

CELEBRATIONS

New Year's Eve

Teacher's notes

Age: Teenagers/Adults

Level: Pre-intermediate (A2)

Time: 30 minutes



Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. Discuss how they celebrated last New Year's Eve
2. Read about New Year's Eve celebrations in Scotland
3. Make New Year resolutions

Language focus: *going to + vb*, *stop + vb(ing)*

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student

Procedure

1. Put students in pairs and tell them to ask each other the questions in the warmer. While they are talking, monitor their conversations and make a note of any mistakes or emergent language. Make sure that they are using the past tenses correctly as all the warmer questions are in the past simple tense.
2. Ask each student to report to the class what their partner did on New Year's Eve last year. Allow students to ask any follow-up questions if they have them.
3. Next, ask students to read the article about New Year's Eve in Scotland in Exercise 1. Be prepared to pre-teach any difficult vocabulary (*fair*, *coal*) then ask the students to do the true or false sentences in pairs. When they have finished, check the answers as a class.

Key:

- a. true
 - b. false (it's New Year's Eve)
 - c. true
 - d. false (it's the song people sing at midnight)
 - e. true
 - f. false (they should be dark)
 - g. false (they always bring coal as a gift)
4. Ask students to read the questions in Exercise 2, and then discuss in pairs or small groups. If students are from a variety of countries, you could widen it out to a whole-class discussion.

5. Write the following definition on the board:
resolution = a serious decision to do something.
Ask the students if they know the verb form (*to resolve (to do something)*). Tell students to read the paragraph in Exercise 3 about resolutions and then unscramble the sentences below it.

Key:

1. I am going to stop smoking.
2. I am not going to eat chocolate every day.
3. I am going to be nice to my sister this year.



TEACHING TIP: This is a good opportunity to introduce two common grammar points: *going to + vb* for future plans and *stop + vb(ing)* for finishing or giving up a habit. Your students might find it useful to see some more examples, e.g. *I'm going to visit my grandparents more often, I will stop wasting so much time on social media sites.*

6. Ask students to complete the resolutions for themselves and then write some more resolutions for the people suggested. When they have finished, ask them to share their answers with the class.



TEACHING TIP: When nominating students in class, it's very important to call them out by name rather than just pointing to them and saying 'You!' as this shows you've taken the trouble to learn their name. Also, try to make sure everyone gets a turn but don't always follow the same order or students might stop concentrating.

7. For the final exercise, ask students to work with someone they haven't worked with before and tell them to choose a year (not last year, as they have already spoken about this) when they had a really good time. Tell them they are going to review the year they have chosen then present it to a partner. Ask them to write answers for all the headings then share their answers with their partner. Make sure to monitor and offer any corrections or help needed. As a final activity, tell each student to present to the class what they have learnt from their partner.

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Worksheet

Warmer

- How did you celebrate New Year's Eve last year?
Did you go to a party or stay at home?
What did you do at midnight?
Did you drink champagne?

Exercise 1: New Year's Eve in Scotland

In Scotland, New Year's Eve is called Hogmanay. While Christmas is a time to spend with the family, Hogmanay is a time to be with friends.

Before celebrations can start, it is important to clean the house and have a bath so that the New Year will start well. Hogmanay parties often include dancing, music and singing. At midnight everyone always sings a song called 'Auld Lang Syne' (although most people don't know what it means). The words 'Auld Lang Syne' literally translate from old Scottish dialect meaning 'Old Long Ago', and the song is about love and friendship in times past.

After midnight, the custom of 'first footing' starts. A 'first footer' is the first person to enter someone's house in the New Year. Tradition says that the person should have dark hair and bring a gift. The gift is often a piece of coal and a bottle of whisky.

True or false?

- In Scotland, New Year's Eve is celebrated with friends.
- Christmas Eve is called Hogmanay in Scotland.
- It's the custom to clean the house and have a bath before midnight on New Year's Eve.
- 'Auld Lang Syne' is a place in Edinburgh where people meet on New Year's Eve.
- A 'first footer' is the first person to enter a house in the New Year.
- A 'first footer' should ideally be fair with blue eyes.
- The 'first footer' brings a piece of coal if the children have been bad the previous year.



Exercise 2: New Year's Eve in your country

- Are any of the traditions in Scotland similar to New Year celebrations in your country?
- What traditional ways of welcoming the New Year do you have in your family or in your region?
- How old are your New Year traditions? Did your grandparents celebrate in the same way?
- Are children allowed to stay up late to see in the New Year?
- Are there any special meals or activities for New Year's day?

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Worksheet

Exercise 3: New Year resolutions

At midnight on New Year's Eve many people make a New Year resolution. No-one is sure where the custom started. All over the world people resolve to give up drinking or smoking or to exercise more or learn a language. Most people keep their resolution for a week and then return to their old habits. Here's your chance to make a New Year resolution.

Unjumble the sentences below:

1. stop going I smoking am to
2. eat am every not chocolate going day to I
3. I be to this nice going am to sister year my

Write some resolutions for yourself:

This year I am going to ...

This year I am not going to ...

Write some resolutions for the following people:

Your mother

Your best friend

Your boyfriend / girlfriend

Your teacher



Exercise 4: Good year

Some years are better or more enjoyable/successful than others. We remember these years and the special things that happened.

Choose a good year for you. Tell your partner why the year was special: What happened? What did you do? Who did you meet? Where did you go?

Make a list of things that have happened in over the last year. Follow these headings to help you:

New friends

Fun things I heard or saw

Fun things I did

Important lessons I learned

Key events/moments

Interview your partner/classmates about their year. Was it a good year?