

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 34

# The Language of Christmas

Full episode script · English

223 lines

Your English Toolbox

Welcome to the Slow Listening Podcast Series, the show where we train your ears step by step.

I'm Martin and I'm Peter.

Today we're doing Christmas idioms in a funny festive dialogue.

We'll explain every idiom, test each other and end with a short Christmas story.

And Martin, please don't be a Scrooge.

Welcome back, friends.

Before we continue,

let me ask you something simple.

Have you ever listened to a podcast and thought,

I'll just listen for a minute?

And then suddenly it's over.

That's exactly what we want today.

If you stay until the end of this episode, three things will happen.

First, you'll understand Christmas idioms, not as vocabulary but as real emotional language.

Second, you'll hear a personal Christmas story that many people quietly relate to, even if they don't talk about it.

And third, you'll walk away with expressions

you can actually use in conversations, exams and real life.

And I promise this is not just another list of idioms.

It's about how language connects to memory, emotion and real moments.

Also, quick reminder before we go deeper.

The full explained list of idioms with examples,

notes and usage tips will be on our Patreon page.

In the description, you'll find the link.

On Patreon, you'll get the full transcription, a clean vocabulary list and extra learning material to practice calmly.

Now, Peter, earlier we joked a lot.

We talked about food and shopping till you drop.

But Christmas is not only jokes and lights, right?

No, not at all.

For many people, Christmas is emotional.

Sometimes warm, sometimes heavy, sometimes both.

Would you be okay sharing something more personal?

Yes.

And friends, I'm sharing this because language is strongest when it's honest.

A few years ago, I remember one Christmas very clearly.

I had just finished a difficult year.

Work-wise, I was completely snowed under and emotionally I felt the same.

Everyone around me was talking about parties, gifts and being excited.

But inside, I felt a bit disconnected.

I still told people I'd be there with bells on.

That's what we do sometimes, isn't it?

We show enthusiasm even when we're tired.

On Christmas Eve, I went to my parents' house.

The place was already decked out, lights everywhere, the table prepared.

My mother kept saying, come on, don't be a scrooge.

Because I was quiet.

She wasn't angry, just worried.

We sat down to eat, like always, too much food.

We ate,

drank and were merry, at least on the surface.

I definitely pigged out, and ten minutes later I was stuffed like a turkey.

Then came the famous food coma, everyone half asleep on the sofa.

From the outside, it looked like a perfect Christmas.

But the proof, as they say, was in the pudding.

At some point my father gave me a small gift,

very small.

I remember thinking, oh, that's it.

But then I stopped myself.

I literally said out loud, well, don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

Everyone laughed.

Inside the box, there was nothing expensive.

It definitely didn't cost a pretty penny, and he didn't splash out.

It was just an old photo, a photo of us from many years ago.

He looked at me and said, good things come in small packages.

That hit me harder than any expensive gift ever could.

In that moment I really understood.

It's the thought that counts.

Not as a phrase, as a truth.

Later that night I went outside for some air.

It started snowing.

Not a movie style storm, but enough to say, wow, maybe this is a white Christmas.

I stood there quietly, thinking about the year.

I realized that all my stress, my worries, my tiredness, they were just the tip of the iceberg.

Underneath, what really mattered was connection.

When I came back in, my mother noticed I was calmer.

She smiled and said, there you are.

No big speech.

No pressure.

That night reminded me that Christmas really does come but once a year.

Not as an excuse to spend or overdo things, but as a pause.

A moment to stop walking on thin ice with ourselves all the time.

Since then, I try not to cancel my own Christmas by overthinking everything.

I try not to give people the cold shoulder when I'm stressed.

And I remind myself that sometimes slowing down is not weakness.

That's why this podcast exists, wow.

Thank you for sharing that.

I think many people listening felt something there.

What I love about your story is that you didn't teach idioms.

You lived them.

You naturally use things like snowed under, eat, drink and be merry, stuffed like a turkey,

the proof is in the pudding, good things come in small packages,

and it's the thought that counts.

And they didn't sound like vocabulary.

They sounded like life.

That's exactly the point, friends.

Idioms are emotional shortcuts.

They carry memory, culture and feeling.

If you remember Peter's story, you'll remember these expressions without effort.

And remember, if you want the full explained list,

clean examples and extra practice, the Patreon link is in the description.

And now we're going to go over some very common and useful idioms

and expressions related to Christmas.

We'll start with a quick review and then, at the end,

you'll hear them again in context through a short dialogue.

The slow listening approach to language never forgets that language is a living thing.

During the Christmas period, people use particular expressions

and a specific kind of language.

What better moment to revisit that language than now?

Part 1

Meanings and quick tests

Christmas comes but once a year.

Meaning, a friendly excuse to overindulge or relax because the occasion is rare.

So if I eat a fourth cookie, I can say it and sound philosophical.

Exactly.

The more the merrier.

Meaning, the more people who join, the more fun it is.

To be there with bells on.

Meaning, you arrive full of enthusiasm.

Lit up like a Christmas tree.

Meaning 1, very bright clothes.

Meaning 2, very drunk.

Deck the halls.

Meaning, decorate for Christmas.

Don't be a scrooge.

Meaning, don't be grumpy, stingy or anti-celebration.

If I say I hate Christmas music, what do you say?

I say, don't be a scrooge mon n'un din.

And turn the volume up.

Stuffed like a turkey.

Meaning, extremely full after eating.

Eat, drink and be merry.

Meaning, enjoy the moment without worrying.

To pig out.

Meaning, eat too much, very casual.

Food coma.

Meaning, the sleepy feeling after a heavy meal.

Give me an exam style sentence with eat, drink and be merry.

During the holidays people gather to eat, drink and be merry.

Strengthening social bonds.

The proof is in the pudding.

Meaning, you judge something only after you try it.

To go cold turkey.

Meaning, stop a habit suddenly and completely.

Shop till you drop.

Meaning, shop until exhaustion.

To splash out on something.

Meaning, spend a lot freely.

Cost a pretty penny.

Meaning, very expensive.

Break the bank.

Meaning, cost more than you can afford.

Stocking stuffer.

Meaning, a small inexpensive gift.

It's the thought that counts.

Meaning, intention matters more than perfection.

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

Meaning, don't criticise a gift.

Good things come in small packages.

Meaning, size doesn't equal value.

To give someone the cold shoulder.

Meaning, intentionally ignore someone.

A white Christmas.

Meaning, Christmas day with snow.

To be snowed under.

Meaning, overwhelmed with work.

Break the ice.

Meaning, reduce social tension.

Walking on thin ice.

Meaning, being in a risky situation.

Tip of the iceberg.

Meaning, a small visible part of a bigger problem.

Like turkeys voting for Christmas.

Meaning, supporting something that harms you.

Cancel someone's Christmas.

Meaning, completely ruin someone's day.

Part 2.

Fast practice and a short Christmas story.

If I invite extra guests, what do I say?

The more the merrier.

If I stop sugar suddenly, I go cold turkey.

You ate too much.

I'm stuffed like a turkey.

Office party scene.

I walk in wearing blinking lights.

You're lit up like a Christmas tree.

I tell the joke to break the ice.

My boss asks about deadlines.

I say I'm snowed under.

Shopping scene.

I want nice gifts but not break the bank.

Choose thoughtful stocking stuffers.

Family dinner.

We eat, drink and be merry.

Then we pig out and fall into a food coma.

Short Christmas story.

On Christmas Eve, Martin was snowed under with work and shopping.

He repeated, Christmas comes but once a year to stay calm.

Peter arrived and said he'd be there with bells on.

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Soon the house was full because the more the merrier.

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They decked the halls while someone danced on a chair.

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I warned him he was walking on thin ice.

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Dinner followed.

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They ate, drank and were merry.

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Martin picked out and announced he was stuffed like a turkey.

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Gifts appeared.

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Small boxes, big smiles.

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Good things come in small packages.

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Snow began to fall.

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Someone whispered, a white Christmas.

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A neighbour arrived grumpy.

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I said don't be a scrooge and invited him in.

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At midnight, Martin joked about quitting sugar cold turkey.

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I said the proof is in the pudding.

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The night ended warm, loud and joyful.

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Merry Christmas, friends.

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Merry Christmas.

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