

History of The Christmas Tree-Topper

A Christmas tree-topper is the decoration that is placed on the very top of a Christmas tree. There are some traditional tree-toppers that have been around for hundreds of years and some more modern choices.

The most common tree-toppers include a star, an angel or a fairy. Other frequently seen choices include ribbons or a cross. Nowadays, almost anything can go on the top of the tree. Some of the more unusual choices are upside-down elf legs, a dinosaur or a favourite cartoon character.



Reasons for Traditional Tree-Toppers

Traditional tree-toppers are usually things that played a role in the story of Jesus being born. They help to mark the traditional Christian celebration of Christmas. A figure of the baby Jesus was one of the earlier items to be placed on the top of a tree by some people.

A star is chosen as it represents the 'Star of Bethlehem' that was seen and followed by the Three Wise Men to where Jesus was born. An angel may represent the angel that appeared to the shepherds to tell them about the birth or the Angel Gabriel who appeared to Mary to announce the coming of Jesus.

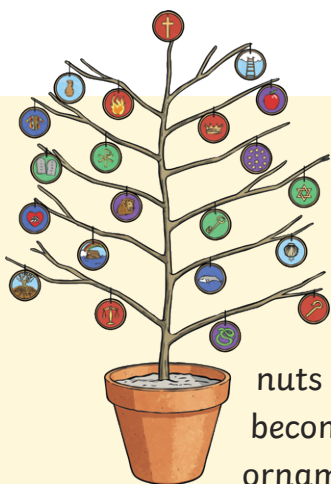


Modern Favourites

Many people now see the Christmas tree-topper as the important finishing touch to their tree.

Holiday figures, such as a snowman, Father Christmas or a reindeer, might give a more fun look to a tree. Flowers, snowflakes and starbursts are other commonly chosen alternatives.

There are some people who prefer to be more unusual with their choice. These options include words with a Christmas greeting or a sparkling crown. If lights and sparkle are not enough, there are even electrically-powered, moving tree-toppers now – but make sure you have a good, sturdy tree!



History of the Christmas Tree

In the 1500s, real trees were first brought into the home and decorated. The tradition probably comes from Germany. These early Christmas trees were decorated with candles, apples, nuts and berries. Other decorations started to become more popular in the 1700s, such as paper ornaments, fruits and sweets.



Did You Know...?

Charles Dickens' original story of 'A Christmas Carol', featuring the famous character, Ebenezer Scrooge, does not mention a Christmas tree at all.



Questions

1. Where is a Christmas tree-topper placed? Tick **one**.

- ☐ anywhere on a Christmas tree
- ☐ underneath the Christmas tree
- ☐ on the very top of a Christmas tree
- ☐ hanging from a branch of a Christmas tree

2. According to the introduction, which of these are among the most common tree-toppers? Tick **three**.

- ☐ a star
- ☐ a dinosaur
- ☐ an angel
- ☐ a figure of baby Jesus
- ☐ a fairy
- ☐ Father Christmas

3. Look at the section called '**Reasons for Traditional Tree-Toppers**'.

Traditional tree-toppers are usually things that played a role in what story?

4. Look at the section called '**Modern Favourites**'.

Draw lines to match these Christmas tree-toppers to the correct headings.

flowers	●	●	holiday figures
sparkling crown	●	●	other commonly chosen alternatives
reindeer	●	●	more unusual choices

5. Look at the sentence, 'There are some people who prefer to be more unusual with their choice.'

What do you think is meant by the word 'unusual'?

6. Which of the following are examples of the earliest decorations to be put onto Christmas trees? Tick **three**.

- ☐ paper ornaments
- ☐ berries
- ☐ electric lights
- ☐ nuts
- ☐ tinsel
- ☐ candles

7. Who wrote the story 'A Christmas Carol'?

Answers

1. Where is a Christmas tree-topper placed? Tick **one**.

- ☐ anywhere on a Christmas tree
- ☐ underneath the Christmas tree
- ☒ **on the very top of a Christmas tree**
- ☐ hanging from a branch of a Christmas tree

2. According to the introduction, which of these are among the most common tree-toppers? Tick **three**.

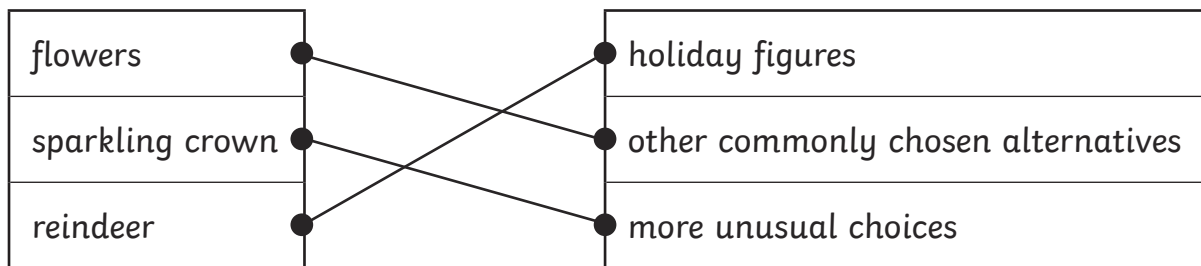
- ☒ **a star**
- ☐ a dinosaur
- ☒ **an angel**
- ☐ a figure of baby Jesus
- ☒ **a fairy**
- ☐ Father Christmas

3. Look at the section called '**Reasons for Traditional Tree-Toppers**'.

Traditional tree-toppers are usually things that played a role in what story?
the story of Jesus being born

4. Look at the section called '**Modern Favourites**'.

Draw lines to match these Christmas tree-toppers to the correct headings.



5. Look at the sentence, 'There are some people who prefer to be more unusual with their choice.'

What do you think is meant by the word 'unusual'?

less common; not commonly occurring; different from others or from normal

6. Which of the following are examples of the earliest decorations to be put onto Christmas trees? Tick **three**.

- ☐ paper ornaments
- ☒ **berries**
- ☐ electric lights
- ☒ **nuts**
- ☐ tinsel
- ☒ **candles**

7. Who wrote the story 'A Christmas Carol'?

Charles Dickens

History of The Christmas Tree-Topper

A Christmas tree-topper is the decoration that is placed on the very top of a Christmas tree. There are some traditional tree-toppers that have been around for hundreds of years and some more modern choices.

The most common tree-toppers include a star, an angel or a fairy. Other common choices include ribbons or a cross.

Nowadays, almost anything can go on the top of the tree. Some of the more unusual choices are upside-down elf legs, a dinosaur or a favourite cartoon character.

Reasons for Traditional Tree-Toppers

Traditional tree-toppers are usually things that played a role in the story of Jesus being born. They help to mark the traditional Christian celebration of Christmas. A figure of the baby Jesus was one of the earlier items to be placed on the top of a tree by some people.

A star is chosen as it represents the 'Star of Bethlehem' that was seen and followed by the Three Wise Men to where Jesus was born.

An angel may represent the angel that appeared to the shepherds to tell them about the birth or the Angel Gabriel who appeared to Mary to announce the coming of Jesus.



Did You Know...?

- Charles Dickens' original story of 'A Christmas Carol', featuring the famous character, Ebenezer Scrooge, does not mention a Christmas tree at all.
- The angel and the star remain the most popular choice of tree-toppers but both come in many different forms and designs.





Modern Favourites

Many people now see the Christmas tree-topper as the important finishing touch to their tree. Decorating the tree is often a festive, family activity right from the tree-topper to the baubles, tinsel and lights.

Holiday figures, such as a snowman, Father Christmas or a reindeer, might give a more fun look to a tree. Flowers, snowflakes and starbursts are other commonly chosen alternatives.

There are some people who prefer to be more unusual with their choice. These options include words with a Christmas greeting or a sparkling crown. If lights and sparkle are not enough, there are even moving tree-toppers now – but make sure you have a good, sturdy tree!



History of the Christmas Tree

In the 1500s, real trees were first brought into the home and decorated. The tradition probably comes from Germany. These early Christmas trees were decorated with candles, apples, nuts and berries.

Other decorations started to become more popular in the 1700s, such as paper ornaments, fruits and sweets. Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert, made it more fashionable to have decorated trees in the home during the 1800s.



Questions

1. Where on a Christmas tree is a tree-topper placed?

2. According to the introduction, what is one of the most common tree-toppers?

3. Look at the sentence, 'There are some traditional tree-toppers that have been around for hundreds of years'.

Which of these are the closest synonyms to the word 'traditional'?

☐ strange, odd

☐ shining, sparkling

☐ customary, standard

☐ unusual, uncommon

4. Which of the following examples are described as being for 'people who prefer to be more unusual with their choice'? Tick **two**.

☐ snowflakes and starbursts

☐ a sparkling crown

☐ words with a Christmas greeting

☐ baubles, tinsel and lights

5. Why do you think it is good advice to 'make sure you have a good, sturdy tree'?

6. Look at the section called '**History of the Christmas Tree**'.

According to the text, when did paper ornaments, fruits and sweets begin to become more popular tree decorations? Tick **one**.

☐ 1500s

☐ 1600s

☐ 1700s

☐ 1800s

7. How do you think Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made it more fashionable for people to have decorated trees in the home?

8. Look at the whole text.

Draw lines to match the sections of the text with the correct information.

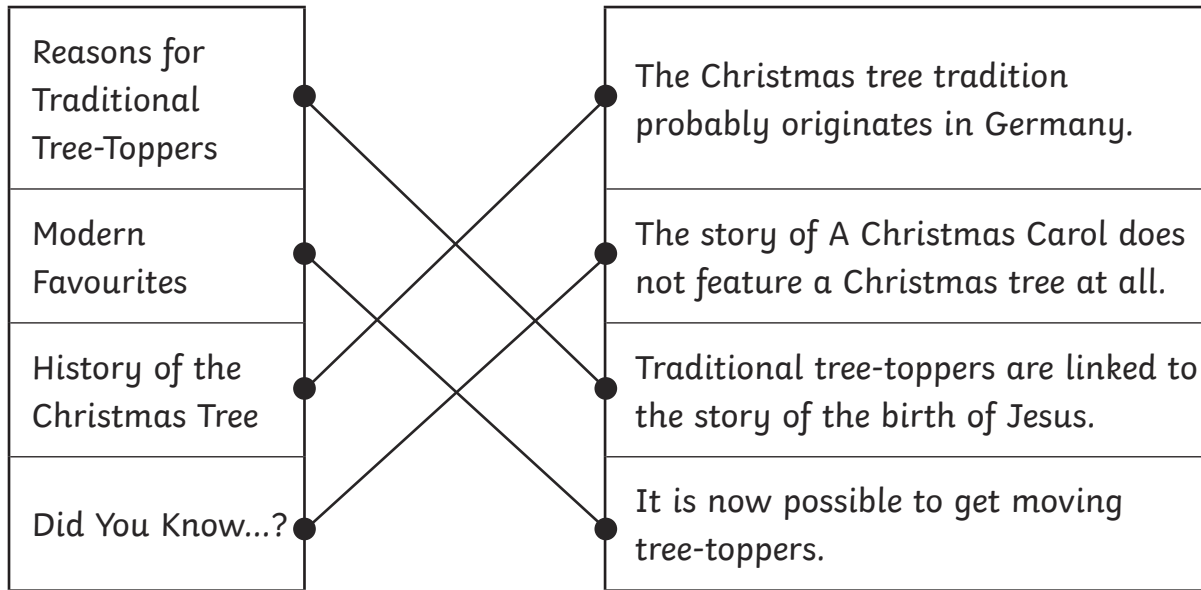
Reasons for Traditional Tree-Toppers ●	● The Christmas tree tradition probably originates in Germany.
Modern Favourites ●	● The story of A Christmas Carol does not feature a Christmas tree at all.
History of the Christmas Tree ●	● Traditional tree-toppers are linked to the story of the birth of Jesus.
Did You Know...? ●	● It is now possible to get moving tree-toppers.

Answers

- Where on a Christmas tree is a tree-topper placed?
(on the very) top of a Christmas tree
- According to the introduction, what is one of the most common tree-toppers?
Accept any one of the following: a star, an angel or a fairy.
- Look at the sentence, 'There are some traditional tree-toppers that have been around for hundreds of years'.
Which of these are the closest synonyms to the word 'traditional'?
☐ strange, odd ☐ shining, sparkling
☒ **customary, standard** ☐ unusual, uncommon
- Which of the following examples are described as being for 'people who prefer to be more unusual with their choice'? Tick **two**.
☐ snowflakes and starbursts ☒ **a sparkling crown**
☒ **words with a Christmas greeting** ☐ baubles, tinsel and lights
- Why do you think it is good advice to 'make sure you have a good, sturdy tree'?
The moving tree-topper may be heavy or its movement may make the tree topple if it is not sturdy.
- Look at the section called '**History of the Christmas Tree**'.
According to the text, when did paper ornaments, fruits and sweets begin to become more popular tree decorations? Tick **one**.
☐ 1500s ☐ 1600s
☒ **1700s** ☐ 1800s
- How do you think Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made it more fashionable for people to have decorated trees in the home?
Accept answers which refer to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert being members of the royal family/famous/well known therefore setting a trend; people would look up to them and follow their style or choices. As they had a decorated tree, it made other people want one too.

8. Look at the whole text.

Draw lines to match the sections of the text with the correct information.



History of The Christmas Tree-Topper

A Christmas tree-topper is the decoration that is placed on the very top of a Christmas tree. There are some traditional tree-toppers that have been around for hundreds of years and some more modern choices.

The most common tree-toppers include a star, an angel or a fairy. Other common choices include a rosette, a bow or a cross. Nowadays, almost anything can go on the top of the tree based on personal choice. Some of the more modern unusual options are upside-down elf legs, a dinosaur or a favourite cartoon character.

Reasons for Traditional Tree-Toppers

Traditional tree-toppers are usually things that played a role in the story of Jesus being born. They help to mark the traditional Christian celebration of Christmas. A figure of the baby Jesus was one of the earlier items to be placed on the top of a tree by some people.

A star is chosen as it represents the 'Star of Bethlehem' that was seen and followed by the Three Wise Men to where Jesus was born. An angel may represent the angel that appeared to the shepherds to tell them about the birth or the Angel Gabriel who appeared to Mary to announce the coming of Jesus.

A Touch of Light

As with other tree decorations, some more modern tree-toppers have been given the added feature of lighting up. Just as candles on trees were replaced by electric lights, some tree-toppers have been given a glow from within, often powered by a battery.

Did You Know...?

- Charles Dickens' original story of 'A Christmas Carol', featuring the famous character, Ebenezer Scrooge, does not mention a Christmas tree at all.
- In the 1900s, artificial trees began to be produced, made from materials such as aluminum and plastic. These gained popularity and many people choose them for their homes now.





Modern Favourites

Many people now see the Christmas tree-topper as the important finishing touch to their tree. Tree decoration has become a big business for shops, right from the tree-topper to the baubles, tinsel, lights and other additions.

Holiday figures, such as a snowman, Father Christmas or a reindeer, might give a more fun look to a tree. Flowers and leaves are more of a classic look. Snowflakes and starbursts are other commonly chosen alternatives.

There are some people who prefer to be completely original or unusual with their choice. How about personalised lettering or initials? For the extravagant finish, there's the sparkle of a jewelled crown. If lights and sparkle are not enough, there are even electrically-powered, moving tree-toppers now – but make sure you have a good, sturdy tree!



History of the Christmas Tree

In the 1500s, real trees were brought into the home and decorated. The tradition is considered to stem from Germany. Sometimes known as 'Paradise Trees', they were first decorated with candles, apples, nuts and berries.

Other decorations started to become more popular in the 1700s, such as paper ornaments, fruits and sweets. Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert, are often credited with making it more fashionable to have decorated trees in the home during the 1800s.



Questions

- How long have some traditional tree-toppers been around? Tick **one**.
☐ nearly ten years ☐ hundreds of years
☐ thousands of years ☐ since Jesus was born
- According to the introduction, what are **three** of the most common tree-toppers?

- Look at the section called '**Reasons for Traditional Tree-Toppers**'.
What is represented by a star being chosen as a Christmas tree-topper?

- Look at the section called '**Modern Favourites**'.
Write **one** example of a tree-topper mentioned for each of the following headings.

The first one has been done for you.

Holiday Figures	Father Christmas
Other Commonly Chosen Alternatives	
More Unusual Choices	

- Why do you think it is good advice to 'make sure you have a good, sturdy tree'?

- Look at the section called '**History of the Christmas Tree**'.
Draw lines to match the development of the Christmas tree and its decorations with the correct time period.

1500s	●	●	Paper ornaments, fruit and sweets became more popular decorations to add.
1700s	●	●	Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made it more fashionable to have decorated trees in the home.
reindeer	●	●	Real trees were first brought into the home and decorated.

7. Look at the sentence beginning 'In the 1900s, artificial trees began to be produced...'
Explain the meaning of the word, 'artificial'.

8. Look at the whole text.
Describe **two** different developments in Christmas tree decoration that have involved the use of electricity.

Answers

- How long have some traditional tree-toppers been around? Tick **one**.
☐ nearly ten years ☒ **hundreds of years**
☐ thousands of years ☐ since Jesus was born
- According to the introduction, what are **three** of the most common tree-toppers?
The most common tree-toppers include a star, an angel or a fairy.
- Look at the section called '**Reasons for Traditional Tree-Toppers**'.
 What is represented by a star being chosen as a Christmas tree-topper?
A star is chosen as it represents the 'Star of Bethlehem' that was seen and followed by the Three Wise Men to where Jesus was born.
- Look at the section called '**Modern Favourites**'.
 Write **one** example of a tree-topper mentioned for each of the following headings.
 The first one has been done for you.

Holiday Figures	Father Christmas
Other Commonly Chosen Alternatives	snowflakes or starbursts
More Unusual Choices	personalised lettering or initials, a jewelled crown or electrical moving tree-toppers

- Why do you think it is good advice to 'make sure you have a good, sturdy tree'?
The moving tree-topper may be heavy or its movement may make the tree topple if it is not sturdy.
- Look at the section called '**History of the Christmas Tree**'.
 Draw lines to match the development of the Christmas tree and its decorations with the correct time period.

1500s	●	●	Paper ornaments, fruit and sweets became more popular decorations to add.
1700s	●	●	Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made it more fashionable to have decorated trees in the home.
reindeer	●	●	Real trees were first brought into the home and decorated.

7. Look at the sentence beginning 'In the 1900s, artificial trees began to be produced...'

Explain the meaning of the word, 'artificial'.

Artificial means made by humans/not natural/a copy of something natural._____

8. Look at the whole text.

Describe **two** different developments in Christmas tree decoration that have involved the use of electricity.

Answers must include both of the following:

- **reference to the introduction of electric lights;**
- **moving tree-toppers.**