

3. Read the text about the end-of-the-year holidays in Australia and tell how they are different from your national ones. What is the most unusual fact about them?

Australians live on the world's largest island, which is also the world's smallest continent. Most of Australia's immigrants came from England and Ireland, 1) _____. Australia is the Land Down Under, where the seasons are opposite to ours, so Christmas, celebrated on December 25, is during summer vacation, and the festivities begin yet in late November. The most popular events of the Christmas season are singing Christmas carols and *presenting Nativity plays*. Families *decorate* their *homes* with ferns, palm leaves, and evergreens, along with the colourful flowers that bloom in summer 2) _____. Some families *put up a Christmas tree*.

On Christmas Eve, all children expect Father Christmas to leave gifts, some families *attend church*. Christmas Day comes, kids open their presents, families and close friends gather together. *The highlight of the day* is the midday dinner, when Australians *enjoy a traditional British Christmas dinner* of roast turkey or ham and a rich plum pudding, 3) _____. Other families choose to head for the backyard barbecue and grill their holiday meal in the sunshine, many even go to the countryside or to the beach to enjoy a picnic, where Father Christmas may show up in shorts to greet children on Christmas!

The day after Christmas is called Boxing Day; this is when Australians with British and Irish backgrounds leave tips for the grocer, postman, newspaper carrier, and others 4) _____. But the *highest point of* summer holidays in Australia is the colourful and sparkling celebration of New Year's Eve. In the Gregorian *calendar*, 5) _____, New Year's Eve, the last day of the year, is on 31 December.



ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

Even though, it is not a public holiday, all educational institutions are closed, in most government offices public servants get time off work, while businesses have normal opening hours. Australians annually celebrate New Year's Eve with parties, parades, music, but the prominent part of the day is New Year's Eve ball, which is a popular tradition and can have various themes, like masquerades, black-tie or formal wear, tropical or gangster and glamour. At such events you can be awarded with prizes for most intriguing or best-dressed outfits.

There are countless free public events held on the night, where visitors can *experience* Australia's unique cheer. In cities and towns across the country, Australians get outdoors to count down the final moments of the year and enjoy memorable time with family and friends. As the clock strikes midnight, *fireworks* are set off to farewell the old year and to welcome the new year, New Year's Day comes. People mark this occasion, they *toast* their *glasses*, drink champagne, hug or shake hands, kiss each other on the cheek 6) _____. Everyone prepares their *New Year's resolutions* for the next year.



4. Complete the text with the following extracts.

- a) *to thank them for their help in the past year*
- b) *called Christmas bush and Christmas bellflower*
- c) *which was introduced to Australia by European settlers*
- d) *bringing their Christmas customs with them*
- e) *which is traditionally set aflame before it is brought to the table*
- f) *to show their joy and appreciation for the old and new year*