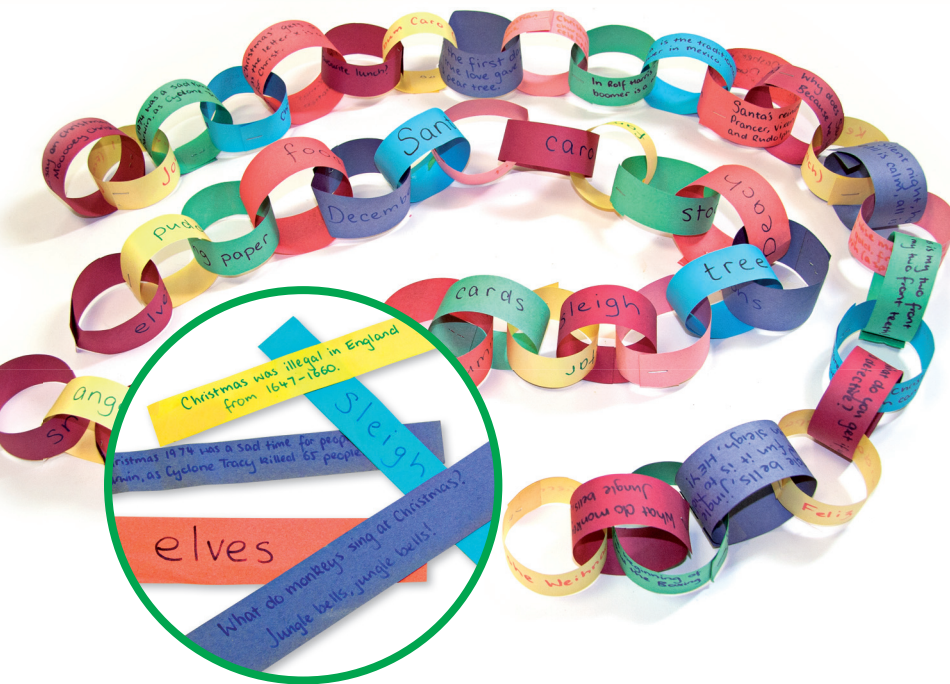


Advent calendars

Oh my, is it really that time of year again? The Christmas spirit will come flitting into your classroom in no time, and students will be hanging out until the holidays and that all important evening when the man with the stuffed sack comes down the chimney. But we don't have to wait until the twelfth month to celebrate! Have students make their own Advent calendars leading up to December so that when it comes, they are all prepared to count down the final days. Have a look at these handy, no-fuss calendar ideas that will have your students wanting the days to go on and on.



Christmas paper chain

Materials:

- coloured strips of paper
- scissors
- glue/staples/sticky tape
- coloured pencils or markers

Instructions: On the first day of December, have students cut 24 strips of paper to form their paper chain (younger students may need larger strips). Every day, have students take a break from their lessons to write something about Christmas on a strip of paper. For younger students, this could simply be word association. Older students may choose to write a fact, a Christmas word in another language, or the chorus to a Christmas carol. On the first day, students simply fasten the ends of the paper strip together. After that, students loop strips through one another to create a paper chain. Once school finishes, they can take their paper chain home to decorate the Christmas tree.



Christmas tree

Materials:

- green paper
- coloured card for the backing
- yellow stars
- small circles (cut or punched out)
- coloured pom-poms
- glue
- scissors

Instructions: Cut out a tree shape from green paper (use a template or cut freehand) and glue it to the backing card. Glue a star to the top of the tree. Write the numbers 1–24 on circle dots and place randomly on the tree. On each day of December, students glue a pom-pom on the correct number, slowly filling the tree up. By Christmas Eve, students will have a lovely decorated Christmas tree!

Interactive Advent calendar

Why not make an interactive Advent calendar? Use your school's computer software to create a fun calendar that the whole class can use to countdown the days to Christmas. Use programs on the internet or Microsoft PowerPoint™ (or a similar program) to create a home page, and link activities, YouTube™ videos, Christmas facts and carols to it. This allows students to use technology to have fun, learn about different cultures at Christmas time, and have some fun watching and singing along with the interactive material.

Examples of ideas to include:

- Christmas around the world
<<http://www.theholidayspot.com/christmas/worldxmas/>>
- 'Santa Claus is coming to town carol'
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjoMqFlc5zQ>>
- 'The night before Christmas video'
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZfSoJmS1ug>>

Examples of interactive Advent calendars:

- <<http://www.santagames.net/calendar/index.htm>>
- <<http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/xmas/calendar/>>
- <<http://polarexpress.com/calendar/>>

Hanging class calendar

Materials:

small paper bags (each student will need 24)
swizzle ribbon
stapler
coloured paper
coloured pencils/markers
craft items (e.g. pompoms, glitter, scraps of material etc.)

Instructions: Pre-cut lengths of ribbon (24 per student, all at different lengths). Distribute the ribbons, along with 24 paper bags, to each student. Have students write the numbers 1–24 on bags and decorate them as they like, using pencils/markers and craft materials. Students staple a strip of ribbon to the top of each bag. Tie all loose ends together in a knot. All the bags should be hanging at different lengths. Hang the calendars on display in the classroom. Pair students and have them write positive affirmations about their partner, which they then fold up and place inside each bag. During December, students receive an affirmation, and can take their calendar home and continue to receive them until Christmas.

ALTERNATIVE: You could make one calendar for the whole class that counts down to the end of term (this may need to be started in November for schools that finish in early December). Instead of positive affirmations, have rewards, such as: 10 minutes free time inside/outside, choice of book for class reading or play a game such as 'Heads down, thumbs up'.



Santa Advent calendar

Materials:

Santa template (see page 54)
scissors
cotton wool balls
coloured markers or pencils
pen
glue

Instructions: Photocopy template and distribute. Students colour Santa's face and hat, and cut him out. With a pen, students write the numbers 1–24 on Santa's beard, leaving space between each number. (Younger students can write numerically, while older students can place the numbers at random.) Each day in December, students glue a cotton wool ball over the corresponding number. The closer it gets to Christmas, the bushier Santa's beard will be!

