

1. Read the text. Then answer the questions.



A BRITISH TRADITION AT CHRISTMAS

On Christmas Day, families all over Britain sit around their tables and eat Christmas lunch. People at the table wear paper hats. Where do these paper hats come from? The answer is the Christmas cracker. A Christmas cracker is a paper tube. It is covered in colourful paper. The idea is for two people to hold the ends of the cracker and pull it. When the cracker is pulled apart, it makes a loud sound. Inside the cracker there is a paper hat, a little gift and a joke written on a piece of paper. The same jokes have appeared in Christmas crackers for years, so they are very well known.

Christmas crackers were invented in the 1850s by a man called Tom Smith. He made money by selling sweets and chocolates. They were wrapped in paper and one day he decided to put a short message in the packages. Many of his sweets were bought by men to give to women, so most of the messages were simple love poems. People liked reading the messages in the packages and his sweets became more popular.

Over the years, the crackers have changed. Smith changed his packages so they made the loud sound when they were pulled apart. Later, a small gift was put in the cracker instead of the sweet. In the 1900s, the paper hats were added to the cracker by Smith's sons and in the 1930s, the love poems were replaced by jokes. Many people bought the crackers at Christmas, so they were called Christmas crackers. Today at Christmas, there is at least one box of crackers to pull in nearly every home in Britain. Perhaps even the Queen wears her paper hat at Christmas lunch!

1. What is the connection between Christmas crackers and paper hats?

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2. What effect did the messages have?

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3. How have Christmas crackers changed since they were first invented? List three differences between the original crackers and the crackers we use today.

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7 Extension

2. Complete the sentences with the verbs in brackets. Use the Present Simple Passive or Past Simple Passive. Then tick the sentences true (T) or false (F) according to the text in Exercise 1.

	T	F
1. Paper hats (wear) on Christmas Day.
2. Christmas crackers (invent) in 1900.
3. In the 1850s, love poems (put) inside the crackers.
4. Most of Smith's sweets (buy) by women.
5. When a Christmas cracker (pull) apart, a bell rings.
6. Many Christmas crackers (sell) in Britain at Christmas.

3. Write to a pen pal about a traditional custom in your town. Complete the table to help you.

Where / When / Why did the custom begin?	
How has it changed over the years?	
Who keeps the custom today?	