

The Christmas Quiz for Work

Twenty-four questions in four rounds, built for a team that did not choose to be there. Nothing needs a religious upbringing, a British childhood or a drink in hand.

4 rounds · 24 questions · about 35 min

How to run it

1. Print one host sheet for yourself and one team answer sheet per table. The host sheet has the answers on it — keep it face down.
2. Four to five people per team works best. Mixing departments is the whole point; a team of one department will quietly turn it into a meeting.
3. Read each question out loud twice, then give about forty seconds. Rounds three and four go faster than the first two.
4. Teams swap sheets at the end of each round and mark each other while you read the answers out. One point each, twenty-four in total.
5. Round four is true or false, so a team that has fallen behind can still come back — worth saving it for last rather than opening with it.

ROUND 1 — The office party, historically

Where the traditions your company is re-enacting actually came from.

1. The Christmas cracker was invented in Victorian London by a man whose day job was what?

- ☐ A A printer
- ☒ B A sweet maker
- ☐ C A toy seller
- ☐ D A chemist

Answer: B — A sweet maker

Worth adding: Tom Smith sold sweets wrapped in a twist of paper, an idea he brought back from Paris. The snap came later, in 1860, after a log crackling on his fire gave him the idea. The hat and the terrible joke came later still.

2. What is the name of the gift exchange where each person draws one colleague's name at random?

- ☒ A Secret Santa
- ☐ B Gift roulette
- ☐ C The Christmas draw
- ☐ D Santa's lottery

Answer: A — Secret Santa

Worth adding: Known as Kris Kringle in parts of Ireland and Australia, and as Wichteln in Germany.

3. Christmas Jumper Day, now an office fixture in the UK, was launched in 2012 by which charity?

- ☐ A Comic Relief
- ☒ B Save the Children
- ☐ C Oxfam
- ☐ D Shelter

Answer: B — Save the Children

Worth adding: It is a fundraiser first and a dress code second, which is worth saying out loud if anyone on the team is wondering why they are wearing it.

4. One widely accepted explanation for the name Boxing Day is that boxes of what were handed out on 26 December?

Answer: Gifts or money, given to servants, tradespeople and the poor

Worth adding: The earliest workplace Christmas bonus, essentially — paid a day late and to the people who had worked through the holiday.

5. In Japan, the end-of-year party that companies hold for their staff is called what?

Answer: Bonenkai

Worth adding: It translates roughly as “forget the year party”. The idea is to leave the year’s grievances behind before January.

6. Which UK retailer's Christmas advert has been treated as an annual national event since 2007?

- ☐ A Marks & Spencer
- ☐ B Sainsbury's
- ☒ C John Lewis
- ☐ D Boots

Answer: C — John Lewis

ROUND 2 — Year end around the world

Useful round if the team is spread across more than one country.

7. In which country is a “13th month” Christmas bonus not a perk but a legal requirement for employers?

- ☒ A The Philippines
- ☐ B Singapore
- ☐ C South Africa
- ☐ D Chile

Answer: A — The Philippines

Worth adding: It has to be paid by 24 December. Several other countries have the same idea by custom; there it is the law.

8. In Sweden, the big festive spread that workplaces and families lay on is called what?

- ☒ A Julbord
- ☐ B Smorgasfest
- ☐ C Vinterbord
- ☐ D Julafton

Answer: A — Julbord

Worth adding: Literally “Christmas table”. Julafton is Christmas Eve, which is the day that actually matters there.

9. In Spain, offices and departments commonly club together to buy tickets for what, every December?

Answer: The Christmas lottery, El Gordo

Worth adding: Colleagues buy a share of one number, which means a whole office can win — or one colleague can be the only person in the building who did not join in.

10. In Iceland, what are people traditionally given on Christmas Eve, to the point that the publishing year is built around it?

- ☒ **A Books**
☐ B Wool socks
☐ C Chocolate
☐ D Candles

Answer: A — Books

Worth adding: Jolabokafloð, the “Christmas book flood”. Most of the country's books come out in the run-up to it.

11. In Ireland, 26 December is a public holiday known as what?

Answer: St Stephen's Day

12. In Germany and Austria, the outdoor Christmas market that the office trip inevitably ends up at is called what?

Answer: Weihnachtsmarkt, or Christkindlmarkt

ROUND 3 — Christmas on screen

Crowd-pleaser round. Expect this one to be loud.

13. In the American series *The Office*, Michael ruins Secret Santa by converting it into what?

- ☐ A A raffle
☒ **B A Yankee Swap**
☐ C An auction
☐ D A sealed-bid exchange

Answer: B — A Yankee Swap

Worth adding: A Yankee Swap, also called White Elephant, where gifts can be stolen from whoever opened them. Optional cruelty: run your own that way.

14. In *Love Actually*, what is the job of the character played by Hugh Grant?

- ☐ A Publisher
☒ **B Prime Minister**
☐ C Barrister
☐ D Record producer

Answer: B — Prime Minister

15. In *Elf*, which New York department store does Buddy end up working in?

- ☐ A Macy's
☐ B Bloomingdale's
☒ **C Gimbels**
☐ D Saks

Answer: C — Gimbels

16. In *The Holiday*, what do the two main characters swap for the Christmas break?

Answer: Their houses

17. In *Scrooged*, what is the job of the character played by Bill Murray?

- ☐ A Advertising executive
- ☒ B **Television executive**
- ☐ C Property developer
- ☐ D Newspaper editor

Answer: B — Television executive

Worth adding: A network president who fires a colleague on Christmas Eve. Recognisable to more teams than management would like.

18. In *It's a Wonderful Life*, what is the name of the town?

Answer: Bedford Falls

ROUND 4 — True or false

Fast round. Read them straight through with no pause and mark at the end.

19. True or false: the Christmas tree was popularised in Britain by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert.

- ☒ A **True**
- ☐ B False

Answer: A — True

Worth adding: True. An illustration of the royal family around a tree, published in 1848, did most of the work.

20. True or false: Coca-Cola invented the red-suited Santa.

- ☐ A True
- ☒ B **False**

Answer: B — False

Worth adding: False, and it is the most confidently wrong answer in this quiz. Red-suited Santas appear in print decades before the adverts. The campaign made the look universal; it did not create it.

21. True or false: the poinsettia is named after a person.

- ☒ A **True**
- ☐ B False

Answer: A — True

Worth adding: True. Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first US envoy to Mexico, sent the plant home in the 1820s.

22. True or false: mistletoe, the plant people are made to kiss under, is a parasite.

- ☒ A **True**
- ☐ B False

Answer: A — True

Worth adding: True. It grows into a host tree and takes water and nutrients from it. Make of that what you will at an office party.

23. True or false: writing “Xmas” is a modern invention by advertisers who wanted to save space.

☐ A True

☒ B False

Answer: B — False

Worth adding: False. The X is the Greek letter chi, the first letter of Christos, and the abbreviation has been in use for centuries.

24. True or false: in Norway there is a tradition of hiding the household brooms on Christmas Eve.

☒ A True

☐ B False

Answer: A — True

Worth adding: True, and the folklore reason is to stop witches taking them for the night.