

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 _____