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With No Grammar and No Textbooks!

Episode #070

Christmas Holidays 2018

Hi everyone! I'm your English teacher Georgiana, founder of speakenglishpodcast.com. My mission is to help you to speak English fluently.

In this episode, I'll talk about the Christmas holidays. And after that, you'll **practice your English speaking** with an exciting mini-story about a man dressed in red.

Alright! Let's start!

Ah! It's Christmas at last! I don't know about you, but I love this time of year. I start to think about what presents to give to my family and friends. Normally I make a list, so I don't forget anyone. Can you imagine forgetting someone? That would be terrible! That's why I start very early to plan what presents to give to everyone.

Finding the right gift for someone can be difficult, so what I usually do is **search online for gift ideas**. And buying online helps me avoid the holiday crowds.

To really feel the **Christmas spirit**, I like preparing a pot with a delightful scent using orange, cinnamon, apple cider, and clove. I let everything boil throughout the day so that the fragrance spreads throughout the house.

At this time of year, I also love to listen to **Christmas songs**. I can recommend some popular Christmas songs:

- "All I want for Christmas is You" by Mariah Carey.
- "Last Christmas" by Wham!
- "Let It, Snow! Let It, Snow! Let It Snow!" by Frank Sinatra.
- "Jingle Bell Rock" by Bobby Helms.
- and something from Michael Bublé's Christmas album.

Plus, I enjoy placing **Christmas lights and decorations**. I sometimes use social media to find unique decorations.

Did you know that some Americans use popcorn threaded on a string to help decorate their **Christmas Tree**?

Or that in New England, you can find some shops called "**Christmas Shops**." There they sell Christmas decorations and toys throughout the entire year!

There are many **classic Christmas movies** that you can watch on TV at this time of year. Here are some examples:

- It's A Wonderful Life (1946)

- Holiday Inn (1942)
- A Christmas Story (1983)
- A Charlie Brown Christmas (1965)
- Elf (2003)
- Bad Santa (2003)
- Love Actually (2003)
- The Man Who Invented Christmas (2017)

And it wouldn't be Christmas without a **tree**! Christmas trees are the symbol of the season. I love having a real tree and decorate it along with my family and friends.

The Christmas trees tradition started in Germany in the 16th century. Protestant reformer Martin Luther first added lighted candles to a tree to remind his children of the wonders of God's creation.

Nowadays, many Americans buy a fresh evergreen tree or a plastic model and decorate it with lights and ornaments.

Food also plays an essential part in the American Christmas. American families serve a variety of menus for Christmas dinner. A standard Christmas dinner usually includes turkey, dressing, potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, veggies, salad, and some dessert.

It's funny how many of us spend so much time preparing for this time of year, and yet Christmas is not always a magical holiday. At least not for everyone. Unfortunately, I've noticed that some families can't help arguing. For example, last year I had dinner at a restaurant on Christmas with some friends. Next to our table there was a family having a quiet dinner. I even told my friends that I thought they were the perfect family. Although unfortunately after dessert, they started arguing.

How about you? How do you celebrate Christmas? Do you have dinner with your family or do you go out with friends?

If you don't feel like cooking or visiting your family this year, why not **go on holiday**? I know it's crazy to take a last-minute Christmas flight when so many people travel, although you can always find a last-minute trip at a reasonable price. It would be ideal to escape the cold weather and enjoy warmer places.

Mini-Story

(improve your speaking)

And now I'm gonna tell a story, but with questions. I use this technique in my courses. It's very effective!

This is how it works:

1. First I give some information. Listen to it carefully.
2. After that, I start asking questions.

After every question, there will be a few seconds of silence. It's your turn to give a quick answer in English.

The answer can be short (yes/no, a name, etc.). After the moment of silence, I will provide a correct answer.

The goal, after some practice, is to be able to answer quickly and automatically.

Helpful hints:

- You can check the transcript if needed.
- Pause the audio to answer if necessary.
- Give short and easy answers, quickly. It's better to give a short and quick answer than a complicated and hesitant one. And it's okay if you answer with just one or a few words.
- Don't worry about making mistakes. You'll always hear the correct answer after the question.
- Try to answer out loud most of the time.
- When you listen for the first time, and the questions seem too complicated, it's ok to listen without answering.

Sometimes the questions may seem very easy. They are designed like that on purpose to build the foundations of your English. The point is not only "knowing" it, but "automating" it.

Let's get started!

There's a man dressed in red.

Is there a woman?

No. Not a woman. There is a man.

Is there a cat?

No. Not a cat. There's a man. There are no animals.

What is there?

A man. There is a man.

Is the man dressed in green?

No. The man is not dressed in green. He's dressed in red.

The man's name is Santa.

Is the man's name Bill?

No. His name is not Bill. His name is Santa Claus.

Is his name John?

No! Neither. His name is Santa, not John.

What's our friend's name?

Santa. Our friend's name is Santa Claus.

Who's Santa Claus? A cat or a man?

A man. Santa is a man.

Santa has the best job in the world.

Does Santa have a bad job?

No. Santa doesn't have a bad job. He has a good job. The best job in the world!

Does Santa have the worst job in the world?

No. No. Santa doesn't have the worst job in the world. He has the best, not the worst.

What does Santa have?

The best job in the world.

Who has the best job in the world?

Santa. Santa has the best job in the world.

What's Santa's job like? Good or bad?

Good. Very good. Santa's job is the best job in the world.

Santa only works one day a year!

Does Santa work three days a year?

No. No. He only works one day a year.

Does Santa work every day?

No! Santa doesn't work every day. He only works one day a year.

Who works one day a year?

Santa. Santa, our friend, works one day a year.

Is it a good job?

Yes, it's a good job. He only works one day, no more.

Why is it a good job?

Because he only works one day a year. It is good job because he only works one day a year.

Good. Santa is dressed in red and has the best job in the world.

Santa has a problem.

Does Santa have a car?

No! Santa doesn't have a car. He has a problem.

Does Santa have a problem?

Yes, Santa has a problem.

Does Santa have two problems?

No. Santa doesn't have two problems. He has one problem.

Does Georgiana have a problem?

No. Georgiana doesn't have a problem. Santa has a problem.

Who has a problem?

Santa. Santa has a problem.

Santa doesn't have a map. He needs a map to work!

Does Santa have a map?

No. Santa doesn't have a map.

What doesn't Santa have?

A map. He doesn't have a map, and he needs a map to work.

Does Santa need a map to work?

Yes, Santa needs a map to work.

What does Santa need?

A map. Our friend needs a map to work.

Poor Santa. He has the best job in the world. He only works one day a year, but he needs a map to do his work.

Finally, Santa decides to buy a GPS.

Does Santa decide to buy a bike?

No.No. Not a bike. He decides to buy a GPS.

Does Santa decide not to work?

No! Neither. He doesn't decide this. He decides to work and buys a GPS.

What does Santa buy?

A GPS. Santa buys a GPS.

Who buys a GPS? Georgiana?

No! Not Georgiana. Santa buys a GPS, not Georgiana.

What does Santa decide to buy?

A GPS. He decides to buy a GPS. He doesn't have one and decides to buy a GPS.

Now Santa only works half a day a year!

Does Santa work two days a year?

No.No. Santa doesn't work two days a year - he only works half a day!

How many days does he work?

Only half a day. Half a day is less than a day.

Does Santa have the best job in the world?

Yes. Santa has the best job in the world! With a GPS, he can work faster.

Now he only works half a day.

All right! This is the end of this mini-story. This technique can help you improve your English fluency. With the questions and answers, you will automate your speech because you'll translate less and less in your mind. If you like these types of lessons, check out my English courses at:

courses.SpeakEnglishPodcast.com

You have hours of mini-stories with professional audio and text. Honestly, I think it's the best way to get excellent spoken English.

All right! This episode ends right here.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

I'll be back next year with a new episode!
Take care!

Bye! Bye!



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