Christmas: Then and Now

Level: B1 (Preliminary) | Speaking, Listening, Reading and Language focus (CambridgeMB)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Part 1: Warm-up

A. Talk to your partner.

1. What do you usually do during your winter holidays?

2. Who do you spend time with? Where?

3. Do you think your grandparents' holidays were different from yours? How?



B. Think about your grandparents' childhood. Tick (✓) the things you think they used to do in winter.

☐ play cards or board games ☐ send text messages ☐ watch streaming series ☐ write letters to relatives ☐ tell stories after dinner ☐ play video games ☐ walk to visit family

Compare your ideas with a partner. Do you agree?



Part 2: Listening



Your teacher will play or read each part twice.

Part 2A: Five short conversations: Christmas Listening Video

For each question, circle the right answer: A, B or C.

1. How did the man's family get to his grandmother's house when he was a boy?

A) by bus B) on foot C) by car



2. What are the two friends going to do at Grandpa's house?

A) watch TV B) play cards C) go for a walk



3. When will the woman's sister arrive?

A) on the 23rd B) on the 24th C) on the 25th



4. What does Mum say about homework?

A) He doesn't have to do any. B) He must do an hour a day. C) He can do it at the weekend.



5. How much was the train ticket to Granada this year?

A) €20 B) €25 C) €30



Part 2B: Paco's childhood winters

A boy recorded his grandfather for a school project. Listen and complete the notes: Grandpa's Christmas Story Write one word or number in each gap.



Paco's winters when he was a boy

• Lived in a small village in the _____ (1)

• Mother's special food: _____ (2) soup with bread

• Travelled to his grandparents' village in a cart pulled by a _____ (3)

• The journey took _____ (4) hours

• On 6th January he usually got a small toy and an _____ (5)

• Favourite toy: a bag of _____ (6)

Part 3: Reading



Read the story. Five sentences have been removed from it. Choose from the sentences **A–H** the one which fits each gap (**1–5**). There are three sentences you do not need

Christmas with Grandma Rosa

Every year, on the afternoon of 23rd December, I go to my grandmother's flat to help her get ready for Christmas. This year, I wasn't very excited. I had a lot of homework, and my friends were meeting in town. **(1)** _____ But when I arrived, Grandma was already waiting at the door with an apron for me.

"Today we're making polvorones," she said. "And you're going to help."

In the kitchen, I opened my phone to look for a recipe. Grandma laughed. **(2)** _____ She took an old notebook out of a drawer. The pages were yellow, and the writing was small and beautiful.

While we mixed the flour and the sugar, Grandma told me stories about Christmas when she was young. **(3)** _____ "We were happy with a few sweets and one present," she said.

After an hour, the first tray came out of the oven. They looked a bit strange: mine were too big, and hers were perfect. **(4)** _____ She pretended not to notice, and we both started laughing.

Then I had an idea. I took a photo of us with the biscuits and sent it to my cousins. **(5)** _____ Grandma watched the screen and smiled. "Maybe your phone isn't so bad," she said.

That evening, I forgot about my homework and my friends. It was the best part of Christmas so far.

Sentences



A I tried to hide my biscuits behind hers.

B I thought it was going to be a boring afternoon.

C My grandfather used to play the guitar for everyone.



D Within a minute, my cousins had replied with hearts and a video of their own.

E She said that children didn't use to get many presents at Christmas.

F "You don't need that," she said. "I know a better way."

G Grandma asked me to bring some flour and sugar.

H The kitchen smelled of cinnamon and warm butter.

Part 4: Language focus



A. Used to: We use used to + verb for habits and situations in the past that are not true now.

• Positive: People **used to** play cards after dinner.

• Negative: Children **didn't use to** have many presents.

• Question: **Did you use to** visit your grandparents every holiday?

Complete the sentences. Use used to, didn't use to or did ... use to and the verb in brackets.

1. My grandfather _____ (walk) to school in the snow.

2. When my mum was little, she _____ (not / have) a mobile phone.

3. _____ you _____ (spend) the holidays at your grandparents' house when you were a child?

4. We _____ (not / have) a television, so we _____ (tell) stories after dinner.

B. Advice and obligation

• You **should** wrap the presents. (should = good idea)

• You **shouldn't** open them early. (shouldn't = bad idea)

• We **have to** be home by nine. (have to = it is necessary)

• You **don't have to** wear a costume. (don't have to = not necessary)



You **should** wrap the presents

Complete the sentences. Use the words in the box : should shouldn't have to don't have to

Example: You ***shouldn't*** run in the house. It's dangerous.

1. It's a holiday, so we _____ get up early.
2. You _____ eat so many sweets. You'll feel ill.
3. You _____ tell Grandma about her present. It's a secret!
4. That film is great! You _____ watch it.
5. We _____ buy a new tree. We can use the old one.
6. You _____ show your ticket at the door. It's the rule.
7. You _____ say thank you when someone gives you a present. It's polite.
8. In my grandmother's house, we _____ take our shoes off. It's the rule.

Speaking. Your English friend is coming to spend the holidays with your family. Tell your partner three things your friend should do and two things your friend shouldn't do 	*S/he should*_____ *S/he shouldn't*_____ *S/he should*_____ *S/he shouldn't*_____ *S/he should*_____

Part 5: Speaking

A. Discussion (pairs)

1. Do you think holidays were better in the past or are they better now? Why?

2. What is the most important holiday tradition in your family?

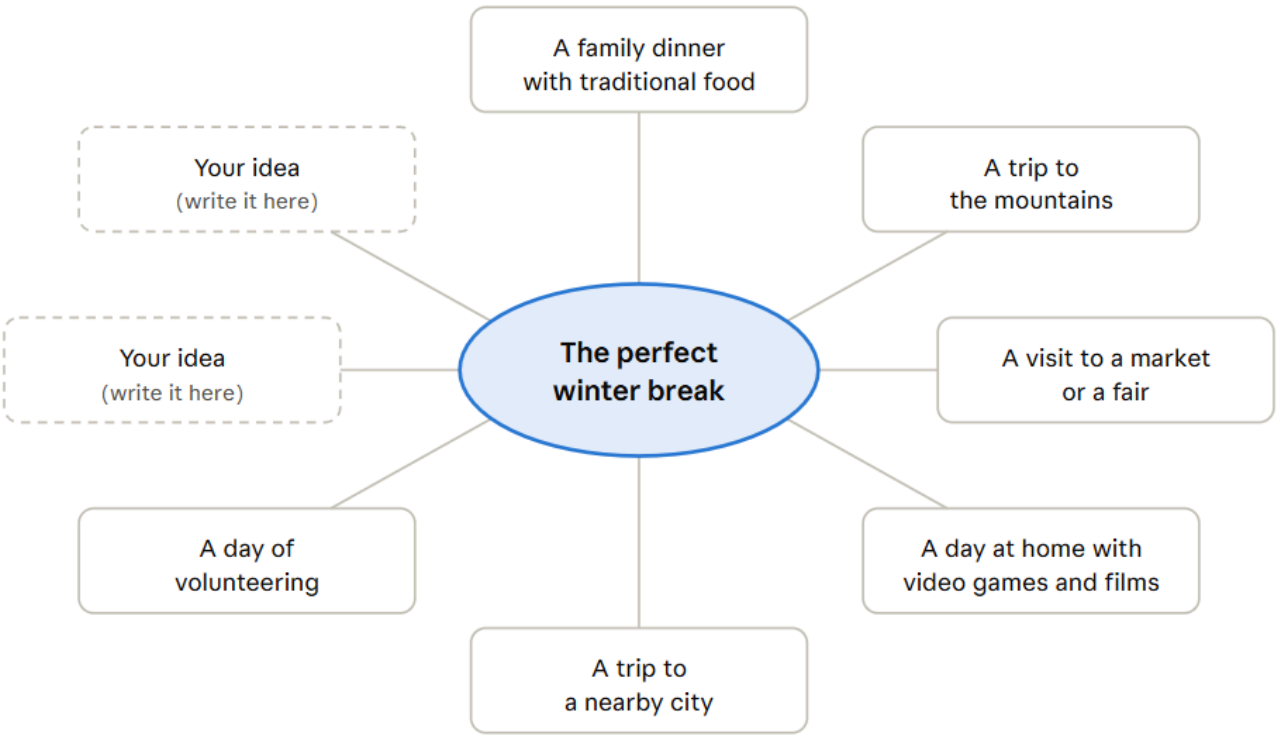
3. How much time do you spend on your phone or on games during the holidays? Is that a good idea?

4. If you could invent a new holiday tradition, what would it be?

B. Plan the perfect winter break (pairs)

Your English friend is visiting for one week. Talk together and decide which three of these activities are the best to do (include two of your own!). Give reasons.

Plan the perfect winter break: choose three



Teacher Section

Answer key

• Part 2A: 1 B, 2 B, 3 B, 4 A, 5 B

• Part 2B: 1 mountains, 2 lentil, 3 donkey, 4 two (2), 5 orange, 6 marbles

• Part 3: 1 B, 2 F, 3 E, 4 A, 5 D (not used: C, G, H)

• Part 4A: 1 used to walk, 2 didn't use to have, 3 Did … use to spend, 4 didn't use to have / used to tell

• Part 4B: 1 don't have to, 2 shouldn't, 3 shouldn't, 4 should, 5 don't have to, 6 have to, 7 should, 8 have to

• Part 1B, Part 4B follow-up, Part 5 and Part 6: free answers. Listen for used to, should / shouldn't and have to / don't have to in context.

Listening script

Part 2A

1. Woman: Did your family do anything special at New Year? Man: My dad says that when he was a boy, they used to walk to his grandma's house every New Year's Eve, because they didn't have a car.

2. Girl: I'm so bored. There's no Wi-Fi at Grandpa's house! Boy: That's the point. We can play cards instead. It's actually fun.

3. Man: Is your sister coming for the holidays? Woman: She can't come before the 23rd, because she has to work. But she'll catch a train on the 24th, so she'll be with us for dinner.

4. Boy: Should I take my laptop on holiday? Mum: I'd leave it at home. We're going to the mountains to relax, and you don't have to do any homework this time.

5. Woman: How much was your train ticket to Granada? Man: Twenty-five euros. It was thirty last year, so I was happy.

Part 2B

When I was a boy, I lived in a small village in the mountains. We didn't have television, so in winter the whole family used to sit in the kitchen next to the fire. My mother always made a big pot of lentil soup, and we ate it with bread. Nobody went on holiday then. Instead, we visited my grandparents, who lived in the next village. We went there in a cart pulled by a donkey, and it took two hours! For the Three Kings on the sixth of January, we put our shoes by the window. We didn't get lots of presents like children today. I usually got an orange and one small toy, and I was very happy. My favourite toy was a bag of marbles, and I played with them with my friends in the street until it got dark. Honestly, I think we had more fun than children do now, but my granddaughter doesn't agree!