

2002 saw the publication of the first new edition of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the most comprehensive dictionary of today's English and its history from 1000 AD to 2002, for nearly a decade. 3,500 new words including JEDI, MEN IN BLACK, ASYLUM SEEKER, BENEFIT TOURIST, MILLENNIUM DOME, SPINMEISTER, BLING-BLING, GO COMMANDO, WEDGIE and a word first used in the 21st century, I-MODE, were added to the new edition along with 500 new quotations from authors writing in the last ten years.

But the work doesn't stop, preparations are already under way for the next edition. MUGGLE, ONE-HIT WONDER, BEYBLADE, GODZILLA, and DIRTY BOMB just missed out on this edition. JK Rowling was one of the new authors quoted, perhaps the next edition will contain Harry Potter vocabulary? Other words that are being used more frequently and therefore will be considered for future inclusion are BOOTYLICIOUS, EEYORISH, LADYBOY, LIFE COACH, GASTROPUB, and EUROCREEP.

As well as containing 3,500 new entries the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* also offers a comprehensive record of the English language. It aims to include every word in use since 1700, and includes many words that date back to Old English. This means that there is some fascinating information to be found in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. For example there are 76 entries containing the word **CHRISTMAS**, which reveal intriguing facts about celebrations, food, and traditions from around the world. POSADA is a Mexican word and it describes a series of visits traditionally paid to different friends before Christmas, representing Mary and Joseph's search for a lodging in Bethlehem. JUNKANOO is an elaborately masked dancer in a Caribbean celebration held at Christmas. JUG-JUG is a savoury Barbadian dish made with pork and beef, served especially at Christmas. POSOLE is a Mexican stew of hominy cooked with pork, beans, and red chilli, traditionally served at Christmas, and TOURTIERE is a word of French origin, which describes a kind of meat pie traditionally eaten at Christmas in Canada

LAMETTA comes from Italian and means brass, silver, or gold foil or wire; specifically thin strips of metallic foil used as Christmas decorations. Also did you know that HAEMOPHILIA B is also known as Christmas disease after Stephen Christmas an English sufferer of the disease? Or that XMAS has been used as an abbreviation since the mid-sixteenth century? The X in Xmas represents the initial letter (khi) of the Greek word Khristos meaning 'Christ'.

Christmas *noun*. The festival of Christ's birth celebrated by most Christian Churches on 25 December (one of the quarter days in England, Wales, and Ireland), devoted esp. to family reunion and jollification; the season around this date. Old English

Father Christmas Santa Claus; a jolly old man dressed in red, personifying Christmas festivities.

interjection. [Alt. of *Christ*.] Expr. surprise, dismay, exasperation, etc. Freq. as **Jiminy Christmas** Late 19th Century

Christmassy *adjective (colloq.)* characteristic of or suitable for Christmas (festivities) Late 19th Century.

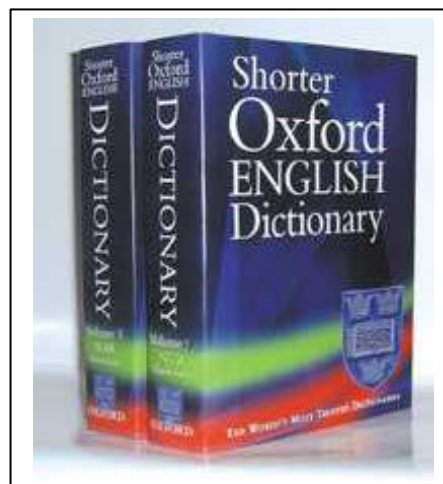
Christmas *verb trans*. Provide with Christmas cheer. *rare*. Only in Late 16th Century

Christmas *verb intrans*. Celebrate Christmas. Early 19th Century

The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* was published on 26 September 2002. It is available in book (£95, 2 volumes, 0-19-860575-7) or CD-ROM (£95, 0-19-860613-3) format.

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A full list of the Christmas entries in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is below.



ADVENT - The season before Christmas in the ecclesiastical calendar, now four weeks in length. OE.

BAUBLE - A coloured glass ball or similar ornament hung for decoration on a Christmas tree. M20

BLACK FRIDAY - US the day after Thanksgiving, which traditionally marks the start of the Christmas shopping season

BOX - A case or receptacle, usu. rectangular or cylindrical and with a lid, of wood, metal, card, etc. (Freq. with function, type, etc., specified or understood contextually.) LOE. *Christmas-box*

BOXING DAY - the first day (strictly, the first weekday) after Christmas Day (on which Christmas-boxes were traditionally given).

CARD - A flat (usu. rectangular) piece of thick paper, thin pasteboard, etc., or now (esp. where durability is required) of plastic, blank or bearing writing, print, a picture, etc., and of various kinds for particular purposes (identified contextually or specified), as conveying an invitation, greeting, or message, displaying rules, information, etc., identifying the bearer or owner, recording membership, registration, or admission, etc. L16.
Christmas card

CAROL - A joyful hymn; esp. (in full Christmas carol) one sung at Christmas. LME.

CHRISTINGLE - A lighted candle set in an orange, symbolizing Christ as the light of the world, given to each child at a children's service (the Christingle service) usu. held in Advent.

CHRISTMAS - The festival of Christ's birth celebrated by most Christian Churches on 25 December (one of the quarter days in England, Wales, and Ireland), devoted esp. to family reunion and jollification; the season around this date. OE

CHRISTMAS *verb trans.* Provide with Christmas cheer. *rare.* Only in L16
verb intrans. Celebrate Christmas. E19

CHRISTMAS DISEASE - from Stephen Christmas, 20th-cent. English sufferer from the disease. = HAEMOPHILIA B

CLUB - An association of people united by some common interest; esp. (a) an association meeting periodically for a shared activity or for social purposes; (b) an association in which members make regular payments to a central fund or regular purchases from a central source to acquire some benefit. (Freq. with specification of purpose, nature, or membership.) L17.
Christmas club

COMPLIMENT - compliments of the season greetings appropriate to the (Christmas) season.

CRACKER - A cylindrical paper structure made so as to break with a bang when its ends are pulled, used on festive occasions, and often containing a paper hat, a motto or joke, a small toy or novelty, etc. M19. *Christmas cracker*.

CRECHE - A model of the infant Jesus in the manger with attending figures, often displayed at Christmas. L18

DAY - A specific period of twenty-four hours, the whole or part of which is assigned to some particular purpose, observance, or action; the date of a specified festival etc. (freq. with specifying word(s)). OE. *Christmas Day*.

EL NINO - [Spanish El Niño (de Navidad) the (Christmas) child, with ref. to beginning in late December.] Formerly, an annual warm southward current off northern Peru. Now, an irregularly occurring southward current in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, associated with weather changes and ecological damage; these associated phenomena.

ETRENNE - A New Year's gift; a Christmas-box.

Eve - The evening or day before a saint's day or church festival; gen. the evening or day before any date or event. ME. *Christmas Eve*.

FAIRY LIGHTS - small coloured lights used for decoration, esp. on Christmas trees

FESTIVE - Of or befitting a feast or festival; joyous, cheerful. M17. The festive season spec. the period around Christmas.

GREEN - (Of a season of the year) characterized by much verdure; (of a winter, Christmas, etc.) mild, without snow. LME.

GRINCH - [Name of a character in the children's story *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1957) by Dr Seuss.] A spoilsport or killjoy.

HAEMOPHILIA - A hereditary disease in which the ability of the blood to coagulate is severely reduced owing to a deficiency of the coagulation factor VIII, the person concerned having a tendency to prolonged bleeding from even minor injuries. haemophilia B a hereditary disease clinically identical to ordinary haemophilia but due to the absence of a different coagulation factor; also called Christmas disease.

HOLLY - Any of several evergreen shrubs or small trees of the genus *Ilex* (family Aquifoliaceae); esp. one of the common European species *I. aquifolium*, with tough dark green glossy leaves with indented edges usu.

set with sharp stiff prickles at the points, and bearing small white flowers succeeded by red berries, much used for Christmas decoration

JIMINY - Expr. surprise or asseveration. Chiefly in by Jiminy, Jiminy Christmas, Jiminy cricket.

JOHN CANOE - W. Indies. Also JONKANOO. L18. An elaborately masked dancer in a celebration held at Christmas; this celebration.

JUG - Also JUG-JUG. M20. A savoury Barbadian dish made with pork and beef, served esp. at Christmas.

KISSING-BUSH - a Christmas wreath or ball of evergreens hung from the ceiling, under which a person may be kissed

KRISS KRINGLE - Santa Claus

LAMETTA - Brass, silver, or gold foil or wire; spec. thin strips of metallic foil used as Christmas decorations.

MASS - A feast-day or festival of a specified saint etc. Long obsolete exc. as 2nd elem. of comb. (Candlemas, Christmas, Lammas, etc.). OE.

MERRY - merry Christmas!: a conventional salutation just before or at Christmas

MIDNIGHT MASS - celebrated at or shortly before midnight, esp. on Christmas Eve

MINCE PIE - a usu. small round pie containing mincemeat, traditionally eaten esp. at Christmas

MISRULE - Lord of Misrule, Master of Misrule - a person presiding over Christmas games and revelry in a wealthy household

MISTLETOE - European plant, *Viscum album* (family Viscaceae), which is parasitic on various trees (esp. apple and poplar), bears white glutinous berries, and is used in Christmas decorations

NOEL - A Christmas carol

NOWEL - A word shouted or sung as an expression of joy, orig. to commemorate the birth of Jesus. Now only as retained in Christmas carols. LME. The feast of Christmas; Christmas-time. LME-L16

O - An anthem, meditation, etc., containing an invocation to Christ beginning with O, as O Sapientia, O Adonai, etc.; spec. (also O-antiphon) each of a group of such antiphons sung in the days preceding Christmas Eve. M16.

PANTOMIME - A traditional theatrical performance, orig. in mime, now consisting of a dramatized fairy tale or nursery story, with music, dancing, topical jokes, and conventional characters, freq. played by actors of the opposite sex from the characters, chiefly performed in Britain around Christmas. M18.

PAPER - paper chain a chain made of usu. coloured paper, used as a decoration esp. at Christmas

PARANG - A variety of Trinidadian folk music, traditionally played at Christmas by groups which travel from house to house.

PEDELION - Any of several plants having fruits, leaves, etc., supposed to resemble clawed feet, esp. (a) lady's mantle, *Alchemilla vulgaris*; (b) Christmas rose, *Helleborus niger*.

PLUM-BROTH - a thick soup of beef, prunes, raisins, currants, white bread, spices, wine, sugar, and other ingredients, formerly traditionally served at Christmas

PLUM-PORRIDGE - (obsolete exc. *Hist.*) porridge made with prunes, raisins, currants, etc., formerly traditionally served at Christmas

PLUM PUDDING - a suet pudding with raisins; spec. a rich boiled pudding made with flour, breadcrumbs, raisins, currants, spices, etc., sometimes flavoured with brandy or other spirit and traditionally served at Christmas

POHUTUKAWA - A New Zealand evergreen tree, *Metrosideros excelsa*, of the myrtle family, which in December and January bears crimson flowers with projecting stamens. Also called Christmas tree, fire-tree

POINSETTIA - A shrubby Central American spurge, *Euphorbia* (formerly *Poinsettia*) *pulcherrima*, having large scarlet bracts surrounding small greenish-yellow flowers, much cultivated (esp. at Christmas) as a house-plant.

POSADA - In Mexico: each of a series of visits traditionally paid to different friends before Christmas, representing Mary and Joseph's search for a lodging in Bethlehem. M20.

POSOLE - A Mexican stew of hominy cooked with pork, beans, and red chilli, traditionally served at Christmas; the maize porridge used as a base for this dish.

PUDDING - cooked dish consisting of various sweet or savoury ingredients, esp. as enclosed within a flour-based crust or mixed with flour, eggs, etc., and boiled or steamed; a baked batter mixture. Now also, the sweet course of a meal. M16. *Christmas pudding*.

PUTZ - In areas of Moravian influence in the US: a representation of the Nativity scene traditionally placed under a Christmas tree. US. E20.

QUARTER DAY - each of four days fixed by custom as marking off the quarters of the year, on which some tenancies begin and end, and quarterly payments of rent and other charges fall due. In England, Wales, and Ireland the quarter days are Lady Day (25 March), Midsummer Day (24 June), Michaelmas (29 September), and Christmas (25 December). In Scotland they are Candlemas (2 February), Whitsunday (28 May, formerly 15 or 26 May), Lammas (1 August), and Martinmas (11 November)

REVEILLON - In France: a night-time feast or celebration, orig. one after midnight on Christmas morning.

SANTA CLAUS - an imaginary person said to bring presents for children on Christmas Eve; Father Christmas. L18

SATURNALIA - Roman History. The festival of Saturn, held in mid December and characterized by general unrestrained merrymaking, the precursor of Christmas. L16.

SCROOGE - [Ebenezer Scrooge, a character in Dickens's A Christmas Carol.] A miserly tight-fisted person; a killjoy.

SEASON - A period of the year marked by some special festivity, as Christmas and New Year. L18.

SWEET - sweet bread (a) unleavened bread; (b) sweet-tasting cake or pastry; (c) bread containing molasses and raisins prepared esp. at Christmas

TINSEL - pangles, metallic threads, etc., used for decoration to give a sparkling effect; esp. glittering metallic strips woven into strands for decorating a Christmas tree etc. L16.

TOURTIERE - A kind of meat pie traditionally eaten at Christmas in Canada. M20.

Toyon - A Californian evergreen shrub of the rose family, *Heteromeles arbutifolia*, the fruiting branches of which are used for Christmas decorations. Also called Californian holly.

TWELFTH DAY - the sixth of January, the twelfth day after Christmas, the festival of the Epiphany

TWELFTH NIGHT - the evening of the fifth of January, preceding Twelfth Day, the eve of the Epiphany, formerly the last day of the Christmas festivities and observed as a time of merrymaking

UNREASON - Abbot of Unreason, Abbot Unreason - *Scottish History* a person elected as the leading character in Christmas revelries mocking the Church and ecclesiastical establishments

UPHALIDAY - Epiphany as the end of the Christmas holiday.

UPHELLY - Of Epiphany as the end of the Christmas holiday.

VILLANCICO - Music. A form of Spanish and Portuguese song consisting of short stanzas separated by a refrain, orig. a kind of folk-song but later used in sacred music; now esp. a Christmas carol.

WASSAIL - The liquor in which healths were drunk; esp. the spiced ale or mulled wine drunk during celebrations for Twelfth Night and Christmas Eve. ME. The custom of going from house to house at Christmas time singing carols or songs; a carol or song sung by wassailers. rare. E17.

WATCH-NIGHT (a) Hist. a religious service extending over midnight held monthly by Wesleyan Methodists; (b) the last night of the year, New Year's Eve; a religious service held on this night (or now also on Christmas Eve), usu. extending over midnight

WHITE CHRISTMAS - Christmas with snow on the ground.

WINTER ROSE (a) a rose blooming in winter; (b) the Christmas rose, *Helleborus niger*; winter savory

WISH - merry Christmas, etc. wish a person joy (of), wish a person the joy (of)

XMAS - colloq. M16. [Abbreviation with X for Greek khi: see X, X 13.]
noun. = CHRISTMAS noun. M16.

YULE - December; January. OE–ME.; Christmas and the festivities connected with it. OE.