

Christmas

- The following cultural notes describe both the origins and the current traditions of this festival. Explain as much as you feel is relevant to the class.
- Christmas Day is celebrated in countries around the world on 25 December, to commemorate the birth of Jesus. In the weeks before Christmas, people decorate a Christmas tree with ornaments. They usually put a star on the top to remind them of the story of the birth of Jesus and the Three Wise Men. People also like to send each other Christmas cards with typical Christmas scenes and a Christmas message. Younger children write a letter to Father Christmas, or Santa Claus as he is sometimes called, to tell him what they would like for Christmas. On Christmas Eve, 24 December, they hang a Christmas stocking at the end of their bed or by the fireplace, if they have one. Traditionally Father Christmas arrives in his sleigh pulled by reindeer. He flies through the air, lands on the roofs of children's houses and delivers the presents by climbing down the chimneys with a huge sack of presents!
- On Christmas Day, families come together to eat a traditional midday meal. This consists of roast turkey, with vegetables. Dessert is a rich fruit pudding served with a brandy sauce that is set alight! The table is decorated with candles and brightly coloured crackers. Everyone pulls the crackers, which make a loud bang. Children love to look inside the crackers to find a colourful paper Christmas hat, a small toy and a Christmas joke.

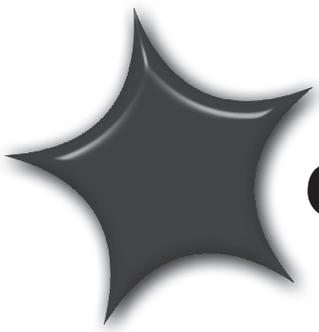
Christmas worksheet 1

- Pupils need brown, grey and red pens or pencils, scissors and glue.
- Pupils follow the instructions to make a Christmas robin decoration.
- **Optional follow-up activity:** Tell the class the legend about the robin's red breast. In the old days, robins were only brown and white. When Jesus was born, he was very cold. The fire was going out and the Virgin Mary was too tired to blow on the embers. She asked the oxen but they said no. She asked the ass but he said no. A robin came into the stable. The robin started flapping his wings to make some heat for the baby. A spark from the fire landed on the robin's breast and turned it red. Jesus was warm so the Virgin Mary said that, from then on, robins could always have red breasts.

Ask the pupils if they know any legends about other animals.

Christmas worksheet 2

- Pupils need three cardboard toilet roll cylinders, crepe or tissue paper, thread, stickers, sticky tape and scissors.
- Pupils follow the instructions to make a Christmas cracker. Help them to understand the joke ('rain, dear' sounds like 'reindeer', the animal that pulls Father Christmas's sleigh. 'Dear' is a term of endearment often used by older people).
- **Optional follow-up activity:** Pupils tell Christmas jokes. Help them to say them in English. Suggestions for Christmas jokes: What falls in the North Pole, but never gets hurt? Snow! What do monkeys sing at Christmas? Jungle Bells!



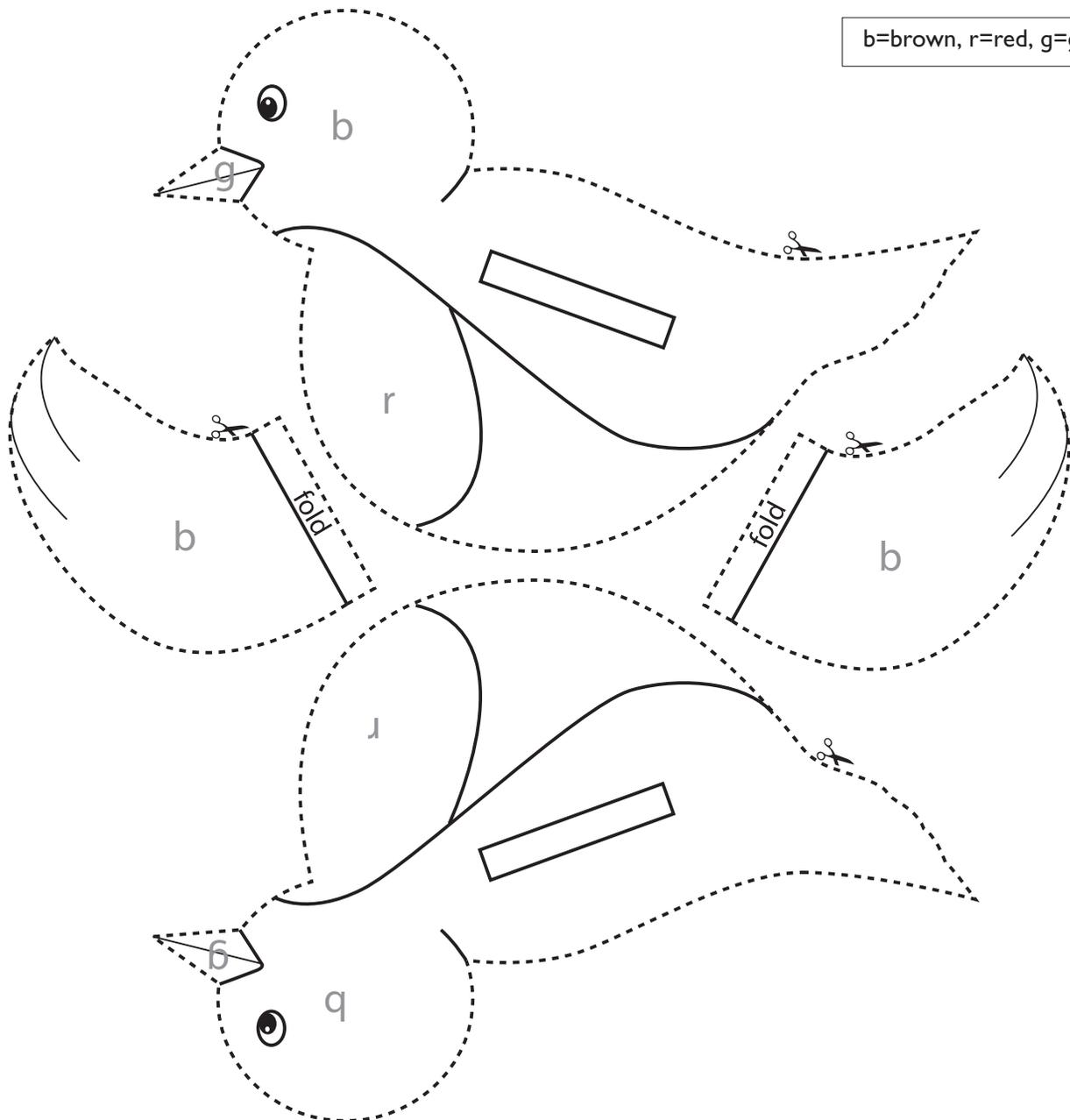
Christmas worksheet 1



Read and make.

A Christmas decoration

- Colour the robins.
- Cut along the dotted lines.
- Glue the two halves together, inserting a straw between the two halves.
- Fold the top of the wings and glue them to the robin.



b=brown, r=red, g=grey



Christmas worksheet 2

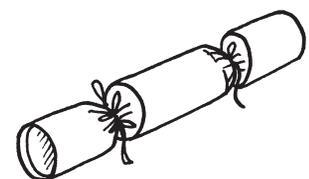
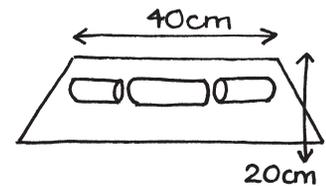
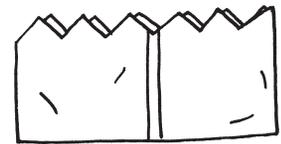


Read and make.

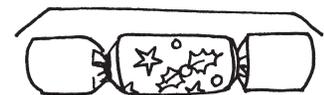
A Christmas cracker



- Make a paper hat with crepe or tissue paper.
- Cut out the joke.
- Put the hat and the joke inside a cardboard cylinder.
- Place another cylinder on each side of this one.
- Cut a piece of crepe or tissue paper 40cm x 20cm.
- Roll the crepe or tissue paper around the three cylinders.
- Tie thread between the cylinders.
- Take out the two end cylinders.
- Decorate the cracker with stickers.
- Pull it!



HAPPY CHRISTMAS!



Father Christmas: *What's the weather like?*
 Mother Christmas: *It looks like rain, dear.*