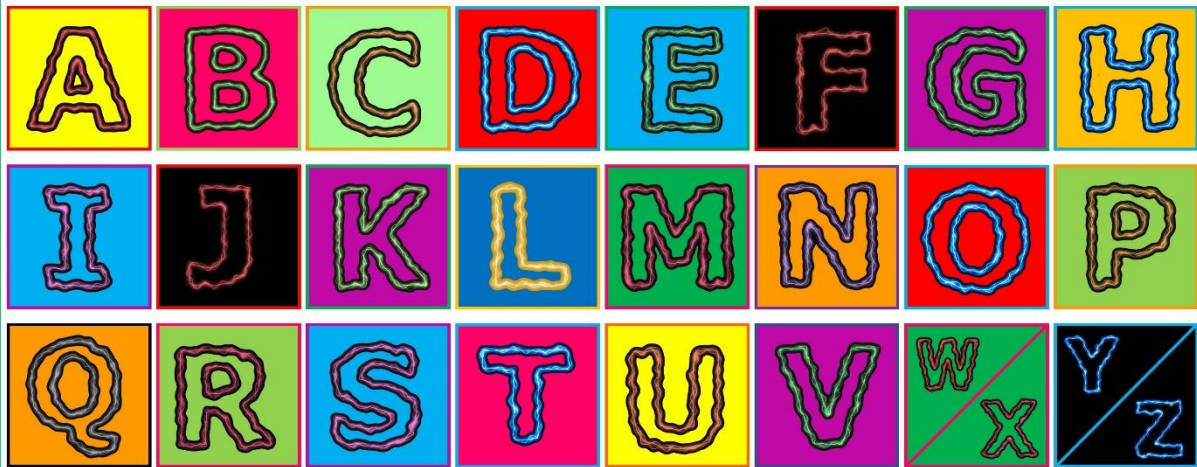


An A–Z of Holiday Activities for Families at Home



A — Acrostic

Write an acrostic poem for yourself. Each person writes their name vertically and writes a word or phrase about what Christmas means to them for each letter.

For example, here's one for me:

Naughty or nice? Why, nice of course.
Opening gifts — loving the look on recipient's faces
Recipes for celebrating — pavlova, everyone's favourite
All the family together playing games and having fun
Home is the place to be.



B — Book

Everyone chooses a favourite book, perhaps one received for Christmas, and reads uninterrupted for half an hour (or more!).



C — Charades

The oldest player goes first to give clues about the title of a book, song, TV, movie, or video game. The first to guess the answer is the next clue giver.

Here are some of the common rules of play:

The clue giver:

- must not speak or make any sounds
- holds up fingers for the number of words in the title
- shows it's a book title by holding hands with palms together then opening like a book
- shows it's a song by putting one hand on the chest and one hand up in the air with mouth open wide as if singing
- shows it's a TV show by drawing a square in the air
- shows it's a movie by miming an old-fashioned movie camera with one hand forming a circle around one eye and the other hand winding the camera handle
- shows it's a video game by moving fingers as if tapping quickly on a keyboard

If your children are too young to play charades this way, you could play animal charades in which children act out an animal but must make no noise.



D — Dominoes

Play a game of dominoes together.

If you don't have a set, you could print the readilearn [Christmas Domino Cards](#).



E — Elf, Tree, Gift

This game works best if you have a few people to play. One person is *It*. The other players spread out behind *It* who faces away from them. The players choose to be an elf (arms and legs spread wide), a tree (hands pointed together above their heads) or a gift (sitting on the floor with their arms around their knees). Once they choose, they must hold that position. *It* then calls out one of the three items and turns around to see. Anyone not in the position called is out until the next round. The last one in becomes *It* for the next round.



F — Freeze

You need someone to be in charge of the music. When the music plays, everybody dances. When the music stops, everyone must freeze. If anyone moves after the music stops, they are out until the next round.

You may download some variants and other suggestions from readilearn, [How to play Freeze!](#)



G — Grandma came to visit

This is a variant of the alphabet memory game, My grandma went to market.

Players take turns to recite ‘Grandma came to visit and she brought ...’

The first player adds an item beginning with *a*; e.g. ‘Grandma came to visit and she brought an alligator.’

The second player repeats what the first player has said, and adds an item beginning with *b*.

The game continues until Grandma has brought an item for all letters of the alphabet in order. As more and more items are added, it becomes more difficult to remember them and children may need reminders of the alphabet sequence.

To make it even trickier, you can request that all items be Christmas related, e.g., angel, bonbon, candy, drum ...

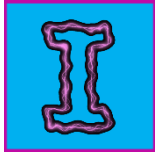
An easier game may be for Grandma to bring items numbering from one to ten. For even younger children, you could simply play it as a memory game without reference to numbers or the alphabet.



H — Hangman

Play Hangman using Christmas words.

Alternatively, you could play readilearn’s interactive Hang Man-type game [Turn on the Christmas Lights](#).



I — I spy

I don't think this one requires any explanation. Easy ways of playing are choosing something beginning with, or for younger children, something of a particular colour.

readilearn has two interactive I spy resources: [I spy something beginning with](#) and [I spy a counting game](#).



J — Jigsaw puzzles

Jigsaw puzzles are fun to do together.

If you don't have a hands-on puzzle, you will find many free puzzles online, including these two free puzzles from readilearn: [Little Koala's Jigsaw Puzzle](#) and [Trees From my Backyard](#). However, the hands-on puzzles are more fun to do together.



K — Kindness

Think of a kind act you can do for another without their knowing. Even a smile can lighten somebody's day.



L — Laughter

Laughter is a great way to lighten the mood. Tell each other jokes or funny stories. Vote for the funniest story.



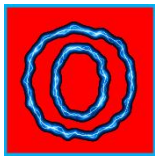
M — Music

Sing, listen to or watch your favourite Christmas songs.



N — [NORAD Tracks Santa](#)

On Christmas Eve you can watch where Santa is travelling around the world. Prior to that, visit the website for lots of interesting information, fun games and other entertaining stuff. (NORAD = North American Aerospace Defense Command. It has been tracking Santa's annual journey for over 60 years.)



O — Origami

Make some origami stars. Use squares of origami paper or wrapping paper. Here's [a video from Red Ted Art](#) with instructions. It involves folding only (no cutting) but some younger children may need help.



P — Play a game

Most families have a collection of board games on a shelf or in a cupboard. Is your family one of them? Take a game off the shelf and play!

What is your family favourite? Is it one of these?

- Snakes and Ladders
- Ludo
- Monopoly
- Scrabble
- Cluedo
- Draughts
- Chinese Checkers



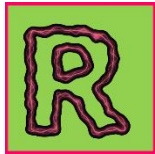
Q — Questions

Play a game of 20 Questions.

It thinks of a person, place, animal or object. The other players have to guess what *It* is thinking of. The players take turns to ask questions. Answers can only be 'Yes' or 'No'. A

player may continue asking questions until they get a 'no' answer. Then it is the next person's turn to ask.

The first person to guess correctly is *It* for the next round. If the answer isn't guessed in 20 questions, players are told what it is and *It* has another turn (less obscure!)



R — Read aloud

Take turns to read aloud from a favourite book or poem. An adult could read to younger children or to all the adults and children.



S — Stick it on the head

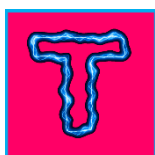
This is another fun guessing game. You need some sticky notes and markers.

Players secretly write the name of a well-known person or celebrity on a sticky note. The sticky notes are then placed on the foreheads of the other players who take turns to ask questions in order to guess who they are.

They may ask questions, but the answers can only be 'yes' or 'no'; for example: Am I living? Am I an actor? Am I in comedy movies?

Players continue to ask questions until they receive a 'no' answer. Then it is the next person's turn. Continue around the circle, taking turns to ask questions, until every knows who they are.

Once everyone has guessed correctly, you can have another round.



T — Travel the World

This is another alphabet game. Players take turns to say a letter of the alphabet in order by naming a place they could travel to and something they could take with them that begins with the letter. For example, the first person might say, 'I went to Africa and I took an apple.' The second person might say, 'I went to Bali and I took a boogie board.' Continue until you reach the end of the alphabet.



U — Up. Keep it up!

For this game you need a balloon, a light indoor ball or a scrunched-up wad of wrapping paper. Throw the balloon into the air. Everyone must try to keep the balloon aloft and avoid it falling to the floor. For extra fun, time how long you can keep it aloft and try to increase the time on each turn.



V — [Virtual Bingo](#)

Who doesn't love a game of bingo? You can play bingo with family and friends, even if you're not all at the same location. It's free for up to 30 players.



W — Wrapping paper

The three Rs — Recycle. Reduce. Reuse.

Recycle? Not all wrapping paper is recyclable and the rules for what is and what is not accepted for recycling differ from district to district, so check with the council in your local area.

Reduce? If you carefully unwrap gifts, portions of the paper can be smoothed and stored for reuse next year, thus reducing the amount going into land fill.

Reuse? If you don't want to reuse paper for wrapping gifts, it can be used in other ways, for example:

- Cut into squares for making Christmas origami.
- Cut into strips for making paper chains.
- If pieces are large enough, use to cover school books or line the inside of drawers.

If none of these ideas appeal, simply scrunch the wrapping paper into balls and have a wrapping paper fight before distributing them to the recycle or general waste bin.



X — Noughts and crosses

Play noughts and crosses. It's easy. All you need is some paper and pencils.



Y — You're next

You're next is a drawing game.

Everyone starts with a piece of paper and a pencil. Each person starts by writing their name and drawing a shape on their piece of paper. They then pass the paper to the next person who adds to it.

Continue in this way until everyone has added to every drawing.

For a large group, you may go around the circle once.

For a small group, you may wish to go around the circle two or three times.

When the paper gets back to where it started, compare the drawings.



Z — ZZZzzz

It's quite okay to have a snooze after all that festive feasting and fun.

Or perhaps you'd rather have a Zoom party.

Whatever you do, enjoy!

