M E
S Y O E E R X F F E N U L L K
W C H R I S T M A S R A D S D
D L I H A K K U N A H N W C X
C F W W R V V W L P A M K K T
E N C H S P X Z W C W E B E U

CANDLE
CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER
ELF
FIREPLACE
ROBIN
WINTER

HANUKKAH
HOTCHOCOLATE
ICESKATING
KWANZAA
PRESENTS
SNOWBALL

Matching Words

Gloves

Flakes

Snowman

Bells

Red

Tide

Advent

Pole

Carol

Scarf

Sleigh

Poinsettia

Wrapping

Will

Yule

Calendar

Snow

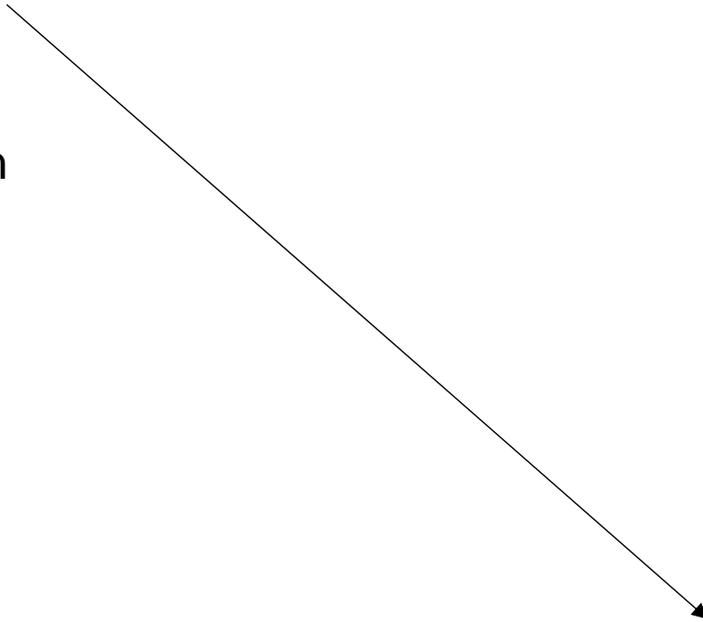
Paper

North

Singers

Good

Carrot



Talking point: Which other December related words can you think of?

Finish that song...

Can you finish the lyrics to these well-known songs? Perhaps you can earn some bonus points by singing the tune afterwards!

1. In the meadow we can build a _____

2. Walking in a _____ wonderland

3. _____ roasting on an open fire

4. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind _____

5. Silver white winters that melt into springs, these
are a few of my _____.

6. We'll take a cup o' _____ yet, for days of auld
lang syne

7. Frosty the snowman was a jolly happy soul
With a _____ and a button nose
And two eyes made out of coal

8. Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds _____ at the sight!

Lighting Up Art Corner

Festive Shapes

Materials –

Paper or coloured card- to use as a background

Paper- either plain or patterned such as wrapping paper or magazines

Glue- such as Prit Stick

Scissors

Ruler or a straight edge

Pencil, pen or felt tip

Optional: hole punch, shaped biscuit cutters, ribbons, string or buttons

Pick a theme or use more than 1: Star, Bauble or Christmas Tree Designs

Either cut out and use the outlines on the following pages or draw your chosen outline onto the paper freehand or using biscuit cutters as templates. You may wish to make the shapes different sizes.

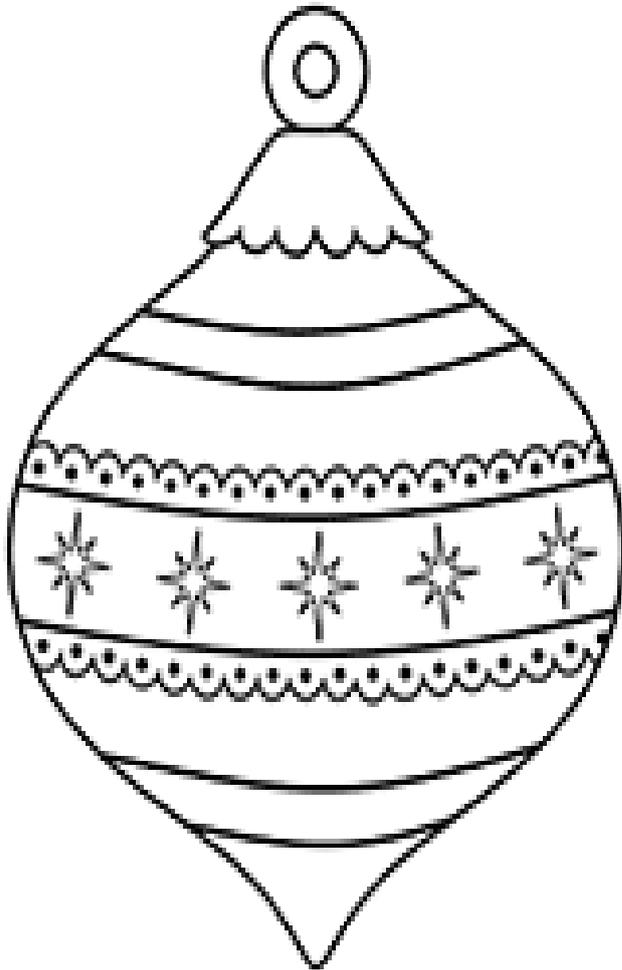
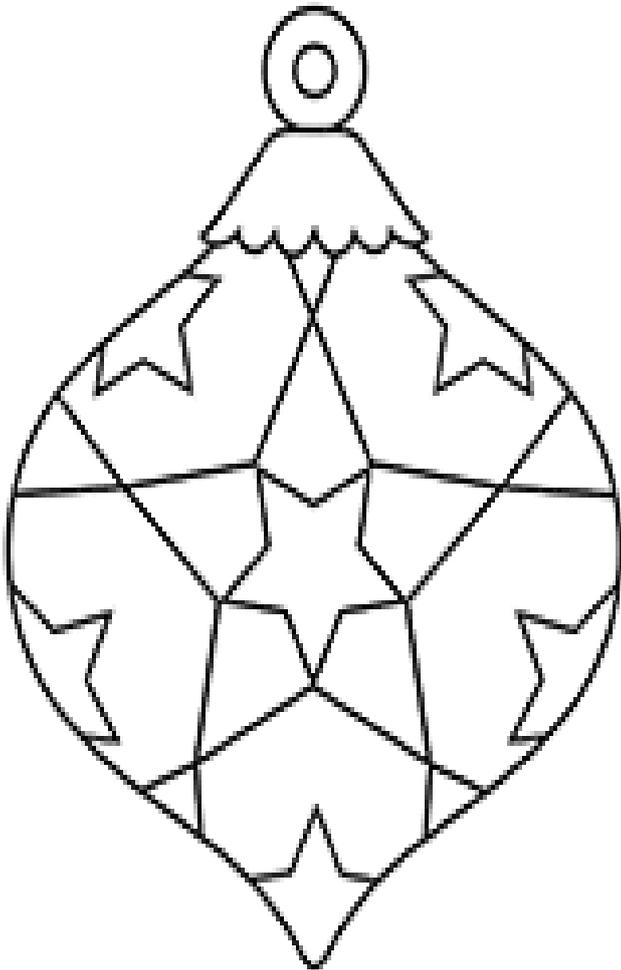
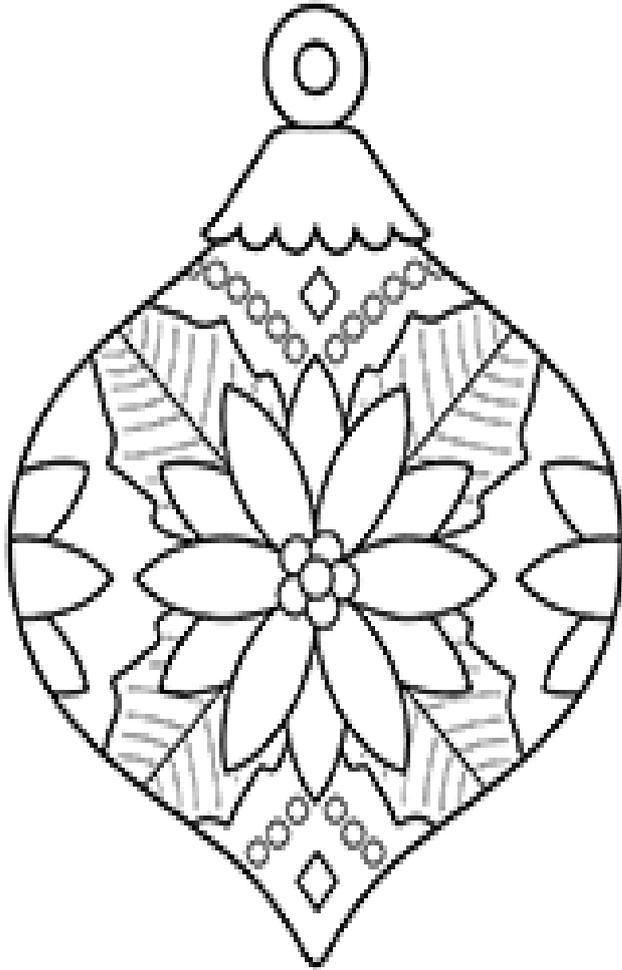
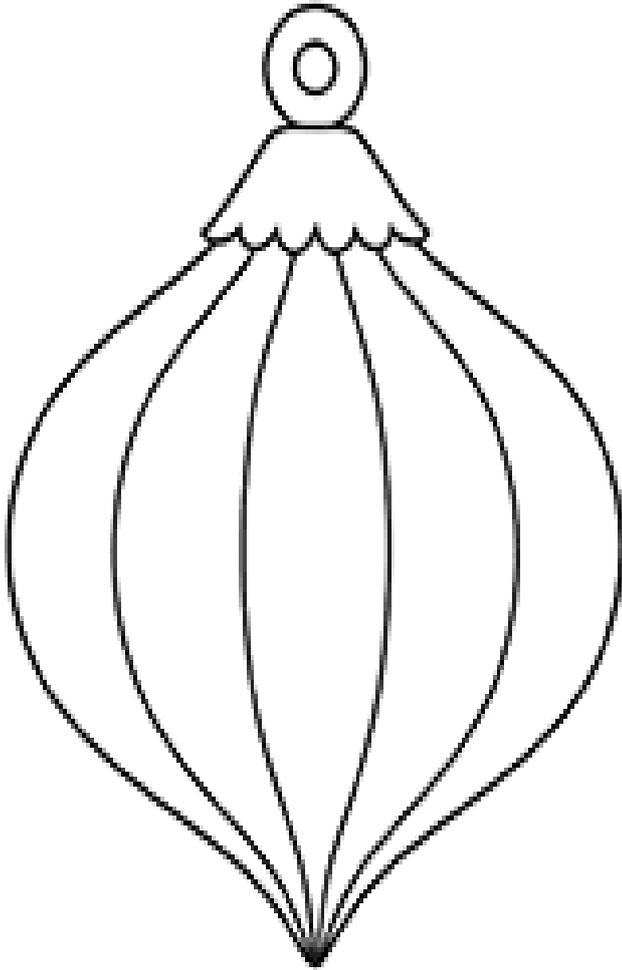
You could stick ribbons, different coloured paper, buttons or colour shapes to decorate the outlines further.

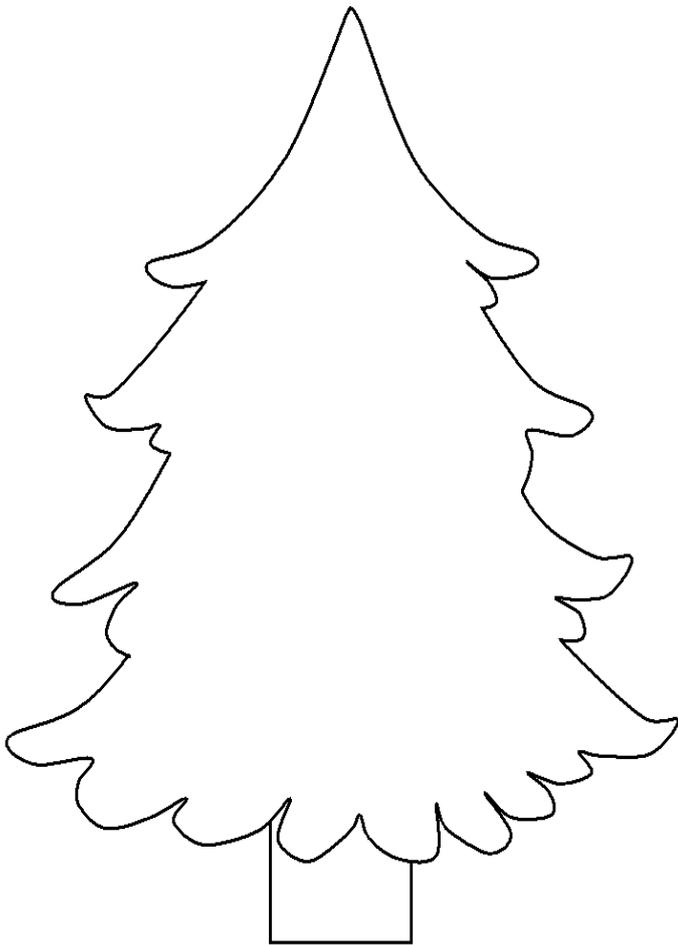
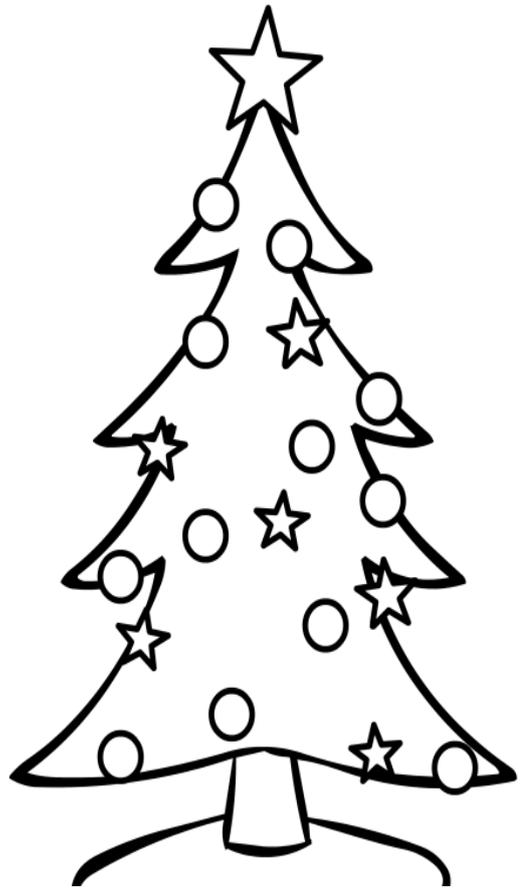
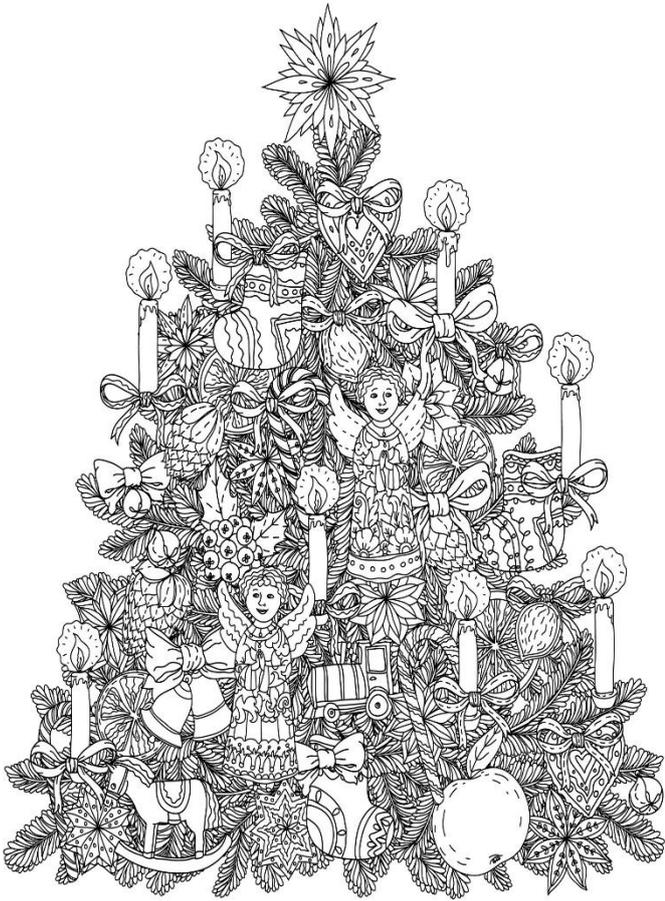
If you have a hole punch you could use this to put holes in the corners of the stars or the points of the Christmas trees.

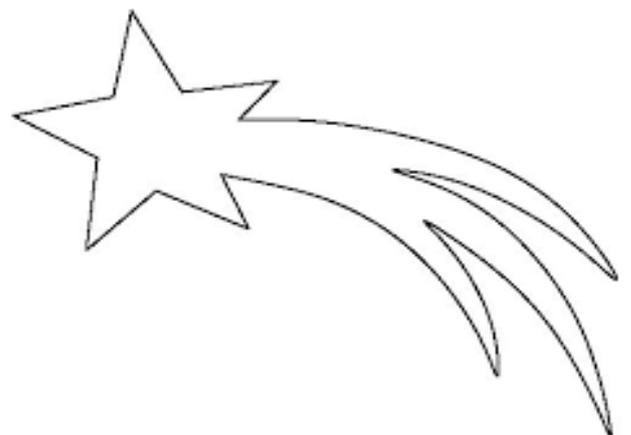
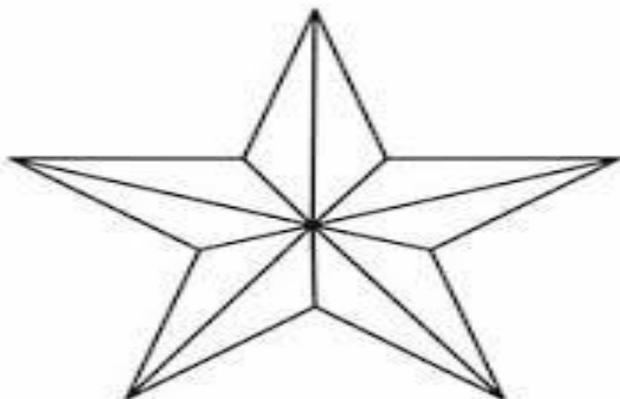
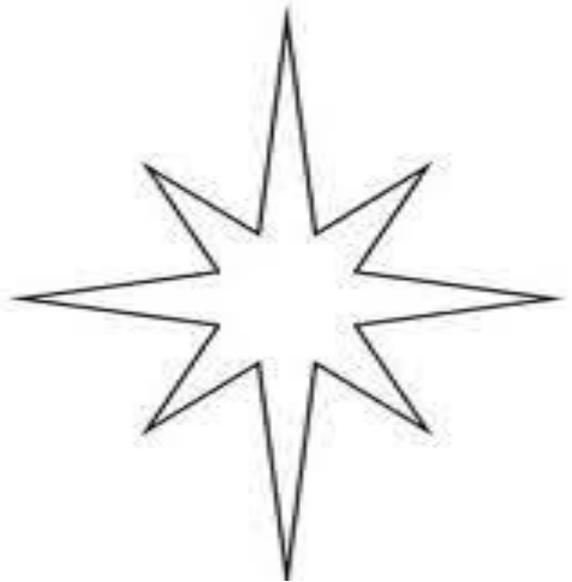
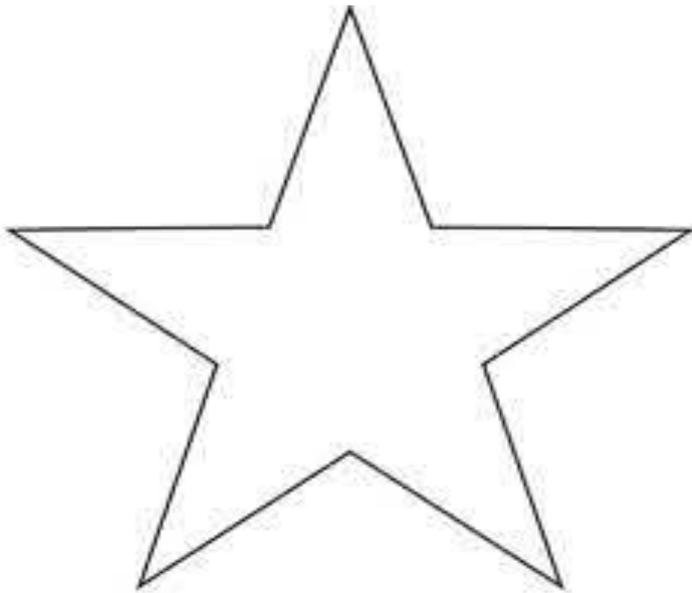
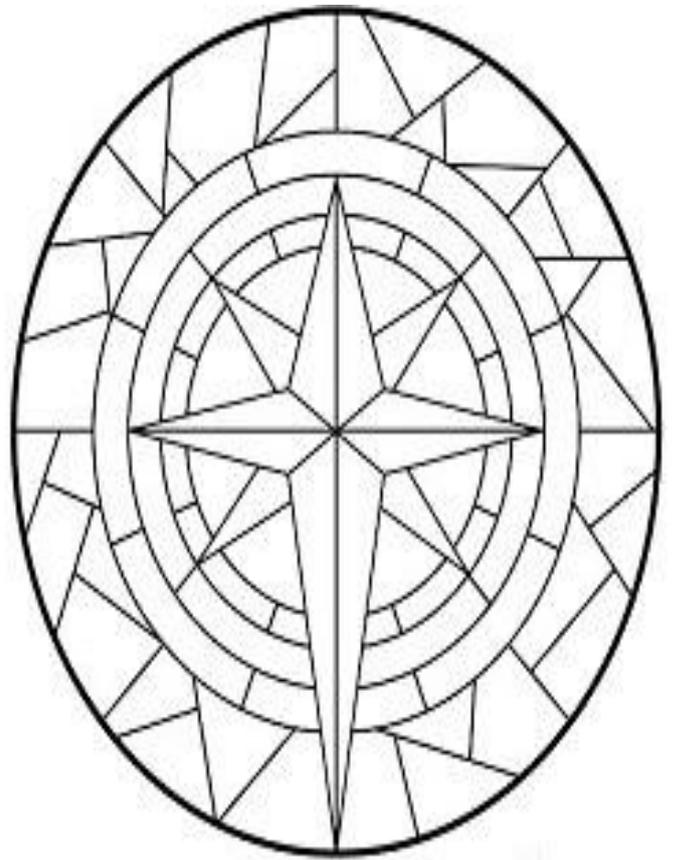
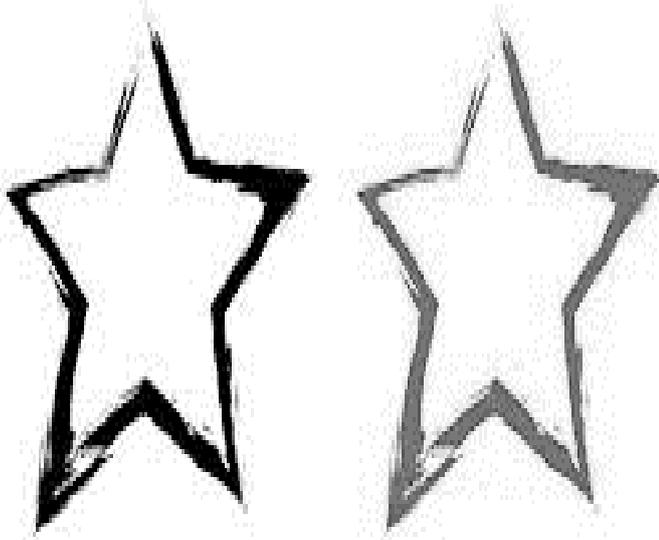
Place the shapes onto your background paper or card as you wish. You can then draw or stick anything extra you wish, to decorate the shapes. When you have arranged the shapes as you wish, glue them down.

Alternatively, create a hole near the top and thread some ribbon or string through to hang as a tree decoration or elsewhere.









Natural Patterns

Salt Dough Decorations

Have a look outside, collect some clean natural objects with patterns, such as ferns, sticks, fir cones or flowers.

The natural world is full of amazing trees and we are very lucky to have a great collection of these at Westonbirt Arboretum. However, if you look closely you will start to notice the natural world is also full of interesting patterns.



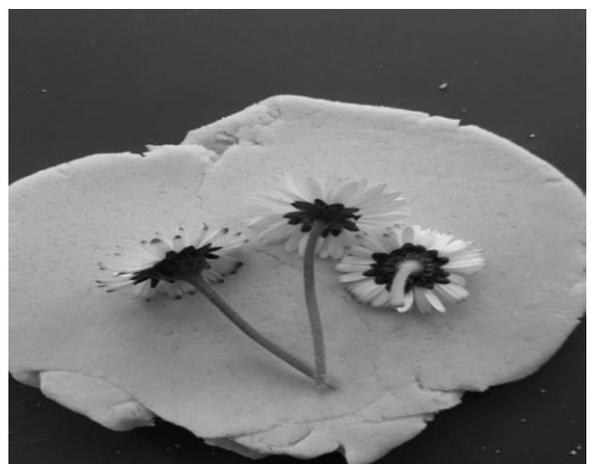
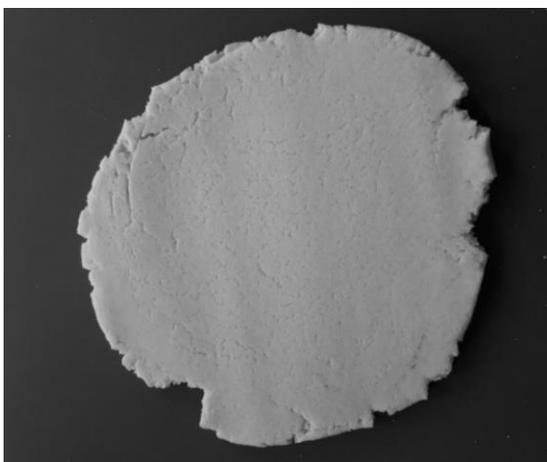
For this activity you will need some salt dough (see recipe on following page) or air drying clay, a rolling pin, biscuit cutter, natural objects with a raised pattern or texture, cocktail stick, string, oven or microwave (if using salt dough method), and paint (optional).

Step 1.

Roll out the salt dough to about 5mm thick.

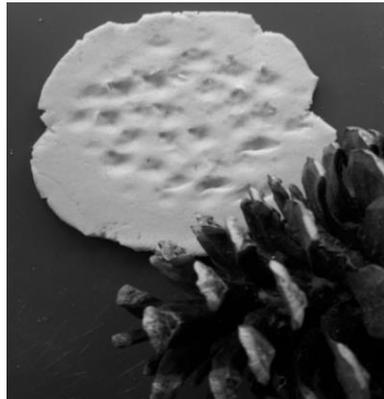
Step 2.

Place the natural object onto the dough and either use your hand to press it down or roll over with the rolling pin to make an imprint in the dough. Cut out a shape with the biscuit cutter.



Step 3.

Repeat with each natural object.



Step 4.

Use the cocktail stick to make a small hole near the top of each shape.



Step 5.

Bake in either the oven or microwave see instructions below.

Or if using air drying clay, leave to dry following the instructions on the pack.

Step 6.

Once hard, you can paint the decorations or leave them plain. Thread the string through the hole and tie to make a loop. Hang up to display.



Salt Dough Recipe (makes 4 small decorations)

2 tablespoons of salt

2 tablespoons of water

4 tablespoons of flour

Mix the salt and flour together in a bowl and stir in the water adding it

Oven bake

Bake the decorations in the oven preheated to 175°C (350°F) for about 30 minutes or until hard.

Microwave bake (quicker method)

Place the salt dough on a microwaveable plate.

Put in the microwave and heat for 10 seconds

Keep doing 10 seconds at a time until the salt dough is dried.

DO NOT OVERCOOK

Because each microwave is different and even your salt dough will be slightly different, microwaving for 10 seconds and checking means that you can avoid over-cooking, which can cause the salt dough to bubble or smoke!

December Wordsearch

PUDDING
TREE
CANDLE

TURKEY
STOCKING
SCARF

REINDEER
ROAST
SPROUTS

SHERRY
SLEDGE
FROST

S	P	R	O	U	T	S	A	F	C	R	E
T	A	O	G	S	J	T	U	R	K	E	Y
O	B	A	Q	C	D	R	N	O	L	I	S
C	I	S	Z	A	L	E	K	S	O	N	L
K	G	T	H	R	N	E	S	T	F	D	E
I	J	D	U	F	C	A	N	D	L	E	D
N	P	U	D	D	I	N	G	I	A	E	G
G	B	V	A	S	H	E	R	R	Y	B	E

Talking point: What do you think of when you think about December?

December Holidays around the World

Christmas is celebrated differently around the world: In Australia it falls during the summer, where it is popular to go camping or to the beach over the holiday. Some Australians decorate a “Christmas Bush,” a native Australian tree with small green leaves and flowers that turn red during the summer.

In the United States, they leave milk and cookies for Santa Claus. In Iceland, capital city Reykjavik turns into a winter wonderland with its Christmas market and for the children, there is not one but thirteen Santas, known as Yule Lads. One arrives each night in the thirteen days before Christmas, leaving gifts in shoes left on window sills.



Hanukkah, or Chanukah, is an eight-day Jewish celebration that commemorates the re-dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem following the Maccabean Revolt. Those who took part in the re-dedication witnessed what they believed to be a miracle. Even though there was only enough untainted oil to keep the menorah’s candles burning for a single day, the flames continued to burn for eight nights.

Also known as the Festival of Lights, Hanukkah begins on the 25th of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar. Celebrations revolve around lighting the menorah. On each of the holiday’s eight nights, another candle is added to the menorah after sundown. The ninth candle, called the shamash (“helper”), is used to light the others. Typically, blessings are recited and traditional Hanukkah foods such as potato pancakes (latkes) and jam-filled donuts (sufganiyot) are fried in oil. Other Hanukkah customs include playing with dreidels and exchanging gifts.



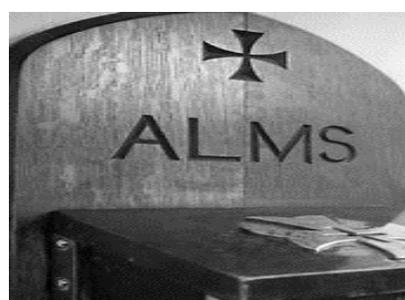
Kwanzaa was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966 after the Watts riots in Los Angeles. He founded US, a cultural organization, and started to research African “first fruit” (harvest) celebrations. From there, he combined aspects of several different harvest celebrations to form the basis of Kwanzaa.

The name Kwanzaa comes from the phrase “matunda ya kwanza” which means “first fruits” in Swahili. Each family celebrates Kwanzaa in its own way, but celebrations often include songs and dances, African drums, storytelling, poetry reading, and a large traditional meal. On each of the seven nights, families gather and a child lights one of the candles on the Kinara, then one of the seven principles, values of African culture, is discussed. An African feast, called a Karamu, is held on December 31.



Boxing Day takes place on December 26. Only celebrated in a few countries, the holiday originated in the United Kingdom during the Middle Ages. It was the day when the alms box, collection boxes for the poor often kept in churches, were opened and their content distributed, a tradition that still happens in some areas. It was also the day servants were traditionally given the day off to celebrate Christmas with their families.

Boxing Day has now become a public holiday in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, among other countries. In England, football matches, horse races and widespread sales in shops often take place on Boxing Day. The Irish refer to the holiday as St. Stephen’s Day, and they have their own tradition called hunting the wren, in which boys fasten a fake wren to a pole and parade it through town. The Bahamas celebrate Boxing Day with a street parade and festival called Junkanoo.



Winter Solstice is a Pagan celebration (also known as Yule) and is one of the oldest winter celebrations in the world.

Ancient people were hunters and spent most of their time outdoors. The seasons and weather played a very important part in their lives. Because of this many ancient people had a great reverence for, and even worshipped the sun. The Norsemen of Northern Europe saw the sun as a wheel that changed the seasons. It was from the word for this wheel, *houl*, that the word yule is thought to have come. At mid-winter the Norsemen lit bonfires, told stories and drank sweet ale.

The ancient Romans also held a festival to celebrate the rebirth of the year. Saturnalia ran for seven days from the 17th of December. It was a time when the ordinary rules were turned upside down. Men dressed as women and masters dressed as servants. The festival also involved decorating houses with greenery, lighting candles, holding processions and giving presents.

The Winter Solstice falls on the shortest day of the year (usually 21 or 22 December) and was celebrated in Britain long before the arrival of Christianity. The Druids (Celtic priests) would cut the mistletoe that grew on the oak tree and give it as a blessing. Oaks were seen as sacred and the winter fruit of the mistletoe was a symbol of life in the dark winter months.

It was also the Druids who began the tradition of the yule log. The Celts thought that the sun stood still for twelve days in the middle of winter and during this time a log was lit to conquer the darkness, banish evil spirits and bring luck for the coming year.

Many of these customs are still followed today. They have been incorporated into the Christian and secular celebrations of Christmas.



Recipe- Mince Pies

Cooking time: 10 to 30 mins **Serves:** Makes 12-14 deep mince pies

Ingredients for the pastry:

- 375g / 13oz plain flour
- 250g / 9oz butter, softened
- 125g / 4oz caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
- 1 medium free-range egg

Ingredients for the filling:

- 2 x 400g / 14oz jars mincemeat
- 2 tangerines or small oranges, zest grated and flesh chopped
- 1 apple, finely diced

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. To make the sweet pastry, rub the flour, butter, sugar and egg together with a splash of cold water until it just comes together as a dough. Do not over work the dough. Wrap the pastry in cling film and set aside to chill in the fridge while you make the filling.
2. To make the filling, turn the mincemeat out into a bowl, grate the zest of the tangerines into the mincemeat, then peel and chop the fruit. Throw the tangerine and apple pieces into the bowl and blend by hand.
3. Roll out the pastry to a 3mm / 1/8inch thickness. With a round pastry cutter, cut out 6 x 9cm / 3½inch discs of pastry. Press the pastry into the muffin cups and fill each one with a good helping of the mincemeat mixture, so that it reaches three-quarters of the way up the side of the pastry-lined cup.
4. With a fluted pastry cutter, cut out 6 x 8cm / 3¼ inch pastry circles for the lids (slightly bigger than the top of the muffin cups). Place a lid on top of each pie and gently push down. Sprinkle with caster sugar.
5. Bake for 20 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm with fresh cream.

Recipe Tips: Ready made pastry can be used instead of making it.
You can halve this recipe to make 6-7 deep mince pies.

Colour in



Talking point: What kinds of birds can you see above? What sort of birds do you usually see in the winter?

'Twas The Night Before Christmas
By Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:

"Now, *Dasher!* now, *Dancer!* now, *Prancer* and *Vixen!*
On, Comet! on, *Cupid!* on, *Donder* and *Blitzen!*
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes--how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."

Winter Quiz Answers

1. Jean Claude Killy
2. St Petersburg
3. The Stoat
4. The Winter's Tale
5. Winter Wonderland
6. Jamaica
7. Katherine Hepburn
8. The Ptarmigan
9. Blitzen (Blitzer)
10. The Snowman

Winter Unscramble Answers

1. Mulled Wine
2. Hot Chocolate
3. Turkey
4. Gingerbread
5. Cinnamon
6. Yule Log
7. Sprouts
8. Mince Pie
9. Fruit Cake

Song Lyric Answers

1. Snowman
2. Winter
3. Chestnuts
4. Made moan
5. Favourite things
6. Kindness
7. Corncob pipe
8. Quake

Blockbuster Answers

1. Wreath
2. Igloo
3. Nativity
4. Tinsel
5. Elf
6. Rings

W U R R N B D V O R H V G P N
F W E U Y L Z S I P R X N R Y
C Q T V Z Y M I B M X G I E M
Z G N U D O L X B B S C T S S
O B I D W W G M Z N L W A E H
I Y W B E X O O L E B M K N W
E T A L O C O H C T O H S T Q
L L V Q V J E A P X R K E S E
L F X M A E L M A A U C C L C
R O B I N P L M B Z E U I M E
S Y O E E R X F F E N U L L K
W C H R I S T M A S R A D S D
D L I H A K K U N A H N W C X
C F W W R V V W L P A M K K T
E N C H S P X Z W C W E B E U

4	3	5	2	6	9	7	8	1
6	8	2	5	7	1	4	9	3
1	9	7	8	3	4	5	6	2
8	2	6	1	9	5	3	4	7
3	7	4	6	8	2	9	1	5
9	5	1	7	4	3	6	2	8
5	1	9	3	2	6	8	7	4
2	4	8	9	5	7	1	3	6
7	6	3	4	1	8	2	5	9

Matching Words Answers

Gloves - Scarf Snowman - Carrot Red - Poinsettia Advent - Calendar
Carol - Singers Sleigh - Bells Wrapping - Paper Yule - Tide
Snow - Flakes North - Pole Good - Will

S	P	R	O	U	T	S	A	F	C	R	E
T	A	O	G	S	J	T	U	R	K	E	Y
O	B	A	Q	C	D	R	N	O	L	I	S
C	I	S	Z	A	L	E	K	S	O	N	L
K	G	T	H	R	N	E	S	T	F	D	E
I	J	D	U	F	C	A	N	D	L	E	D
N	P	U	D	D	I	N	G	I	A	E	G
G	B	V	A	S	H	E	R	R	Y	R	E

Fill in the Blanks Answers

Snowflake Fireplace Scarf Mistletoe Boots