

D.E.Ü.

MAGAZİN





A special thanks to

-everyone who has given their precious time to ELT magazine: writers, editors, designers; and of course, our readers.

The winter is here, and with it comes the festive season for countless cultures around the world. The coming of the new year represents the flow of time, change of seasons, and a new, blank slate in life. The importance of this time of year is why we decided to dedicate our 6th issue of ELT magazine to winter, and New Years.

We would like to thank our tireless writers contributing to ELT Magazine, in addition to our editors and reviewers for their work, our professors, and most importantly our beloved **readers**.



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CULTURE





Frankenstein

Ending 2025 with nothing short of a masterpiece, Guillermo del Toro blesses us, mortals, with the Frankenstein's retelling. This is not a horror film though, it's a cinematic gothic opera where every frame is a calculated move. We dive into the brilliance of the director, the perfect choice of the cast, the language of the costumes, and the artistic scenes that make this re-reading of Mary Shelley's classic tragedy.

This version of the story remains largely faithful to Mary Shelley's novel, though it compresses 288 pages into a 2-hour-and-29-minute experience. To compensate this, del Toro masterfully incorporates and enhances the emotions of belonging and love toward the other by tweaking the book's storyline to make it flow more naturally and adapt better to the screenplay.

Fun Fact! Guillermo del Toro decided Oscar Isaac as his Victor Frankenstein while they are chatting about sons and fathers in Guillermo's kitchen 2 years before the production of the film.

Costumes

The film is guaranteed to be an Oscar contender for its brilliant costume design by Kate Hawley. The wardrobe of Mia Goth varies beautifully as she carries each and every gown in an elegant fashion that does not scream loudly.

Many viewers miss this little trick. She plays both Elizabeth and Victor's mother—hinting at Victor's tangled inner world and his unhealthy attachment patterns (yes, Oedipus complex vibes)



Cyclamen is associated with love, sincerity and empathy. Cyclamen are often gifted to show love and adoration for their recipient. Different colors represent different meanings:

Cyclamen
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Pink: Tender farewell and gentle love
White: Pure resignation and peaceful departure
Red: Deep, sincere love despite separation
Purple: Dignified farewell



The elaborate headpieces worn by Goth selected intentionally to emphasize the face and give the character an air of otherworldliness or holiness, framing Elizabeth as the unattainable, revered, yet potentially destructive female.

Fun Fact: In the film, Elizabeth is a noble lady who is mostly to herself, silent and calm. In order to carry these attributes to screen, Mia Goth spent time in a convent, observing nuns and their behaviours.



According to Kate Hawley (costume designer) Oscar Isaac's costumes, heavy on velvet and bravado, were intentionally designed to evoke the rockstar status and confidence of musicians like Prince and David Bowie.

Makeup artist Mike Hill says the team did "the full body probably about 20 times. But he never complained once." Hill adds, "He used it as his time to become the creature, to become the character."

In total, the full body makeup takes up around 11 hours to finish.



Bonus

In this scene where Elizabeth and the Creature see each other for the first time and touch hands, we can see that the pose mirrors Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam."



Fun fact

Knowing Elizabeth's interest in insects, del Toro intentionally wanted her gowns to represent one, hence all the fluorescent fabrics, just like in this scene.

Overall, del Toro's Frankenstein stands out because it mixes beauty and darkness in a very striking way. With observations and the film's strong visuals, the story becomes more than just a retelling of an old story and makes us understand what it means to be human. The movie doesn't just bring Shelley's story back to life, it brings back the feelings behind it. It makes the viewer think about creation, responsibility, and the thin line between love and what we call a-

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NISA NUR ERTEN





Gingerbread Cookies



Recipe



Meve Koch, Ayse Kalkisim

Ingredients:



- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 cold eggs
- 100 g butter, at room temperature
- 1/2 tea glass of molasses (carob molasses if available)
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 packet baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1.5 teaspoons ground ginger
- A pinch of ground cloves (if using whole cloves, crush them and use the powder)
- Flour as needed (approximately 4–4.5 cups)
- Optional for decoration:
Cake decorating pens (can be Dr. Oetker's)



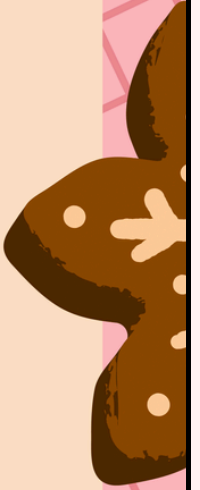


Merve Koch, Ayşe Kalkışım

Instructions:



1. Beat the room-temperature butter and sugar with a mixer until it reaches a creamy consistency.
2. Add all ingredients except the flour and baking powder, and continue mixing with a spatula.
3. In a separate bowl, sift the flour and add the baking powder, then gradually incorporate it into the mixture. The dough must be cold during the shaping process. I always let it rest in the refrigerator for about 1 hour before shaping. This makes shaping much easier.
4. Roll out the chilled and rested dough on a floured surface to about 2 cm thickness.
5. Cut out shapes using gingerbread man cookie cutters and place them slightly apart on a baking tray lined with parchment paper.
6. Bake in the middle rack of a preheated 180°C (356°F) oven for about 12–15 minutes, until lightly golden. Keep an eye on them while baking.
7. After they cool, decorate them as you like.
8. Your little gingerbread cookies are ready! 🎉🍪





12 months - 12 shows

JANUARY – STRANGER THINGS

Stranger Things might be the most famous series on the list, but since its final episode will be released on January 1st, I wanted to include it anyway. Apart from the rising tension and some suspenseful moments, it is a great series where you can feel the sincerity between the characters and witness the growth of each child through seasons.

FEBRUARY – THE STUDIO

The Studio, which has been talked about a lot after the 2025 Emmy Awards, tells the story of a group of people working in a movie production studio. Thanks to its short episodes and extremely famous guest stars, you can easily finish it in a few days.

MARCH – THE LINCOLN LAWYER

Even if you're not fan of courtroom dramas or stories about the daily life of lawyers, The Lincoln Lawyer will satisfy you in this genre. The series has a main case and various side events in each season, and it appeals to everyone with its wonderful characters and unexpected plot twists.

APRIL – CAROL AND THE END OF THE WORLD

Although it might be depressing for some people, this series will make you question various aspects of existence. Although the first episodes may be a bit slow, when you finish it, you will find yourself thinking about characters and their journey.

MAY – MONSTER

Monster is the best anime to recommend if you're looking for a series that explores deep philosophical questions. Each event leads to another moral conflict, and you find yourself thinking about everything in depth.

JUNE – ONLY MURDERS IN THE BUILDING

Despite its title, Only Murders in the Building is one of the funniest sitcoms of the last few years. It tells the story of three characters who try to solve some murders in their apartment.

JULY – TIME

The series, which takes place in a prison, shows us the character development and dilemmas faced by both the guards and the prisoners. If you watch it for action, you may be disappointed. However, it's a great experience to watch the decisions that lead the characters to the prison.

AUGUST – BLACK MIRROR

Black Mirror is another highly popular series that I put in this list. Each episode is a separate movie, which you will want to talk about for hours.



SEPTEMBER – EMERGENCE

Emergence is a thrilling series for fans of the science fiction genre. After a mysterious plane crash, a little girl appears with no memory of her past, and a police officer takes this mysterious girl into her house.

OCTOBER – ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE

This mini-series tells the story of a blind French girl and a German soldier whose paths cross during World War II. Even those who don't like this genre will love its emotional story.

NOVEMBER – SILO

I wanted to add a post-apocalyptic series to this list, and Silo is a perfect choice. If you're looking for a series that focuses on secrets and mysteries rather than nonstop action, this is the one for you.

DECEMBER – ALEXA AND KATIE

Although its plot may seem depressive, Alexa and Katie will make you feel like you are a part of the group. It's a sitcom about the story of two friends, one of whom is diagnosed with cancer. The series highlights how they face challenges together with their families and friends.

MEHMET TÜR

DAPHNE

The Daphne flower symbolizes various meanings, including beauty, purity, eternal love, and transformation. In Greek mythology, the Daphne flower represents transformation and rebirth. The flower has also been associated with purity and innocence. Its fragrance and delicate appearance further enhance its symbolism of beauty and grace. The Daphne flower's evergreen nature represents eternal love and fidelity.



BEYZANUR MURAT



Jason Mraz Have it All

Christmas always brings the well-known old songs with it. There is a beauty in listening to them. You immediately feel the spirit. A sense of familiarity fills one's chest. Especially as a generation that grew up with Hollywood and the American Dream, as well as various English content, these songs are a part of us, regardless of where we are or how we live.

However, I am not here today to serve you the basics. The ones you already know. Good ol' friends. We are going to listen to them anyway. Let's move towards some melodies and lyrics we can listen to while we wish for blessings in the new 365 days, shall we?

Happiness, health, wealth, wisdom... Along with the other things that come to my mind when I think of a brand new year, almost everything is pretty much involved in this song called Have It All by Jason Mraz. Praying, making a wish, manifesting, whatever you call it – you can do it while listening to this song.

Mraz has always been a little happiness corner for the little me, years and years ago. He has this joy, this hope in his music. You can always find yourself going back to his songs. The familiarity will embrace you at any stage of your life. This time, if you would like to participate, I highly encourage you to give his songs a chance. Especially in a period where we slowly start to think about what is ahead of us in the new year, this is a song to get inspired by. The things he wishes for the listener are such universal wishes that anyone, anywhere can relate. It brings millions of people together, that's music anyway. What's important is that it's a Jason Mraz song. The man with a voice that flows like honey. This calming, joyous voice wishes you happiness, less chaos, less stress, a path that you will pave, and so on. He calls for the ones he loves and never wants to be parted from them. A great means to shift what we ask for into our New Year's resolutions, I believe.

Here is the song that will inspire your 2026 vision board. Everything one can possibly wish for, explained with much love in a cute little song. You're welcome.



Scan Me!

MINA MERCANGIL



LETTERS TO SANTA

Reimagined for Adults

When we were children, writing letters to Santa was serious business. ✉️ We listed our dream toys, promised to “be good,” and waited impatiently for Christmas morning.

But what if adults could write to Santa too? Imagine the wish lists now — less about toy trains and dolls, and more about coffee that never gets cold, endless vacation days, and Wi-Fi that never disconnects. Let's take a peek at what those grown-up letters might look like this year... 🎄 🎄 🎄

🛌 Dear Santa, Please Bring Me... Sleep.

I've been (mostly) good this year — but my brain refuses to shut off at night. I'd like eight uninterrupted hours of sleep wrapped in peace and quiet. Throw in a day where I can stay in pajamas guilt-free.

☕ Dear Santa, A Lifetime Supply of Coffee Would Be Nice

Not to be greedy, but coffee is basically the adult version of Christmas magic. Please make sure it stays at the perfect temperature. And maybe add a self-refilling mug feature?

💰 Dear Santa, How About a Bill-Paying Elf?

I loved believing in elves as a kid — now I'd really love one who handles rent, taxes, and subscriptions I forgot to cancel. I'll even leave out extra cookies.



❄️ Dear Santa, Can You Pause Time?

Just for one quiet winter evening — no emails, no deadlines, no buzzing phones. I just want to sit by the fire, listen to soft music, and remember what peace feels like.

💻 Dear Santa, A Stable Internet Connection

This might sound boring, but for anyone who's ever frozen mid-Zoom-meeting — you know it's a Christmas miracle worth asking for.

♥️ Dear Santa, Some Childlike Wonder, Please.

It's easy to get lost in the noise of adult life — bills, traffic, routines. I'd like a small refill of that childhood excitement, the sparkle of believing that something magical is always possible.

🎁 Maybe Santa's Real Gift is Perspective

Sure, adults don't expect a sleigh on the roof anymore. But the heart of Christmas hasn't changed — it's still about hope, kindness, and connection.

Maybe the best "adult wish list" isn't filled with stuff at all, but with more laughter, patience, and love.

So go ahead — grab a pen, make some cocoa, and write your own grown-up letter to Santa. Who knows? Maybe the magic still works. 🧑🏻‍🎅 ✨

ZEBU SHAKIROVA

Throughout history, this flower has been connected to healing, mystery, and even danger. Hellebore symbolism across different eras:

Ancient Greece: Used as both a remedy and a poison. Myths say it cured madness and was even used to poison enemy water supplies.

Middle Ages: Believed to protect against evil. It was used in magical practices and thought to keep away dark spirits.

Victorian Era: Associated with scandal, secrecy, and emotional instability. It was not seen as a cheerful or romantic flower.

HELLEBORES



FROM MISTLETOPE TO TANGERINES

NEW YEAR TRADITIONS

As the weather gets cold and the New Year comes, people began to plan their New Year. Some people want to stay at home and gather with their family while others go out and have fun at parties. Although there are diverse plans on people's mind, rooted traditions will be the same. So, hug your blanket and take your hot chocolate, we will see the New Year traditions through different cultures.

Summarizing one of the oldest and the deepest culture might be a good start. China has its own celebration and festivities nearly between January 1st and February 20th called "Chūn jié" Spring Festival. It is all about focusing on a fresh start, enjoying and appreciating their close ones. Speaking of a fresh start, it is impossible to think a fresh start without cleaning. So, firstly Chinese clean their houses and decorate them with especially red. Red paintings, walls, and lanterns are all around. They believe red give them good luck. Then they visit graves and temples, giving offerings. To pamper themselves, they also buy new clothes to welcome the new year while looking good. For the young ones a red envelope full of money known as "Hongbao" will be given by the elderly. So, if you want to spend your New Year in China take your "Chuen hap" which is a snack box with sweets and enjoy the Lantern Festival.

Let's continue with Asian culture and look through Japanese New Year traditions. Around January 1st and January 3rd "Shōgatsu" celebrated with joy, hopes and relief. As January 1st represents the whole year, having good time is crucial. They are having good time while gathering at family unions and forgetting about their duties. To enjoy the "Bonenkai parties" which means forgetting the year, they must complete all the responsibilities. With this party they just relief and have fun with their Toshikoshi Soba's. In their feasts, special dishes such as Osechi Ryori, Otoso, and Ozoni take places along with the Toshikoshi Soba. For showing care and love they also send New Year cards for their loved ones scheduled to arrive exactly on January 1st.

One of the usual New Year traditions comes from UK. Except from eating turkey with the family and stuffing gifts under the tree, there are some other fun activities. For instance, you can see the famous London New Year's Eve fireworks display, or New year's Day Parades surrounding streets with music and dances along with costumes. A literal cherish happens in a flow of people. However, if you want to keep your celebration simple and quiet, you can sing "Auld Lang Syne" after toasts of champagne and exchange good wishes. Something you always need to remember is kissing when you under the mistletoe with someone, if you do not want bad luck.

Turning our attention to Türkiye, we must clarify a misunderstanding. New year celebrations and Noel is not the same and they are not even in the same date. So, most people in Türkiye only celebrate "the new year" coming with best wishes. In celebrations usually, a feast given with mezes, sweets, and mouth-watering dishes. Also, a competing energy takes place while playing bingo with friends. You can see the parents eating tangerines and watching the famous TV show throughout the evening. It is a good opportunity to see famous Turkish celebrities singing. Apart from cozy evenings, there are also fireworks display over the Bosphorus, parties and concerts venues. At the end, it is impossible to get bored at the New Year in Türkiye.

To sum up, we can say every country has its own traditions. Yet, all of them linked to good intentions, enjoying and of course cleaning. So, the important thing is wherever you are, you should always find something to have fun. Also, do not forget to appreciate the blessings life gave you. "Gong Xi Fa Cai", "Shin'nen'omedetō", "Happy new year." and Mutlu yıllar!

Epiphany and Italy's Generous Witch: *La Befana*

"La Befana vien di notte con le scarpe tutte rotte, col vestito alla romana viva viva La Befana!"

Taking a different perspective on new year celebrations, we cannot overlook the Feast of Epiphany, a celebration of great significance in Christianity. This feast, which celebrates the visit of the Three Magi to the infant Jesus for Catholics and Protestants, and the baptism of Jesus for the Orthodox, is generally celebrated by Roman Catholics on January 6th and by Eastern Orthodox Christians on January 19th. As it is celebrated twelve days after the birth of Jesus, it is also known as the Twelfth Day.

In many countries, Epiphany is celebrated by giving gifts to children (often placed in their shoes) and by preparing various pastries and sweets. For example, in Germany and Switzerland, 'Three Kings Bread' (Dreikönigskuchen) is baked. Similar to Germany and Switzerland, in Mexico, a sweet bread called 'Rosca de Reyes' is baked and a tiny baby Jesus figure is hidden inside. It is believed to bring good luck to the person who finds it.



This holiday also has a number of other traditions. In the Czech Republic, people celebrate this day by swimming in the freezing Vltava River in Prague. This is said to be a symbol of Christ's baptism. Besides swimming, you can also see men dressed as the Magi riding camels in the Prague city center as part of the Three Kings Day Parade.



They have a very deep meaning of romantic love, devotion, adoration and care. In China, this flower symbolises two lovers where the petals represent the woman, and the calyx (the green leafy part) represents the man. These two parts are joined together, even after the flower withers. Normally, when the petals start to fall the calyx will stay intact. But, with camellias, the petals and the calyx both fall together. So, it also represents eternal love and long-lasting devotion.



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Do you remember the witch from cartoons, depicted as an old woman flying on a broomstick? Although she is often portrayed as a villain, this depiction is a very familiar and beloved figure for Italians. La Befana (which literally means "the old witch") is Italy's Christmas witch. She is portrayed as having ember eyes, sharp feline teeth, a sharp and cutting tongue, and a sooty face from the chimneys she enters houses through. According to Italian legend, La Befana, a woman resembling a witch who rides a broomstick, refused to join the Wise Men on their journey to see the infant Jesus because she was too busy sweeping her house. However, she later regretted her decision but could never find them. From that day on, she began leaving gifts for all children, hoping that one of them might be the baby Jesus.

Children eagerly await Befana, who begins to fly through the air on her broomstick on January 5th. They leave out their shoes and stockings so that Befana can fill them with gifts. According to legend, well-behaved children receive sweets and gifts from Befana, while naughty children get nothing but lumps of coal. However, even the coal she leaves is made of sugar, because Befana wants the holiday to be sweet for everyone.

Another rumor is that she dislikes being watched when she enters a house's chimney to leave gifts. It is said that children who see her will get into trouble, or they will receive a playful thump on the shoulder from her broomstick. Of course, this is likely just a "sweet lie" told to keep excited children in their beds. But her dual nature is one of the most endearing aspects of La Befana. While she is known to bring gifts, she also serves as a gentle reminder for children to behave well.

For Befana's visit, some families leave out a glass of wine and a plate of food. They believe this will give her energy for her journey to find baby Jesus.

In short, Befana is a generous and charming figure, much like the Santa Claus we are accustomed to. La Befana's character is a reflection of the Italian concept of "dolcezza"—a combination of sweetness, kindness, and affection.

CANSU YALNIZ



Winter Idioms and Expressions

Winter may be cold and frosty, but English is full of expressions that warm up your vocabulary! From snowflakes to storms, winter idioms help you sound more natural and colorful when speaking English. Let's explore some cool (and sometimes icy!) idioms that native speakers love to use during the chilly season. ❄️

🧊 1. Break the ice

Meaning: To start a conversation in an awkward or uncomfortable situation.

Example: The teacher told a funny story to break the ice on the first day of class.

🧊 Fun fact: This idiom originally came from ships that had to "break the ice" so other boats could pass — just like how people "break the ice" in conversation!

❄️ 2. Snowed under

Meaning: To have too much work or to be very busy.

Example: I can't go out this weekend — I'm snowed under with homework!

❄️ 3. Leave someone out in the cold

Meaning: To ignore or exclude someone.

Example: They made all the plans without me — I felt left out in the cold.

🧊 4. Put something on ice

Meaning: To postpone or delay something.

Example: The project was put on ice until after the holidays.

❄️ 5. The tip of the iceberg

Meaning: Only a small part of a much bigger problem or situation.

Example: The missing files were just the tip of the iceberg — the whole system was hacked!

❄️ 6. Walk on thin ice

Meaning: To take a big risk or do something dangerous.

Example: You're walking on thin ice by lying to your boss.

🧊 7. Cold shoulder

Meaning: To ignore or treat someone in an unfriendly way.

Example: After their argument, she gave him the cold shoulder for days.

❄️ 8. As cold as ice

Meaning: Very cold — or describing someone who has no emotion.

Example: His voice was as cold as ice when he spoke to me.

❤️ Warm Expressions for Cold Days

Not everything about winter is chilly! English also has "warm" idioms to bring comfort:

🔥 Warm welcome → To greet someone kindly.

🔥 Warm up to someone → To start liking someone more.

🔥 Warm the cockles of your heart → To make you feel happy and loved.

🌟 Why Learn Winter Idioms?

Idioms make your English sound natural, fun, and expressive. Using them helps you connect better with native speakers and adds personality to your speech.

So this winter, grab a cup of cocoa, curl up with a good book, and try adding a few of these idioms to your conversations — you'll sound cool and confident! 🧊🍵

Christmas in Space

It's fascinating to think about how people around the world celebrate the New Year. We usually focus on traditions happening below the ozone layer, but space has its own small group of people marking the occasion: the astronauts aboard the International Space Station.

The ISS is home to a multinational crew, each with their own cultural background. Even though the station focuses on exploring outer space, the astronauts still maintain strong ties to Earth. We can join New Year's events, festivals, and fireworks anywhere on the planet, but we can't exactly join the ISS celebration. So... how do they celebrate?

Before looking at how they celebrate, we should understand when they celebrate. The ISS orbits Earth roughly every 90 minutes, which means astronauts witness 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets each day. With days passing so quickly, the question "When exactly is New Year's?" becomes more complicated than expected.

To keep things simple, the ISS follows UTC (Coordinated Universal Time). Still, astronauts sometimes honor their home countries—Russians celebrate with Moscow time, while Americans pay attention to Houston.

Decorations include mini Christmas trees, paper ornaments, and LED lights. With no gravity, everything must be attached with tape or Velcro. Instead of exchanging gifts, astronauts share handwritten notes or enjoy special meals together.

Their food comes in vacuum-sealed packages, but the New Year's menu is more festive than usual: space-friendly versions of turkey, sweet potatoes, cake, and dried fruits. Some crew members bring traditional foods from home such as mochi, Olivier salad, or apple pie.

They also connect with loved ones through live video calls, and NASA often posts these wholesome moments online. Many astronauts say the best part of celebrating in space is watching Earth's glowing lights as fireworks burst across the continents.

As one astronaut put it: "Below us, fireworks sparkle across continents—and we're all watching the same sky."

Each year ends with a short video message from the crew, often emphasizing peace, unity, and humanity's shared spirit of exploration. No matter where we are in the universe, the New Year reminds us that we are one species sharing one home.



FURKAN EMRE ÜÇLER



Best Christmas Markets Around the World

When December arrives and the scent of cinnamon, roasted chestnuts, and hot chocolate fills the air, Christmas markets begin to sparkle across the globe. 🌍✨

From charming European villages to modern city squares, these festive markets bring people together to celebrate warmth, joy, and tradition — even in the coldest weather!



🎄 1. Nuremberg, Germany – The Classic Christmas Market

One of the oldest and most famous markets in the world! Since the 16th century, Nuremberg's Christkindlesmarkt has been known for its wooden stalls, hand-carved toys, and delicious gingerbread cookies (Lebkuchen). Don't forget to try a hot cup of mulled wine (Glühwein) while snowflakes fall softly around you.

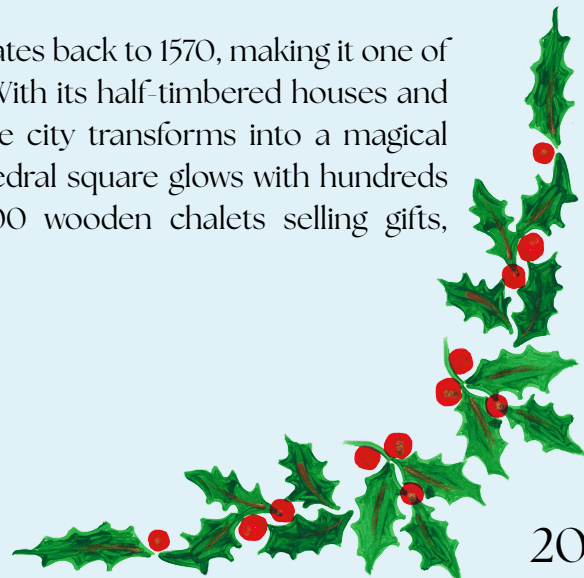
★ 2. Vienna, Austria – A Winter Fairytale

Imagine sipping hot punch in front of Vienna's grand City Hall! The Vienna Christmas Dream market is famous for its twinkling lights, skating rink, and beautiful handmade ornaments. The whole city feels like it's wrapped in a sparkling snow globe.



🎁 3. Strasbourg, France – The Capital of Christmas

Strasbourg's market dates back to 1570, making it one of the oldest in Europe. With its half-timbered houses and festive decorations, the city transforms into a magical wonderland. The cathedral square glows with hundreds of lights and over 300 wooden chalets selling gifts, sweets, and crafts.



4. Prague, Czech Republic – Fairy Lights and Cozy Nights

Set in the heart of Prague's Old Town Square, this market is full of charm and history. Try Trdelník — a sweet, warm pastry rolled in sugar and cinnamon. With carolers singing and the Gothic architecture in the background, it feels like stepping into a Christmas storybook.



5. New York City, USA – Christmas in the Big Apple

The Bryant Park Winter Village and Union Square Holiday Market are full of excitement and energy. Between skating under the Empire State Building and shopping for local crafts, you'll feel the festive buzz of New York's holiday spirit.



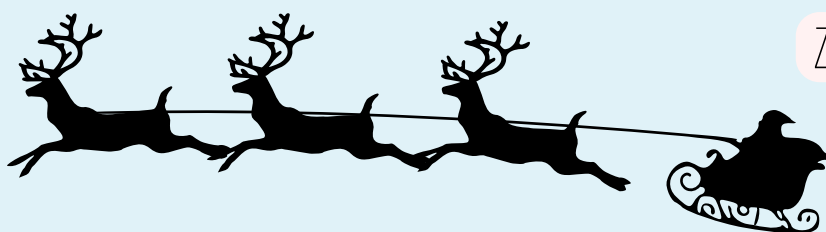
6. Tokyo, Japan – A Modern Christmas Glow

Christmas may not be traditional in Japan, but Tokyo knows how to celebrate! The Roppongi Hills and Hibiya Park markets are filled with lights, German-style food, and winter concerts. Everything sparkles — it's Christmas with a modern twist!

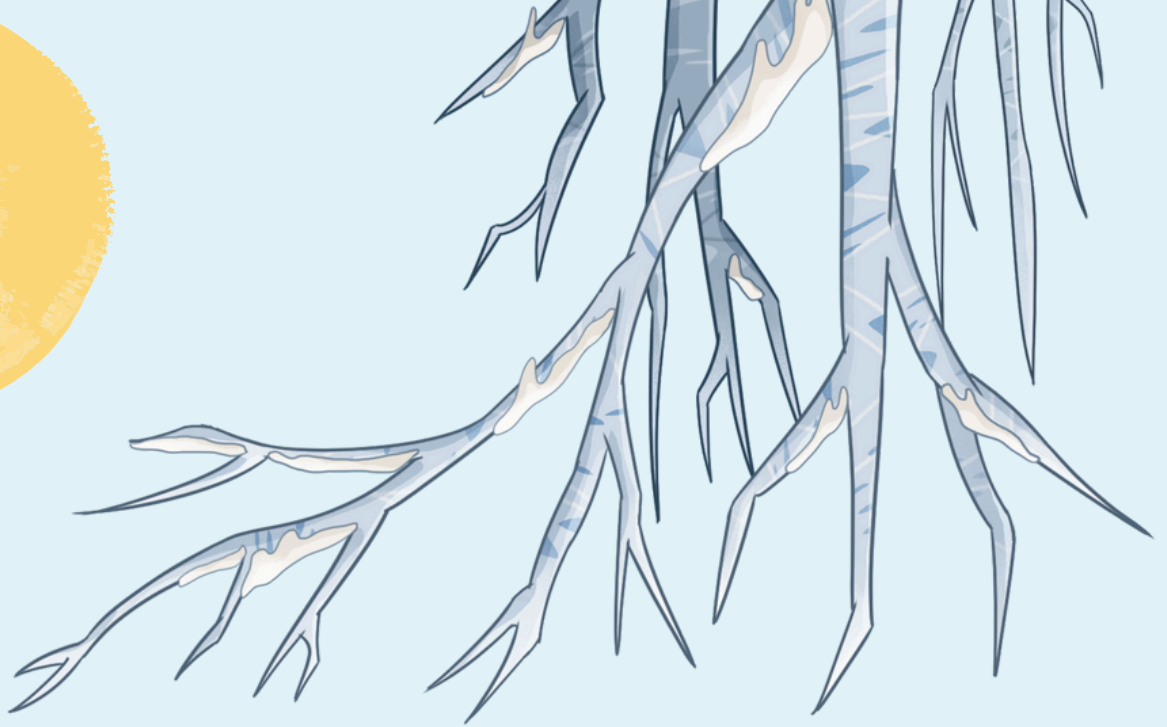
Why We Love Christmas Markets

They're not just about shopping — they're about connection, culture, and cheer. Whether you're sipping cocoa with friends or buying a handmade ornament from a local artist, these markets remind us that joy can be found in the simplest things.

So grab your scarf, warm mittens, and holiday spirit — the magic of Christmas awaits you around the world! 🧑🏻‍🎅 ✨



ZEBO SHAKIROVA



LITERATURE





Merry ChristMyTH!

Yule: A Festival of Fire, Darkness, and Hope



Long before Christmas was even a thing, the peoples in Northern Europe gathered around to honor the rebirth of the sun at the Winter Solstice (approximately December 21). It marked the turning point of the year - the shortest day and longest night - when darkness began to fade and the light slowly returned.

In pagan belief system, the winter solstice marked the 'death of the old sun' and the 'birth of the new sun'. The days had grown shorter and colder, and people feared that the sun might never return. To call it back, they lit fires, burned great logs, and feasted through the longest night of the year - believing that light itself was being reborn.

In Norse tradition, this marked the beginning of Jól (Yule), a twelve-day festival filled with feasting, joyful gatherings, and cherished traditions - a celebration so rich that it eventually inspired what we now call the 'Twelve Days of Christmas'.

It was a festival of hope, a bold promise that no darkness - no matter how deep - can last forever. But Yule was not just a festival; it was a sacred turning point. Symbolically, Yule represented death and rebirth, the cyclical nature of time, and the renewal of life after hardship.

Before Santa, There Was Odin

In the old Norse stories, the line between worlds blurred at Yule. People truly believed that during this sacred time, Odin - if you haven't met Odin before, you can check out our previous issue to meet him - would charge across the stormy night sky, leading the Wild Hunt: a mysterious group of spirits, gods, and warriors riding together.

Over the centuries, this wild winter god softened and transformed. The mysterious wanderer of the North gradually became the warm, gift-bearing figure we now call Santa Claus - still with his long beard, still traveling through the winter sky, and still holding a bit of old magic.



From Yule Fires to Christmas Lights

During the darkest days, people decorated their homes, shared food, and told stories, reminding one another that even in the long night, they were not alone. Evergreens like holly, ivy, pine, and mistletoe weren't just decorations. They were brave enough to stay green when everything else had faded. Families leaned close to the Yule Log as it burned, whispering their dreams into the smoke, then kept the ashes to protect their home and bless the year ahead. Candles, hearth fires, and bonfires symbolized the returning sun. Outside, the world was frozen; inside, there was laughter, warmth, and gratitude. Yule celebrated what truly mattered: hope, family, and the promise that 'the sun will rise again'



When Christianity spread, these traditions evolved - the evergreen became the Christmas tree, the Yule Log became a dessert (even inspiring cakes such as the Woodland Christmas Yule Log Cake) or decoration, and gift-giving found new meaning in the story of Christ. Even the date, December 25, was chosen to sit right beside the solstice, the old celebration of returning light.

Today, beneath twinkling lights and tinsel, the spirit of Yule lives on: hope in darkness, warmth in winter, and the belief that light always comes back. May you, dear readers, always remember that every darkness has its light, and may hope continue to grow in your heart. STAY MYSTERIOUS!!!

ZEYNEP GÜLCAN ŞENCAN

The First Snowflake ❄️

I stand tall in the corner of the city,
It is a place to be just me.
With my small circle of light,
I am the witness of a brutal fight.

The vendor packing up his worries,
The students racing for their dreams,
Workers missing the last bus,
As the year's last hours softly rush...

Then the first snowflake falls,
Slow, slow and slow...
It stops the hustle and all worries befall,
What was once a misery is now a chance to grow.

-This poem was written from the perspective of a street lamp in a city approaching the new year.



VELİZ NAS

PIONEER WOMEN

ANN BANCROFT



Ann Bancroft paved the way for women to follow their desires even though these desires are seen as “male dominant areas” or “too hard for a woman to achieve” in the society in 20th century. She became the first woman to reach the North Pole. Not only reaching there herself, but she also helped other women by leading their expedition to the South Pole in 1992-1993. Let's look at her life a closer look.

She was born in September 29, 1955 in Minnesota, United States. She was quite an interested child in sports like camping and canoeing even at a young age like eight that she led her cousins on mini expeditions in her own backyard.

Things didn't go perfectly in her life as she had learning difficulties as a result of her dyslexia. Nevertheless, she was able to finish high school. She taught how to play basketball to girls in her collage, and they started a team together. Then, she got accepted from the University of Oregon and her major was Physical Education. After her graduation, she became a special education teacher, but she was still dreaming of becoming an explorer.

In 1986, she quit teaching because she had an opportunity where she was invited to participate in Will Steger International North Pole Expedition. They travelled by dogsleds and reached the North Pole after fifty-six days. Ms. Magazine named her Women of the year in 1987 since she became the first woman to make it to the North Pole.

She didn't stop there. To be able to raise funds to support an educational expedition to Antarctica which was led only by women, she founded All Women's Expedition (AWE) Foundation in 1991. So, in November 1992, she organized the American Women's Expedition to Antarctica. They travelled on skis and completed the journey after sixty-seven days. That was the first all-female team to reach the South Pole on skis. Ann became the first woman to travel both North and South Poles.

AWE foundation shifted its focus to inspire women to become adventurers while encouraging them to reach their own dreams. Later on, the leaders of the organisation named it as the Ann Bancroft Foundation.

She skied and sailed across Antarctica in ninety-four days with Liv Arnesen who was a female explorer from Norway. They became the first women to ski across Antarctica.

Ann was not only into expeditions and supporting women rights, but she also had some activism movements in the fields of gender equality and sexuality, gave speeches publicly to support same sex marriages in Minnesota.

After we had a closer look to her life, we can say that she followed her passion while inspiring and protecting women, so this makes her a hero as well as a strong inspiration and role model for us.



HILAL NAZ KULA

12 months - 12 books

JANUARY – PLAYING WITH FIRE / TESS GERRITSEN

Playing with Fire is an excellent thriller by Tess Gerritsen. Although she is known for her crime novels, this book does not involve murder. The book tells the story of a little girl who loses her mind when she hears a certain melody.

FEBRUARY – BUCHMENDEL / STEFAN ZWEIG

A perfect novella for the shortest month of the year, Buchmendel (also known as Mendel the Book-dealer) tells the story of a man who is so devoted to books that he does not even notice the war in his country. Like almost every Stefan Zweig book, you can finish it in one sitting.

MARCH – SCYTHE / NEAL SHUSTERMAN

Scythe is a fascinating dystopian novel. The book tells the story of a corrupted organization called the “Scythes”, whose responsibility is to control the population in a world where natural death has been completely cured.

APRIL – THE INVISIBLE MAN / H.G. WELLS

H.G. Wells is one of the pioneers of science fiction novels. Instead of The Time Machine, which is often recommended, I would like to suggest The Invisible Man. The book tells the story of a mysterious man, who arrives to a village called Iping during a snowstorm.

MAY – MADONNA IN A FUR COAT / SABAHATTİN ALİ

Madonna in a Fur Coat is Sabahattin Ali's most famous book, which has retained its popularity over the years and has been translated into many languages. The book tells the unforgettable story of Maria and Raif.

JUNE – HEART OF DARKNESS / JOSEPH CONRAD

Apart from its story, Heart of Darkness carries important messages about imperialism, racism, fascism, and forced labor. The book will take you to colonialism times, while following Marlow on a journey to the Congo to find a man named Kurtz. During this journey, Marlow also discovers his own true identity.



JULY – DIARY OF A MURDERER / KIM YOUNG-HA

After retiring, a serial killer becomes an Alzheimer's patient. Before he forgets everything, he must catch another killer who is threatening his daughter. Diary of A Murderer is another book you can finish in one sitting with its thrilling plot and unique narrative style.

AUGUST – THE IRON HEEL / JACK LONDON

The Iron Heel is one of the earliest dystopian novels and the inspiration behind George Orwell's 1984. The story is told from the perspective of Avis, who witnesses the struggle between workers and capitalists.

SEPTEMBER – The LORD OF THE RINGS / J.R.R TOLKIEN

I included The Lord of the Rings in this list not only for its captivating story, but also because of its huge universe which demonstrates how a perfect fantasy world can be created.

OCTOBER – OF MICE AND MEN / JOHN STEINBECK

This book, which we previously recommended its theater adaptation in our magazine, is an excellent work that captivates the reader in every way. Of Mice and Men is an emotional novel that will make you curious about the fate of its characters.

NOVEMBER – THE GREAT SPEECH / MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK

The only book that can truly be recommended for November...

DECEMBER – A CHRISTMAS CAROL / CHARLES DICKENS

This book is the main reason why I decided to prepare this list for the magazine. A Christmas Carol was a book I reserved to read in December, and that's exactly why it's the last book on this list. It's a Charles Dickens novella that features ghosts and Christmas themes.

MEHMET TÜR






EDUCATION



Is ChatGPT the new co-teacher in ELT classrooms?



Since AI has rapidly spread around the world, debates on its role in education have inevitably increased. Many teachers now wonder whether AI could replace their roles in the classroom. Today, numerous AI-powered language learning applications offer personalized tutoring, enabling learners to focus on form, improve fluency through pronunciation checks, receive instant feedback, and generate language output anytime, even beyond classroom walls.

Therefore, it is only natural for teachers to question the rise of AI in education. However, a more important question emerges: *Can AI truly replace teachers? Or should we view it as a co-teacher – an intelligent assistant designed to support, not substitute, human educators?*

As AI moves from a futuristic concept to an everyday tool, ELT is experiencing a paradigm shift. The question is no longer if AI will be present in education—but how it should be used.

AI presents remarkable benefits when thoughtfully integrated into language instruction:

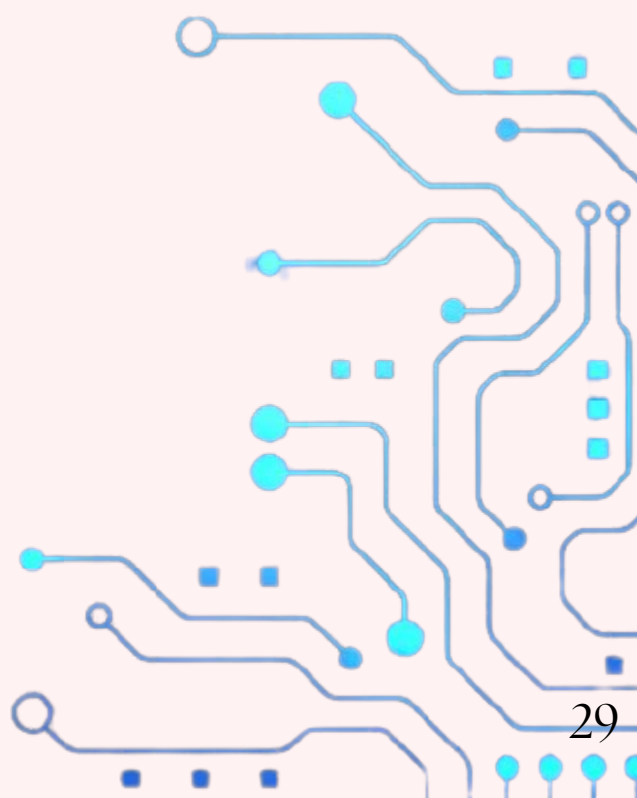
- **24/7 language practice:** Students can engage in conversations anytime without the fear of being judged.
- **Instant corrective feedback:** AI tools provide grammar, vocabulary, and even pronunciation guidance.
- **Personalized learning:** Tasks can be tailored to individual levels, learning speed, and interests.
- **Writing support:** AI assists learners in brainstorming, structuring essays, and improving coherence.
- **Speaking confidence:** Chatbots and voice assistants reduce foreign language speaking anxiety by offering low-pressure practice environments.

Recent studies highlight that students perceive AI as a *non-threatening language partner* that allows them to experiment, make mistakes, and improve fluency more comfortably than in traditional settings (Kohnke, Moorhouse & Zou, 2023).

Despite its advantages, AI integration must be handled carefully:

- **Over-dependence** may reduce students' ability to produce language independently.
- **Reliability issues:** AI can generate wrong information or unnatural sentence structures.
- **Ethical concerns:** Academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and loss of originality remain significant risks.
- **Lack of emotional intelligence:** AI cannot fully replicate human empathy, cultural sensitivity, or motivational classroom dynamics.

AI cannot replace teachers but serves best as a supportive co-pilot, not the main instructor. Teachers play a vital role in guiding students to use AI critically, ethically, and productively, ensuring that technology enhances rather than replaces learning.



But how can we integrate AI in our classroom?

Here are some practical ELT activities using AI:

1. **AI Writing Review:** Students compose a paragraph, ask AI for feedback, then revise and reflect on changes.
2. **Chatbot Speaking Practice:** Learners conduct 1-minute spoken conversations using voice bots and report new vocabulary they learned. We may also use it for our speaking assessments.
3. **Error Detective Task:** AI generates a text with intentional errors; students work in groups to correct them.
4. **Debate with AI:** Students ask AI for arguments on a topic, then challenge or defend those ideas in class.

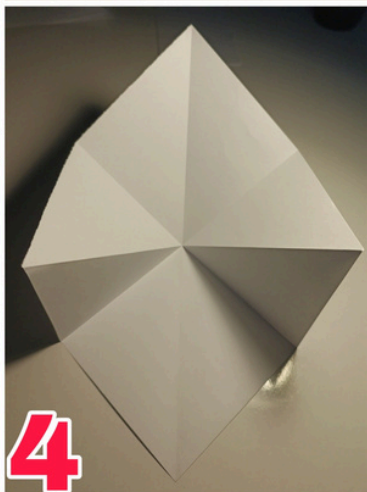
AI is not taking over English teaching — it is transforming it. When used strategically, it becomes a powerful partner that expands learning possibilities and boosts learner confidence. The future of ELT lies in technology-supported, teacher-guided learning, where human insight meets digital innovation.

As educator and researcher Ethan Mollick states, *“AI will not replace teachers, but teachers who use AI will replace those who don’t.”*

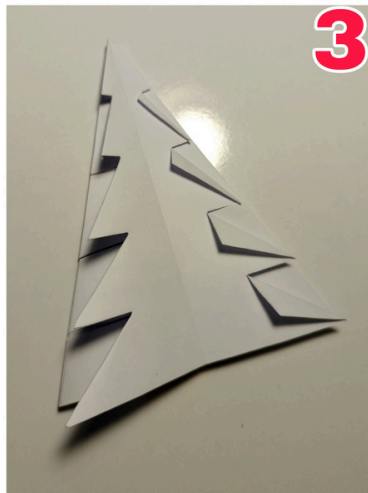
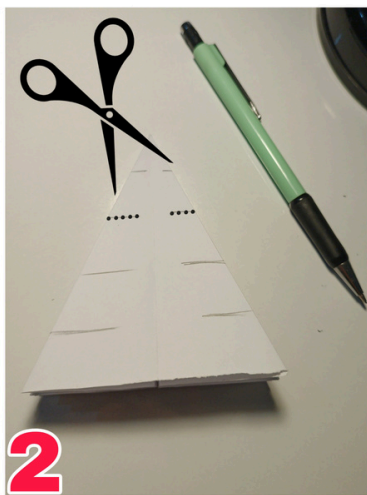
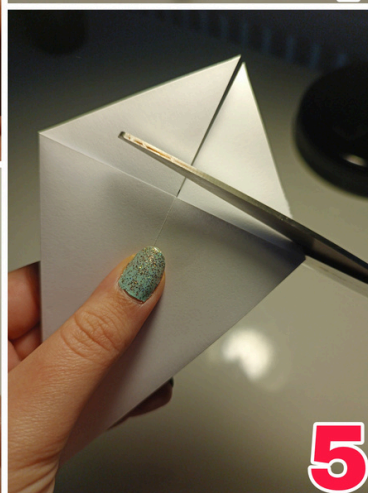
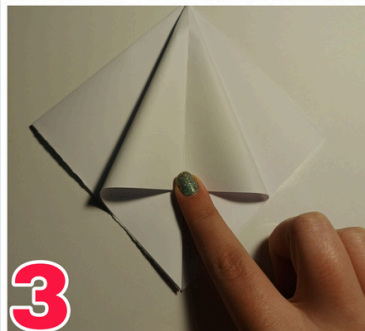
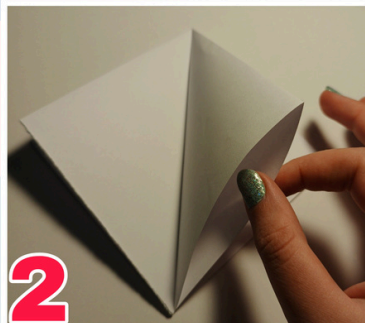
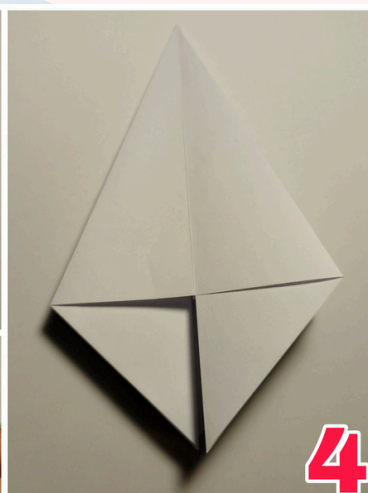
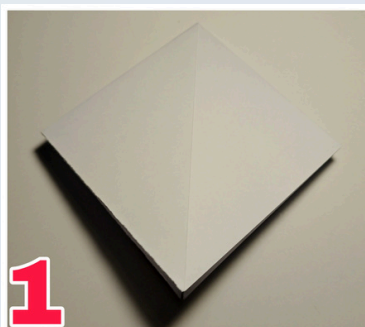
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MERVE KOCH



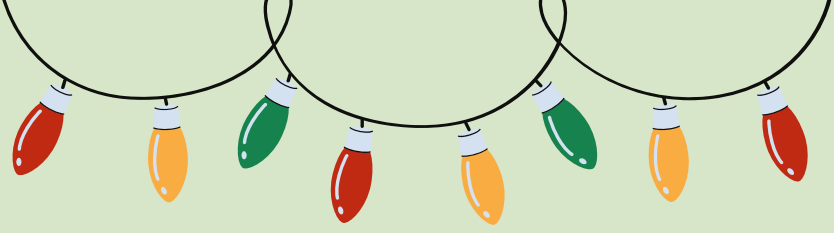
GAME CORNER



ORIGAMI CHRISTMAS TREE



New Year BINGO!



AYŞE NUR BEŞİKTEPE, MERVE KOCH

Make a gingerbread man cookie	Get your friends a present	Watch christmas theme movies
Make yourself a hot chocolate	2026 Happy New Year!	Try new recipes
Read 2 books	Make yourself a hot chocolate	Go on a self date

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