

Describing a Process: How to Decorate an X-mas Tree

Teacher Notes

Level: ESL High-Intermediate

Objectives: learn the names of Christmas tree decorations, review time-order signal words, explain a process of decorating a Christmas tree

Bring in a sample of Christmas decorations or images of a decorated Christmas tree cut out from postcards, calendars etc. Show/point to one decoration at a time and elicit the name(s): garland, icicles, ornament, wreath, glass ball, a strand of lights, tinsel. In a higher level class, add adjectives to describe the decorations:

frosted/hand-painted glass balls
matte/shiny/glittered/translucent ornaments
clip-on birds

Hand out the worksheet. Students guess the popular tree decorations based on their descriptions in **Tree Decorations**.

Review the common time-order signal words (first, next, then, following that, finally etc.) and discuss their purpose when giving an explanation how to do something (make steps of a particular process clear to the listener/reader). Go over more examples in **Let's Decorate the Tree**.

Using the time-order words, students arrange the steps of decorating a Christmas tree in the right order in 2b.

Wrap up with **Discussion Questions**.

Answer Key

1. Tree Decorations

1. mittens
2. garland
3. angels
4. tinsel
5. Santa Claus
6. ribbons
7. popcorn
8. pinecone
9. ornaments
10. tree skirt

the words under the arrow:
tree topper

2. b. Let's Decorate the Tree!

1. First, set the tree up on a tree stand.
2. Then, hang the lights. Wind the lights around the branches and spread them evenly.
3. After that, hang the garland. Weave it in and out of the branches.
4. Next, hang large ornaments.
5. Following that, fill in with smaller ornaments. Place small ornaments near the top, medium in the center and large at the base. Work from inside of the branches to the outside.
6. Just before the last step, toss tinsel.
7. Finally, attach a tree topper.

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1. Tree Decorations

Guess the popular tree decorations based on the descriptions below. Spell out the names of the decorations on the blank lines.

1. a type of gloves with one part for a thumb and another for the rest of the fingers
2. this decoration can be made from colorful paper loops
3. these are often drawn as people with wings
4. thin threads or strips of glittering material
5. an old man who delivers presents to children around the world on Christmas/New Year Eve.
6. long pieces of colored fabric or paper used to tie a present
7. kernels of corn that puff up when heated
8. a cone of a pine tree
9. small decorative objects
10. this covers the tree stand

	1	m	i	t	↓	e	n	s	
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	3	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
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	5	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
6	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
				7	_	_	_	_	_
				8	_	_	_	_	_
9	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
				10	_	_	_	_	_

Read the word(s) under the arrow.

What is the name of the decoration that is placed on top of the tree? _____

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a. Time-Order Signal Words

When you explain how to do something, you need to make a list of steps in the process. The steps should be listed according to time order. Review the time-order words that make the steps clear to the reader or listener.

first, second, third	next	following that
the first/next/last thing (to do is...)	then	just before the last step
to begin with	after that	finally

b. Let's Decorate the Tree!

Arrange the steps of decorating a Christmas tree in the right order. Use time-order signal words.

_____, hang large ornaments.

_____, fill in with smaller ornaments. Place small ornaments near the top, medium in the center and large at the base. Work from inside of the branches to the outside.

_____, toss tinsel.

_____, hang the garland. Weave it in and out of the branches.

_____, hang the lights. Wind the lights around the branches and spread them evenly.

_____, set the tree up on a tree stand.

_____, attach a tree topper.

Stand back and admire!

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Discussion Questions

With a partner, discuss the questions below. Share your most interesting findings with the class.

1. Do you prefer a real or an artificial tree? Explain your preference.
2. What is your choice for a tree topper? (e.g.: angel, star, bow)
3. Do you choose a theme for your tree: a single color or mixture of shapes and patterns?
4. Do you decorate underneath the tree?
5. Do you reuse Christmas ornaments year after year?
6. Have you kept any ornaments that you made as a child or related to family memories?