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**Level 5 – 25th December, 2020**

## Scientist finds the 'right' way to cut Christmas cake

**FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:**

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2012/201225-christmas-cake-5.html>

### Contents

The Reading	2
Phrase Matching	3
Listening Gap Fill	4
No Spaces	5
Survey	6
Writing and Speaking	7
Writing	8

Please try Levels 4 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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# THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2012/201225-christmas-cake-5.html>

Christmas cake is a centuries-old festive tradition. The vast majority of people who enjoy this seasonal treat are unaware that there is a science behind slicing it. A professor of applied mathematics and geometry in the UK tested several hypotheses on the best way to cut a Christmas cake into slices. He focused on how to dissect the cake while leaving the insides as moist as possible. His solution was to cut the cake across the middle into two semicircles, then cut slices and push the remaining halves together. Perhaps he would admit that this isn't exactly rocket science.

Christmas cake is an English tradition that began as plum porridge. Nowadays, raisins, sultanas, orange rind and other dried fruit are used. The fruit is often soaked in brandy. It is common for the fruitcake base to be covered in a layer of marzipan, then for the top and sides to be coated in icing that can be over a centimetre thick. The top of the cake is usually decorated with Christmas symbols like fir trees or snowmen and women. Christmas cakes vary around the world. In Japan, they are simple sponge cakes with whipped cream and strawberries.

Sources: <https://www.iflscience.com/editors-blog/maths-says-theres-a-right-and-wrong-way-to-cut-christmas-cake/>  
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-9068307/Christmas-cake-cut-without-letting-dry-according-114-year-old-study.html>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas\\_cake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas_cake)

# PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2012/201225-christmas-cake-5.html>

## PARAGRAPH ONE:

- |                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. a centuries-old festive   | a. moist as possible |
| 2. The vast majority         | b. behind slicing it |
| 3. here is a science         | c. science           |
| 4. applied mathematics and   | d. hypotheses        |
| 5. tested several            | e. tradition         |
| 6. leaving the insides as    | f. together          |
| 7. push the remaining halves | g. geometry          |
| 8. this isn't exactly rocket | h. of people         |

## PARAGRAPH TWO:

- |                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Christmas cake is an English   | a. fir trees             |
| 2. orange rind                    | b. layer of marzipan     |
| 3. The fruit is often soaked      | c. cream                 |
| 4. covered in a                   | d. in brandy             |
| 5. The top of the cake is usually | e. around the world      |
| 6. Christmas symbols like         | f. tradition             |
| 7. Christmas cakes vary           | g. decorated             |
| 8. sponge cakes with whipped      | h. and other dried fruit |

# LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2012/201225-christmas-cake-5.html>

Christmas cake is (1) \_\_\_\_\_ festive tradition. The vast majority of people who enjoy (2) \_\_\_\_\_ are unaware that there is a science behind slicing it. A professor of applied (3) \_\_\_\_\_ in the UK tested several hypotheses on the best way to cut a Christmas cake into slices. He focused on (4) \_\_\_\_\_ the cake while leaving the insides as moist as possible. His solution was to cut the cake across the middle (5) \_\_\_\_\_, then cut slices and push the remaining halves together. Perhaps he would admit that this isn't (6) \_\_\_\_\_.

Christmas cake is an English (7) \_\_\_\_\_ as plum porridge. Nowadays, raisins, sultanas, (8) \_\_\_\_\_ other dried fruit are used. The fruit is (9) \_\_\_\_\_ brandy. It is common for the fruitcake base to be covered in a layer of marzipan, then for the top and sides to (10) \_\_\_\_\_ icing that can be over a centimetre thick. The top of the cake is (11) \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas symbols like fir trees or snowmen and women. Christmas cakes (12) \_\_\_\_\_ world. In Japan, they are simple sponge cakes with whipped cream and strawberries.

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2012/201225-christmas-cake-5.html>

Christmas cake is a centuries-old festive tradition. The vast majority of people who enjoy this seasonal treat are unaware that there is a science behind slicing it. A professor of applied mathematics and geometry in the UK tested several hypotheses on the best way to cut a Christmas cake into slices. He focused on how to dissect the cake while leaving the insides as moist as possible. His solution was to cut the cake across the middle into two semi-circles, then cut slices and push the remaining halves together. Perhaps he would admit that this isn't exactly rocket science. Christmas cake is an English tradition that began as plump porridge. Nowadays, raisins, sultanas, orange rind and other dried fruit are used. The fruit is often soaked in brandy. It is common for the fruit cake base to be covered in a layer of marzipan, then for the top and sides to be coated in icing that can be over a centimetre thick. The top of the cake is usually decorated with Christmas symbols like fir trees or snowmen and women. Christmas cakes vary around the world. In Japan, they are simple sponge cakes with whipped cream and strawberries.

# CHRISTMAS CAKE SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2012/201225-christmas-cake-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about Christmas cake in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

*Scientist finds the 'right' way to cut Christmas cake – 25th December, 2020*  
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## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

# WRITING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2012/201225-christmas-cake-5.html>

Write about **Christmas cake** for 10 minutes. Read and talk about your partner’s paper.

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