

Name _____

Sweden

Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

One of the largest holiday celebrations in Sweden is St. Lucia's Day, or St. Lucy's Day. It is celebrated on December 13th. The holiday originated from stories told by Monks. St. Lucia was a young Christian girl who was *martyred*, or killed for her faith in 304. It is believed that she would secretly bring food to the persecuted Christians in Rome. She would wear candles on her head so she could carry food with both of her hands. St. Lucia's Day is now celebrated by a girl dressing in a white dress with a red sash around her waist. She also wears a crown of candles on her head. Real candles are still used!

On Christmas Eve, people usually exchange presents. Families attend church on Christmas morning. Families often have goats made of straw in the house to protect the Christmas tree. People use straw to decorate to remind them that Jesus was born in a manger. Even Christmas decorations and Christmas ornaments are made of straw.



1. What holiday is celebrated on December 13th? _____
2. Who told the stories of St. Lucia? _____
3. What does martyred mean? _____
4. Why did St. Lucia wear candles on her head? _____
5. What do families do on Christmas morning? _____
6. Why do they decorate with straw? _____

Name _____

Australia

Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

The Christmas holiday comes towards the beginning of the summer in Australia. Children are out of school for their summer holidays from mid December to early February. The warm weather means that many families celebrate while they are camping or even at the beach.

Australians decorate for the Christmas season with Christmas lights on their houses. They also decorate with bunches of "Christmas Bush". Christmas Bush is a tree native to Australia. It has small green leaves and cream colored flowers. During the summer, the flowers turn a deep shiny red. This usually happens during the week of Christmas.

When Santa gets to Australia, he changes into less hot clothing. He also gives his reindeer a rest and uses kangaroos, or boomers. "Six White Boomers" is a popular Australian Christmas song. The main Christmas meal is eaten at lunch. It usually consists of barbecue or seafood. Australians also celebrate Boxing Day, or the day after Christmas. It is celebrated by barbecues and trips to the beach.



1. Why is it hot during the Christmas holiday in Australia? _____

2. When are Australian students out of school for summer? _____

3. What is Christmas Bush? _____

4. What do you think that "boomers" are? _____

5. Why does Santa need to change when he gets to Australia? _____

6. What is Boxing Day? _____

Name _____

Canada

Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

Canada is a very large and diverse country. People with many different cultural backgrounds live there. Because there are so many different backgrounds, there are many different holiday traditions. Some of these holiday traditions come from France, England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Norway, Ukraine, and people native to Canada.

Most Canadians open their Christmas presents on Christmas Eve. There are some that only open their stockings on Christmas Eve. Canadians decorate their houses with Christmas trees, lights, and other Christmas decorations. Stockings are traditionally hung from fireplaces for Santa to fill.

The traditional Christmas holiday meal in Canada is usually turkey and other side dishes such as mashed potatoes and vegetables. Desserts include mincemeat tarts and plum puddings.

There is a Santa Claus Parade in Toronto. It's one of the largest and oldest Santa parades in the world. It started in 1913 when Santa was pulled through the streets of Toronto. Children followed him along the route and marched with him. Now over 2,000 people take part in the parade.



1. Name 4 different countries from which

Canadians may get their holiday traditions.

2. When do most Canadians open their Christmas presents? _____

3. How do Canadians decorate for Christmas? _____

4. Describe their traditional Christmas meal.

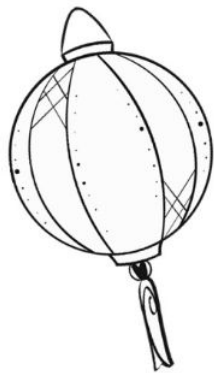
5. How did the Santa parade in Toronto begin? _____

Name _____

China

Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.



The Christmas holidays are only celebrated in large cities. This is because only one percent of people in China are Christians. In large cities there are Christmas trees and other Christmas decorations in department stores and on the streets. Santa Claus is called "Shen Dan Lao Ren".

More and more young people in China are celebrating the Christmas holidays. Christmas parties are popular and fun. Christmas is also a time for couples to give gifts to one another, similar to Valentine's Day. They may even go out for special dinners.

Only a very few people put up Christmas trees in their homes. Live Christmas trees are not available, so Christmas trees are *artificial*, or not real. These Christmas trees are usually decorated with paper chains, paper flowers, and paper lanterns. These trees are often called trees of light instead of Christmas trees. Most of the world's Christmas decorations are made in China, however very few of these decorations are actually used in China.

1. Where are the Christmas holidays celebrated in China? _____

2. Where can you see Christmas decorations in the large cities _____

3. Christmas is celebrated similar to what other holiday? _____

4. What do you think that *artificial* means? _____

5. How do people in China decorate their Christmas trees? _____

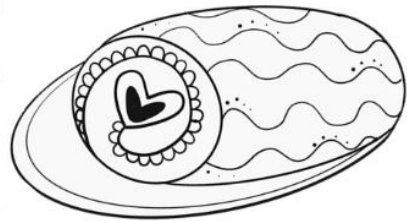
6. Why might people find it ironic that most Christmas decorations are made in China? _____

France

Reading Comprehension

Name _____

Read the passage below and answer the questions.



Yule logs are a part of French holiday tradition. Yule logs are made of cherry wood and burned in homes. On Christmas Eve, the log is carried into the

home where it is burned all night. The custom is to leave the yule log and candles burning all night in case Mary and baby Jesus come during the night.

In France, Santa Claus is known as Pere Noel. Children leave their shoes by the fireplace filled with carrots and treats for Pere Noel's donkey. Pere Noel takes the treats and in return leaves presents if the child has been good throughout the year. Usually the presents that are left are small enough to fit in the shoes, like candy, small toys, and money.

The main meal that is eaten during the holidays is called Reveillon. It is eaten on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning. Popular dishes include roast turkey with chestnuts, roast goose, oysters, lobster, venison (deer meat), and cheeses. A chocolate sponge cake log, called a buche de Noel is often eaten for dessert.

1. What are yule logs made from? _____

2. According to custom, why is the yule log left burning all night? _____

3. Who is Pere Noel? _____

4. What do children leave for Pere Noel? _____

5. What is Reveillon? _____

6. What is venison? _____

7. How is Reveillon similar or different than your holiday meal? _____

Name _____

Germany

Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

Advent plays a large role in the holiday season in Germany. Different types of Advent calendars are used in German homes. There are Advent calendars made out of cardboard, wood, or wreaths. There are 24 boxes or openings on Advent calendars. There is a small present in each box or opening. A new box or opening is opened each day before Christmas.

It is believed that the tradition of the Christmas tree began in Germany. Adding candles to Christmas trees was first done by Martin Luther 500 years ago. He was walking home one night and was *awed*, or amazed by the twinkling stars that he could see shining through the evergreen trees. In order to recreate this scene for his family, he placed an evergreen tree in his home and wired its branches with candles. Traditionally, Christmas trees are brought into homes and decorated on Christmas Eve.

Children in Germany call Santa "Kris Kringle" or "St. Nickolas." They write him letters and place them on the windowsill at the beginning of Advent. He delivers presents on Christmas Eve.



1. What can Advent calendars be made from? _____

2. What is behind each box on an Advent calendar? _____

3. Who is believed to start the tradition of lights on Christmas trees? _____

4. What do you think *awed* means? _____

5. Today, what is used instead of candles on Christmas trees? _____

6. What two names are used for Santa in Germany? _____

Name _____

Greece

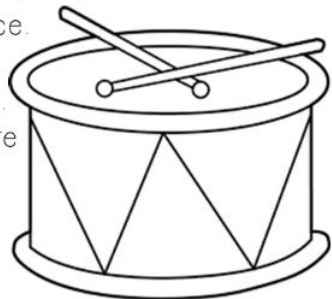
Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

In Greece, children go out on Christmas Eve and sing "kalanda" or Christmas carols. This is especially popular for boys. They sing while playing the triangle and drums. They often carry with them model boats which are painted gold. Carrying a boat is an old custom in the Greek Islands. If the children sing well they may be rewarded with money or sweet things to eat.

The main meal at Christmas is usually pork or lamb that is roasted in an oven. It can be served with spinach and other vegetables along with cheese pie. *Baklava* is a popular Christmas and New Year's food. Baklava is a sweet pastry filled with nuts and sweetened with honey or syrup. Baklava can be eaten for breakfast or just as a snack.

Santa is referred to as *Aghios Vassilis* in Greece. He brings presents to children on January the 1st. Greek people also celebrate Epiphany on January 6th. Epiphany festivals include blessings of boats, music, dancing, and lots of food.



1. What is "kalanda"? _____

2. What instruments do they play when they sing kalanda? _____

3. What may happen if they sing well? _____

4. What is baklava? _____

5. When does Santa bring presents? _____

6. What can be a part of Epiphany festivals? _____

Name _____

Italy

Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.



The Nativity crib scene is an important part of Christmas holiday traditions in Italy. The cribs are used to tell the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus. This tradition was made popular by St. Francis Assisi in 1223. He had visited Bethlehem and saw the Nativity cribs they displayed in their homes. The city of Naples in Italy is now world famous for its cribs and crib making. People display them in their homes and

churches have large Nativity scenes. The figure of baby Jesus is not placed in the crib until the night of December 24th, or Christmas Eve.

Most families do not eat meat on Christmas Eve. Instead, they eat a seafood meal before they attend church services. In America, Italian-American families may eat several different fish dishes. This is known as the Feast of Seven Fishes. This tradition was started by Italian immigrants in the 1800s.

On Christmas day Babbo Natale, or Santa Claus, brings gifts. On the night of Epiphany, children believe that an old lady named Befana brings presents for them. Children leave stockings by the fireplace for Befana to fill.

1. What do the Nativity cribs represent?

2. Who started the tradition of Nativity cribs? _____

3. When is baby Jesus placed in cribs? _____

4. What do most Italian families eat on Christmas Eve? _____

5. What do they call Santa in Italy? _____

6. When did the Feast of Seven Fishes begin? _____

7. Who is Befana? _____

Name _____

Japan

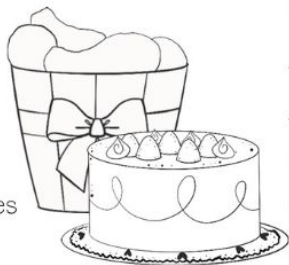
Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

The Christmas holidays have only been celebrated in Japan for the last few decades. Christmas is not really viewed as a religious celebration. Instead, it's a time to spread happiness. Christmas Eve is often celebrated more than Christmas day. Christmas Eve is considered a romantic day, similar to Valentine's Day. Couples spend the day together and exchange gifts. People may go for walks to see Christmas lights or have a nice meal at a restaurant. Getting a table at a restaurant on Christmas Eve can be difficult since it's so popular!

On Christmas day, fried chicken is often eaten. It is actually the busiest time of the year for fried chicken restaurants like KFC. People often have to place their orders for fried chicken in advance to make sure that they can get it. Fried chicken became popular in 1974 after an advertising campaign called "Kentucky for Christmas."

The traditional Japanese Christmas food is Christmas cake. It's a sponge cake decorated with strawberries and whipped cream.



1. Christmas in Japan is celebrated similar to what holiday? _____

2. What might people in Japan do on Christmas Eve? _____

3. What is a popular Christmas meal? _____

4. Why do people have to order their food in advance? _____

5. Describe Christmas cake. _____

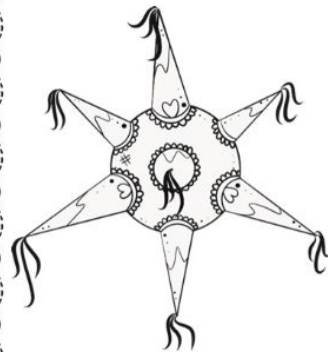
6. What fast food would you pick to eat on Christmas? _____

Mexico

Reading Comprehension

Name _____

Read the passage below and answer the questions.



Christmas is celebrated all over Mexico. The Posada procession is a popular tradition. From December 16th to Christmas children perform the Posadas. This *procession*, or movement of people, is held to celebrate

the Christmas story. It portrays Mary and Joseph looking for someplace to stay. The outside of homes are decorated with evergreens and paper lanterns. Children travel from house to house and are told that there is no room. At the last house they are told that they can stay and they have a Posada party. On the final night of the Posada on Christmas Eve, a baby Jesus is placed in the manger.

There are often pinatas at Posada parties. A pinata is made of clay or paper and is filled with candy and treats. Children take turns hitting the pinata while blindfolded. When it busts open, children rush forward to collect the treats and candy

1. When do children perform the Posadas?

2. What is a procession? _____

3. What does the Posadas portray?

4. What happens on the last night? _____

5. What is a piñata? _____

6. What would you like to be filled in a piñata? _____

Name _____

Spain

Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

Most people in Spain celebrate the Christmas holiday by attending a special midnight mass called "La Misa Del Gallo," or the Mass of the Rooster. It is called this because a rooster is supposed to have crowed the night that Jesus was born. The main Christmas meal is eaten before mass on Christmas Eve. It's usually stuffed turkey or seafood like lobster or crabs.

People in Spain also celebrate another festival after Christmas called Epiphany. It is celebrated on January 6th. It is celebrated with the "Fiesta de los Reyes Mages," or the Festival of Three Magic Kings. It celebrates when the three kings or wise men brought gifts to baby Jesus. Children receive some gifts on Christmas Day, but most are opened at Epiphany. Children believe that the wise men bring them gifts. Letters are written to the three wise men asking for toys. Children leave their shoes on windowsills or under Christmas trees to be filled with presents. Some people even leave buckets of water for the camels that bring the wise men. Children who have not been good may receive pieces of coal.



1. What does "La Misa Del Gallo" mean? _____

2. Why do they celebrate the Mass of the Rooster? _____

3. What day is Epiphany celebrated? _____

4. What does the Festival of Three Magic Kings celebrate? _____

5. Where do children leave their shoes for the wise men? _____

6. What is received by children who have not been good? _____

Name _____

United States

Reading Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

Because the United States is a multi-cultural country, there are many different traditions and ways that people celebrate the holidays and Christmas. Christmas is celebrated on the 25th of December. Families decorate their homes with lights and other decorations. Santa leaves children presents under Christmas trees and in stockings.

Jewish families celebrate Hanukkah, which honors the dedicating of the second temple in Jerusalem. Hanukkah last eight days. It can take place from late November to late December. Many families celebrate by exchanging gifts each night of the eight day celebration. The lighting of the menorah is a special tradition. It has nine candles and a different one is lit each day of Hanukkah.

Kwanzaa is a celebration of African-American culture and heritage. It lasts from December 26th to January 1st. Kwanzaa comes from a Swahili phrase that means "first fruits of the harvest." Seven different principles are recognized each day of the celebration. It is often celebrated along with Christmas.



1. What does multi-cultural mean? _____

2. When is Christmas celebrated? _____

3. Where does Santa leave presents? _____

4. Who celebrates Hanukkah? _____

5. Describe the menorah. _____

6. What does the phrase Kwanzaa mean? _____

7. What holiday do you celebrate? _____

Which Country?

Comprehension

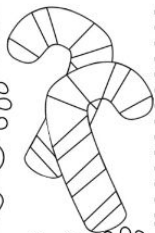
Name _____

Using your information, answer the questions below.

1. In which country do children perform the Posada? _____
2. In which country do they celebrate St. Lucia's Day? _____
3. In which country does Santa deliver presents with 6 kangaroos?

4. In which country do children await gifts from Befana? _____
5. In which country do children believe that the three kings bring them gifts on Epiphany? _____
6. In which country do people celebrate by eating baklava? _____
7. In which country do families celebrate with yule logs? _____
8. In which country do people celebrate by going out to eat dinner?

9. In which country do families celebrate with different types of Advent calendars? _____
10. In which countries do families celebrate by hanging stockings and awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus? _____
11. In which country do families have cookie parties? _____
12. In which country is Christmas mainly celebrated in large cities? _____

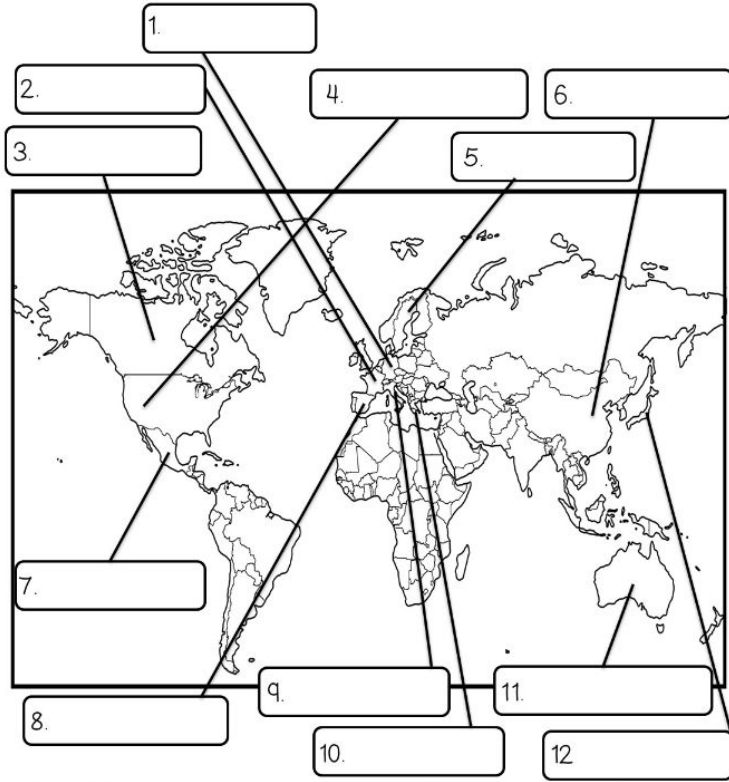


| | | | |
|---------|---------------|--------|-----------|
| Germany | Mexico | Spain | Australia |
| Japan | Greece | Italy | Sweden |
| Canada | United States | France | Japan |

Name _____ **Holidays Around the World**

(Geography II)

Label the map correctly.



United States

Canada

Sweden

Mexico

Australia

Japan

China

Spain

Germany

France

Greece

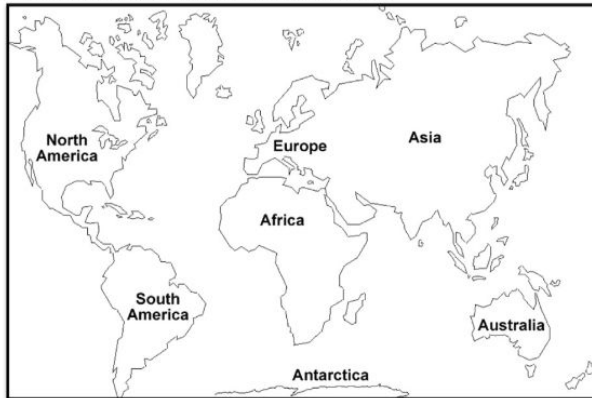
Italy

Little School on the Range © 2018

Name _____ **Holidays Around the World**

Geography #2

Follow the directions below and color the map accordingly.



1. The United States and Mexico are on the continent of North America. Color it BLUE.
2. Australia is its own continent. Color it ORANGE.
3. Brazil has many Christmas customs similar to Mexico. Brazil is on the continent of South America. Color it RED.
4. Sweden, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, and Spain are all on the continent of Europe. Draw a STAR on Europe.
5. Japan is on the continent of Asia. Draw a TRIANGLE on Asia.
6. Many countries in Africa do not celebrate Christmas. Color Africa YELLOW.
8. Scientists on Antarctica celebrate Christmas according to their own beliefs. Color it PURPLE.