

CHRISTMAS WITH THIS AMERICAN LIFE PODCAST WS 5



1. Read the chunks and read the lyrics. Can you find the correct places for them?

Listen to the clip from *Somebody Stole My Santa Claus Suit* by the Christmas Jug Band, featuring Dan Hicks, and first drag and drop the chunks next to numbers. Then listen again and fill the gaps with verbs. \_\_\_\_\_

a no-show

the pillow off my bed

my Jingle Bells

my beard, hat and boots

Somebody \_\_\_\_\_ my Santa Claus suit

Somebody \_\_\_\_\_ off 1) \_\_\_\_\_

Some little fatso is all dressed in red

He even had the gall to \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

Now what my kids going to think?

If Santa's 3) \_\_\_\_\_, well boy, they'll \_\_\_\_\_ a stink

But Deck the Halls and "What the Hell!"

Yeah, I still got 4) \_\_\_\_\_

So sucker, you can \_\_\_\_\_ the suit!

Cause frankly I don't \_\_\_\_\_ a hoot!



Now find in the lyrics words and expressions fitting the follow definitions:

a plump person \_\_\_\_\_

had sufficient arrogance to do something \_\_\_\_\_

will complain or object very angrily \_\_\_\_\_

decorate for Christmas \_\_\_\_\_

care about someone or something (used in negative statements) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Listen to the snippet from yet another Christmas episode of *This American Life* and fill the gaps with prepositions \_\_\_\_\_

**Ira Glass:** Act Five, *Santa Claus Versus the Easter Bunny*. A while back, writer David

Sedaris moved \_\_\_ France, where he enrolled \_\_\_ a school to study French. He was the

only American there. As he explained \_\_\_ an audience \_\_\_ City Arts and Lectures \_\_\_ San Francisco,

the teacher could be kind \_\_\_ mean.

**David Sedaris:** Oh, she would throw chalk \_\_\_ people, and stabbed someone \_\_\_ the eye \_\_\_ a pencil one day, and would hold your homework paper \_\_\_ your head and show everyone the mistakes that you made. So I wrote a story \_\_\_\_\_ her. And she read it, and I got thrown \_\_\_\_\_ school.

**Ira Glass:** This is another story \_\_\_\_\_ her, and \_\_\_\_\_ the big religious holidays, and the sheer arbitrariness \_\_\_ the way we celebrate sometimes. Easter eggs, Santa filling the stockings, all the non-religious icons.



**3. Listen to the snippet once. What task were the students given? Listen again and tap out all the things relatable to the Moroccan student \_\_\_\_\_**

she was chatty and friendly

she was sulky and chubby

she had grown up speaking French

she hoped to improve her Grammar

she demonstrated her superiority

the other students adored her

she had recently transferred to the class

she liked to help out her classmates

she had covered these lessons back in the fourth grade

**Listen again and match the correspondent parts of collocations \_\_\_\_\_**

a brief list

of photos

a scattered arrangement

of major holidays

photos capturing

nanny

people in

Poles

to match the holiday

the act of celebration

a Russian

French people

two chatty

with the corresponding picture

a pouty, plump

grammar genie

had enrolled

folded across her chest

to improve  
until she was booted  
her shoulder  
her bronzed arms  
some great

had given out  
Moroccan woman  
up to her appropriate level  
in the class  
her spelling

**Now retell the snippet**

**4. Read, drag and drop, listen and check \_\_\_\_\_**

had generally ignored      at drastically reduced      had moved on to      was usually observed  
had to do with      as soon avoid      leading to the suspicion  
was represented      had their way      was scheduled

We had finished discussing New Year's Eve, and the teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Easter, which \_\_\_\_\_ in our textbook by a black and white photograph of a chocolate bell lying upon a bed of palm fronds. "And what does one do on Easter?



Would anyone like to tell us?" It was, for me, another one of those holidays I'd just \_\_\_\_\_ .

Growing up, my family \_\_\_\_\_ the Easter celebrated by our non-Orthodox friends and neighbors, \_\_\_\_\_ that we might be either Jews or Communists. As Greeks, we had our own Easter which \_\_\_\_\_ anywhere from two to four weeks after what was known in our circle as "the American version." The reason \_\_\_\_\_ the moon or the Orthodox calendar, something mysterious like that. Though our mother always suspected it \_\_\_\_\_ at a later date so that the Greeks could buy their marshmallow chicks and plastic grass \_\_\_\_\_ sale prices. "The cheap sons of bitches," she'd say, "If they \_\_\_\_\_ , we'd be celebrating Christmas in the middle of god damn February."

**5. Let's listen to the snippet, read it out loud, then try to correct the mistakes made by people in this story \_\_\_\_\_**



A brave Italian was attempting to answer the teacher's latest question, when the Moroccan student interrupted, shouting, "Excuse me, but what's an Easter?" Despite having grown up in a Muslim country, it seems she might have heard it mentioned once or twice, but no. "I mean it," she said, "I have no idea what you people are talking about." The teacher then called upon the rest of us to explain. The Poles led the charge to the best of their ability.

"It is," said one, "a party for the little boy of God who call hisself Jesus and-- you know, like that." She faltered, and her fellow countryman came to her aid. "He call hisself Jesus, and then he die one day on two morsels of lumber."



The rest of the class jumped in, offering bits of information that would have given the Pope an aneurysm. "He die one day. And then he go above of my head to live with your father." "He weared the long hair. And after he died the first day, he come back here for to say hello to the peoples." "He nice. He make the good thing. And on the Easter, we be sad, because someone made him dead today."

**6. Listen to the clip and fill each gap with three words \_\_\_\_\_**

a. Part of the problem had to do with grammar. Simple nouns, such as "cross" and "Resurrection", were \_\_\_\_\_, let alone such complicated reflexive verbs as "to give of yourself your



only begotten son." Faced with \_\_\_\_\_ explaining the cornerstone of Christianity, we did what any self-respecting \_\_\_\_\_ might do. We talked \_\_\_\_\_.

"Easter is a party for to eat of the lamb," an Italian student explained. "One, too, may eat of the chocolate." "And who brings the chocolate?" The teacher asked. I knew the word, and so I \_\_\_\_\_ saying, "The rabbit of Easter." "He bring of the chocolate."

b. \_\_\_\_\_ My classmates reacted as though I had \_\_\_\_\_ on a house cat. They were mortified. A rabbit? A rabbit?

The teacher, assuming I had used \_\_\_\_\_, positioned her index fingers on top of her head, wiggling them \_\_\_\_\_ were ears. "You mean one of these? A rabbit,

rabbit?" "Well, sure," I said, "he come in the night when one sleep on a bed. With a hand, he have the basket, like for a bread."

Show what the teacher did.

7. Listen to the snippet and fill the gaps with verb forms



The Moroccan \_\_\_\_\_ her eyes, and the teacher sadly \_\_\_\_\_ her head as if this \_\_\_\_\_ everything that was wrong with my country. "No, no," she said, "here in France, the chocolate is \_\_\_\_\_ by a big bell that flies in from Rome." I called for a time-out. "But how do the bell know where you \_\_\_\_\_?" "Well," she said, "how does a rabbit?" It was a decent point, but at least a rabbit has eyes. That's a start.



Rabbits \_\_\_\_\_ from place to place, while most bells can only go back and forth. And they can't even do that on their own power. On top of that, the Easter bunny has character. He's someone you'd like to \_\_\_\_\_. A bell has all the personality of a cast iron skillet. It's like saying that come Christmas, a magic dust pan \_\_\_\_\_ in from the North Pole, \_\_\_\_\_ by eight flying cinder blocks.

**Come**

*preposition*

**INFORMAL**

when a specified time is reached or event happens.

"I don't think that they'll be far away from honours come the new season"

8. Unjumble the questions and find the correct place for each one in the script. Then listen and check \_\_\_\_\_

A. /the candy if /and how does/ any arms / a bell hold/it doesn't have/?

\_\_\_\_\_?

B. / it get/ how does/ being heard/ without/into your house/?

\_\_\_\_\_?

C. /can see a bell/ to stay/ who/ up all night,/ wants/ so they/?

\_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_?\_\_\_ And why fly one in from Rome when they've got more bells than they know what to do with right there in Paris? That's the most implausible aspect of the whole story. As there's no way the bells of France

would allow a foreign worker to fly in. There's no way the bells of France would allow a foreign worker to fly in and take their job. That Roman bell would be lucky to get work cleaning up after a French bell's dog.

\_??\_ \_???\_ It just didn't add up. I suppose similar questions could be asked of the Easter bunny. I'd just never thought about it that hard.

### 9. Listen to the clip and put the lines in order

\_\_\_ I wondered then if, without the language barrier, my classmates and I could have done a better job making sense of Christianity, an idea that sounds pretty far-fetched to begin with.



\_\_\_ leaving behind a handful of chocolate kisses and a carton of menthol cigarettes. A bell though, that's [BLEEP] up.

\_\_\_ Nothing we said was of any help whatsoever to the Moroccan woman. Clearly disgusted, she just sat there, her lips positioned as if to spit.

\_\_\_ In communicating any religious belief, the operative word is faith, a concept illustrated by our very presence in that classroom.

\_\_\_ I'm not sure how that fits in with the Resurrection, but if I could hope to one day carry on a fluent conversation, it was a relatively short leap to believing that a rabbit might visit my home in the middle of the night,

\_\_\_ Why bother struggling with the lessons of a six-year-old if each of us didn't believe that, against all reason, we might eventually improve?

### 9. Unjumble the final question

/of people/ well, what/ can you/ believe in anything/ do with a nation/ who'll apparently/?

\_\_\_\_\_ ?

Listen to the last clip and check \_\_\_\_\_