

December 2011

Hello again to all of you and welcome to *Mansión Inglés Christmas* podcast. A very merry Christmas to all of you! This is podcast number 44, recorded for December 2011. Taking your English to the next level and into the year 2012.

En los podcasts mensuales hablamos de los temas, vocabulario y ejercicios que salen en nuestro cuaderno mensual. Así podáis practicar la pronunciación y repasar el material del cuaderno. Si quieres recibir gratis el cuaderno o leer los anteriores, vete a mansioningles.com y sigue los enlaces en la página principal.

Bueno, en el cuaderno este mes tenemos mucho vocabulario de navidad, por supuesto - of course! -y algunas hechos interesantes de la historia de navidad. La canción de navidad este año es "Do They know It's Christmas?" by Band Aid. We also have some commonly confused words for advanced students, and in the business section I tell you a true story about a Company Christmas party I had when I worked in the UK many years ago.

Pero vamos a empezar en el nivel básico con la pronunciación del vocabulario en el primer ejercicio del cuaderno.

¿Cómo se dice en inglés pastel de navidad? - Christmas cake - repeat Christmas cake.

¿cómo se dice árbol de navidad? - Christmas tree y muñeco de nieve? - a snowman - repeat - snowman.

Papa Noel es Father Christmas y también Santa Claus

¿Como se dice regalo? - present. So Christmas presents son....regalos de Navidad. Repeat: Christmas presents. Cartas de navidad son Christmas cards y un reno es reindeer - repeat: reindeer. How many reindeer does Santa have? Hmmm there's Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, and Blitzen. That's 8. So Santa has 8 reindeer.

Santa goes down the chimney. Chimney is similar in Spanish - chimenea. Repeat: Santa goes down the chimney. He takes presents down the chimney. Children put a Christmas stocking, or calcetín de navidad, above the chimney. Santa puts presents in the stocking. Sweets are caramelos, dulces. Repeat: sweets. Se dice sweets in British English y candy in American English. Sometimes Santa puts sweets in the Christmas stocking.

Listen and repeat - escucha y repite:

Father Christmas is too fat.

There's a reindeer in the chimney.

There aren't many presents this year.

Where are the presents?

The presents are under the tree.

There are some sweets in the Christmas stocking.

Look, it's snowing! Let's make a snowman.

The 25th of December is Christmas Day. The 24th of December is Christmas Eve. What's the 26th of December? - Boxing Day. Boxing Day es un *día festivo en Gran Bretaña*. Repeat Christmas Day, Christmas Eve, Boxing Day. January the 1st is New Year's Day and December the 31st is New Year's Eve. New Year's Eve is the last day of the year.

Listen and repeat some more Christmas expressions from the intermediate section:

Christmas decorations

Christmas pudding

the three wise men

Christmas crackers

carol singers

Christmas stocking

Can you believe that the English parliament once passed a law that made Christmas illegal? Well yes, In 1647 all festivities were banned (*prohibido*) by Oliver Cromwell. He thought that it was immoral to celebrate and have fun on a holy day (*un día santo*=a holy day). The ban was lifted only when Cromwell lost power in 1660. So it's not only these days that governments are stupid.

Another interesting Christmas fact is that in Russia it was forbidden to celebrate Christmas until 1992. This is because Christmas celebrations were banned after the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Saint Nicholas is the patron saint (*el patrón*) of sailors (*marineros*), merchants (*comerciantes*), archers (*arqueros*), thieves (*ladrones*), children (*niños*), and students.

On average, only 13 per cent of British families attend church on Christmas Day. Only 13% in Britain go to church.

The first Christmas tree with lights was in 1882. It was made by a friend of Thomas Edison, the famous inventor, and it was displayed on Fifth Avenue in New York City. The very first Christmas tree.

And the film Bad Santa starring Billy Bob Thornton, the ex-husband of Angelina Jolie, holds the record for the most swearwords (*tacos*) in a Christmas film. But it's in the uncut version which may not be easy to find. I've already tried.

Now listen to some words and expressions from this exercise in Spanish, and try to say the English translation before I do. Ready?

aprobar una ley - to pass a law

prohibir - to ban - Christmas was banned - smoking is banned (*prohibido*).

quitar una prohibición - to lift a ban - the ban was lifted.

sabio - wise - He's a wise man.

los Reyes Magos - The Three Wise men

un par de medias - a pair of stockings

calcetín navideño - Christmas stocking

prohibido - forbidden

bombilla - light bulb - B-U-L-B light bulb

nuez - walnut

I enjoyed writing the exercise for the Christmas song this year, "Do They Know It's Christmas", and I also enjoyed watching it on YouTube. I remember when Bob Geldoff from the Boomtown Rats and Midge Ure from Ultravox formed Band Aid in the 1980's. And now all those stars have changed so much: Sting, Phil Collins, Bono, George Michael. Paul Weller and others from some great British bands like Status Quo, Duran Duran, Spandau Ballet. But now I'm just showing my age!

Listen and repeat these words from the song that have the same vowel sound - *el mismo sonido vocal*:

sun / ones

flow / grows

tears / fear

afraid / shade

instead /spread

smile /life

Listen to some words from the song in Spanish, and try to say the English translation before I do. Ok?

sombra - shade or shadow - shade *es un lugar sin sol*. If the sun is too strong, sit in the shade. - and shadow *es una proyección* - *las sombras de los árboles* - the shadows of the trees, for example.

abundancia - plenty - There's plenty of food.

alegría - joy

extender, difundir - to spread - you spread butter on bread, for example, or spread joy and happiness at Christmas time.

oración - prayer - Say a prayer for me. *¿Cómo se dice rezar en inglés?* - to pray - They go to church to pray

lagrimas - tears - How do you say *llorar* in English? - to cry - I cried for you - So cry is the verb and tears, the noun, the water that

comes from your eyes when you cry - you can also cry tears of joy if you're happy.

fluir - is to flow - a river flows and if you cry a lot, tears can flow

picadura - sting - the verb and the noun are the same - to sting and a sting - a bee or a wasp can sting you. So can scorpions. In the song they sang about *picadura amarga* - bitter sting - the bitter sting of tears - "The only water flowing is the bitter sting of tears."

¿Cómo se dice en inglés en vez de, en lugar de? - instead of -

Repeat: Instead of - I'll have tea instead of coffee - Let's go to the beach instead of the pub - Nah - Let's go to the pub instead of the beach!

regalo - gift - Before we translated *regalo* as present, but you can also say gift. I've got a gift for you - Please accept this gift from all of us.

da de comer, alimentar - is to feed - food -F-O-O-D is a noun, and to feed - F-E-E-D is the verb. - Don't forget to feed the dog - How often do you have to feed a baby?

In the advanced section we had some advanced vocabulary. Do you remember these words?

Sleigh - Eight reindeer pull Santa's sleigh. Sleigh is *trineo*. The spelling is a bit strange - S-L-E-I-G-H. Repeat: sleigh - Here's a definition from Wikipedia with two similar words: "A **sled** - S-L-E-D, **sledge** - S-L-E-D-G-E, or **sleigh** is a land vehicle with a smooth underside or possessing a separate body supported by two or more smooth, relatively narrow, longitudinal runners that travels by sliding across a surface."

Holly in Spanish is *acebo* and **mistletoe** is *muérdago*. Repeat: mistletoe. It's traditional to kiss someone under the mistletoe. When I lived in London I used this tradition at Christmas with mixed results, especially with strangers, and especially after a few drinks!

Eggnog is a popular Christmas drink. It's made with milk or cream, sugar, beaten eggs and liquor such as brandy, rum or maybe whisky with also some cinnamon or nutmeg on top. I've never liked it much, It's much too sweet for me, but my grandmother liked it. I prefer a glass or two of Jack Daniels or single malt whiskey.

Mince pies are small round pastry tarts filled with mincemeat (*carne picada*). I don't like them, but I love **Christmas pudding**. You would probably find mince pies, Christmas pudding and Christmas cake in a **Christmas hamper**. A hamper is a *cesta* - Christmas hamper - *cesta de navidad*. Companies in the UK used to give Christmas hampers to their employees when I lived there, but with the recession I'm not sure how many companies still do this. many companies probably can't afford it.

Do you know how to say *pesebre* in English? **manger**. The baby Jesus lay in a manger.

In the confusing words exercise you could find a lot of the answers from the prepositions that go together with the words. Try to remember the prepositions that go with words. For example, insist - He **insisted ON** seeing the manager. **Accustomed TO** - He's not accustomed **to** driving on the right hand side of the road. To be **familiar WITH** someone or something - Are you familiar **with** the law? To be **aware OF** - Are you aware **of** the rules? To be used **TO** something - Are you **used to** the food?

Instead of, apart from etc.

If you make an announcement, you say something publicly. I have an announcement to make. We're getting married. The Prime Minister made an announcement on TV last night.

How do you say **warning**? - A warning is *una advertencia*. Let this be a warning - *que esto sirva de advertencia*

It happened without warning - *sin previo aviso*

Advice is *consejo* and it's an uncountable noun so we say a piece of advice or some advice. Let me give you a piece of advice, son.

A **notice** can be a written sign *un aviso* to put up a notice in the street, for example.

You can take notice of someone - *hacer caso* - or not take notice.

Don't take any notice of him, he's an idiot!

at work you can **hand in your notice** if you decide to leave your job- (*de dimisión o despido*) *preaviso*: I have to give a month's notice - *tengo que avisar con un mes de antelación*.

You can also do something **at short notice** - *con poca antelación*.

until further notice means *hasta nuevo aviso* - There will be no trains leaving this station until further notice.

Do you say *reunión* in Spanish or *reencuentro*? - a **reunion** of school friends. For example, when you get together and meet up after a long time. You can have a family reunion - *una reunión familiar*.

In the dictionary **newscaster** is *presentador de informativo* or *locutor*. I also found *busto parlante* which is an expression I hadn't heard before.

If you get lost you ask for **directions**, except if you're a man in which case you insist you know the way and you keep driving until you find your way again or run out of petrol!

Signs can be *carteles, pancartas, símbolos or signos*, but a **road sign** es *una señal*, in Spain anyway.

In the business English section I told a true story about when I used to work in an insurance office in London, and every Christmas we would have a firm's Christmas party. Firm F-I-R-M is another word for company - *empresa*. We don't often use the word enterprise when we speak about companies in English, although it does also mean *empresa*.

I'll read the text to you. Try to remember as much of the text as possible because I will test you after.

The Firm's Christmas Party

I used to work for a very large and successful insurance company in London. Every year, in the middle of December, we would have a Christmas party, paid **for** by the company.

They had a lot of money. Back in the 1980's I suppose our office **alone** employed over 600 people, and there must have been around 1,000 at the party.

It usually **took place** on Friday evening. This meant that no work was done after lunch, because lunch would be in the pub! We'd start **drinking** about 1pm and after 3 or 4 drinks, we'd **get on** the train to the centre of London or take the **coach** provided by the firm.

The **venue** was a huge theatre and dance hall in the Strand in the centre of London, but we wouldn't go **straight** there. Each department generally went with their workmates to a pub **nearby** for more drinks. I remember that there were mostly men at the 'pre-party' drink. Maybe the girls were getting ready and **putting on** evening dresses and make up. There was a special **atmosphere** in the pubs at Christmas time. People in London actually spoke to each other and were friendly. They lost their English coldness and stuffiness.

When we finally arrived at the party most of us were drunk, and very hungry. The food was always good, but I mainly remember the music and the incredible amount of alcohol everyone consumed. I don't remember anyone being **sober**.

Boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands and wives were **banned** from the event, and it was common for employees to 'pair-up' for a kiss and a dance for the evening. Things were a little crazy. Only once a year, at Christmas time, 1,000 office workers stopped being boring and English and actually enjoyed themselves, they let their hair **down** and went a bit wild!

Ok, listen again and when I stop speaking, try to remember the next word and say it before I do. Ready?

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Let's finish with some Christmas expressions. Listen to some expressions and try to say the English translation before I do. Ready?

¡Feliz Navidad! - **Happy Christmas! or Merry Christmas!**
Papá Noel - **Father Christmas or Santa Claus**
regalo de navidad - **Christmas present or Christmas gift**
muñeco de nieve - snowman
chimenea - **Chimney**

una estrella – **star**
un burro - **a donkey**
el acebo - **holly**
el muérdago - **mistletoe**
el pavo - **turkey**
un villancico - **Christmas carol**
una cesta de Navidad - **a Christmas hamper**
pastor - **shepherd**
Nochebuena - **Christmas Eve**
Día de navidad - **Christmas Day**
diciembre 26 – **Boxing Day**
Nochevieja - **New Year's Eve**
El día de año nuevo - **New Year's Day**
¡Felices fiestas! - **Season's greetings!**
Salud! - **Cheers!**
¡Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo! - **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**
¿Qué te regalaron para Navidad? - **What did you get for Christmas?**

Well, that's it for this month, and for this year. Thanks to all of you for all your support during 2011. And, if you want to contact us you can find us on Facebook. Just search Facebook for ***La Mansión del Inglés*** and join our growing community of fans. Or send an email to: mansionteachers@yahoo.es. You can also follow us on Twitter. Our Twitter name is MansionTwit.

Until next month then, take care and keep practising to take your English to the next level! Bye for now and Merry Christmas!

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*The music in this month's podcast was by **Revolution Void**, the album was *The Politics of Desire* and the track was *Outer Orbit*.*