Hard Christmas Trivia

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which U.S. president lit the first National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse in Washington, D.C., in 1923?

A. Calvin Coolidge
B. Woodrow Wilson
C. Herbert Hoover
D. Warren G. Harding

Correct answer: A. Calvin Coolidge
Calvin Coolidge lit the tree on Christmas Eve in 1923. Harding had died earlier that year, and Coolidge had succeeded him.

2. Which British monarch delivered the first Christmas Day message to be televised live?

A. George V
B. George VI
C. Elizabeth II
D. Charles III

Correct answer: C. Elizabeth II
Elizabeth II delivered the first live televised Christmas message in 1957. Annual radio messages had begun under George V.

3. The first full-length staging of The Nutcracker in December 1892 took place in which city?

A. Vienna
B. St. Petersburg
C. Paris
D. Copenhagen

Correct answer: B. St. Petersburg
The full ballet premiered at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg on December 17, 1892.

4. Henry Cole’s early printed Christmas card and the first publication of A Christmas Carol both date to which year?

A. 1870
B. 1827
C. 1854
D. 1843

Correct answer: D. 1843
Cole commissioned the card in 1843. Dickens’s novella was published that December.

5. Whose illustrations appear in the first edition of Charles Dickens’s A Christmas Carol?

A. Gustave Doré
B. John Leech
C. George Cruikshank
D. John Tenniel

Correct answer: B. John Leech
The Morgan Library’s first-edition record credits John Leech as illustrator. It records hand-colored plates in the volume.

6. A congressional measure in 1870 established Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, July 4, and presidentially designated thanksgiving days as legal holidays where?

A. The District of Columbia
B. The entire British Empire
C. The Alaska Territory alone
D. The State of New York alone

Correct answer: A. The District of Columbia
The 1870 provision discussed in federal records applied to the District of Columbia.

7. Who wrote the text of the first British royal Christmas radio broadcast, delivered by George V in 1932?

A. A. A. Milne
B. H. G. Wells
C. George Bernard Shaw
D. Rudyard Kipling

Correct answer: D. Rudyard Kipling
Kipling wrote the address that George V delivered from Sandringham for the BBC’s overseas service.

8. Which company staged the first complete production of The Nutcracker in the United States on Christmas Eve 1944?

A. Boston Ballet
B. New York City Ballet
C. San Francisco Ballet
D. Joffrey Ballet

Correct answer: C. San Francisco Ballet
Willam Christensen’s production opened at San Francisco’s War Memorial Opera House on December 24, 1944.

9. Emily Bissell’s 1907 U.S. Christmas seals originally helped raise funds for a Delaware facility treating which disease?

A. Tuberculosis
B. Smallpox
C. Yellow fever
D. Polio

Correct answer: A. Tuberculosis
Bissell sold seals to raise money for a Delaware tuberculosis sanatorium. The decorative seal accompanied regular postage.

10. In 1843, Henry Cole commissioned which artist to make his printed Christmas card?

A. William Morris
B. John Everett Millais
C. Dante Gabriel Rossetti
D. John Callcott Horsley

Correct answer: D. John Callcott Horsley
Horsley designed the card for Cole. Its center shows a gathering, with two scenes of charity alongside.

11. The first official U.S. Christmas postage stamp showed a wreath and candles. At a postmasters’ convention in which city did it go on sale in 1962?

A. Boston
B. Philadelphia
C. Pittsburgh
D. St. Louis

Correct answer: C. Pittsburgh
The Post Office Department issued the stamp in Pittsburgh on November 1, 1962, during the postmasters’ convention there.

12. Which pair correctly matches a U.S. Christmas card publisher and the location of his factory in the 1870s?

A. Louis Prang and Albany, New York
B. Louis Prang and Roxbury, Massachusetts
C. Henry Cole and Roxbury, Massachusetts
D. Henry Cole and Albany, New York

Correct answer: B. Louis Prang and Roxbury, Massachusetts
Louis Prang printed Christmas cards at his factory in Roxbury. The National Park Service notes that his early designs included a flower.

13. The National Christmas Tree ceremony returned to using a living tree in 1973. Which pairing identifies that tree’s species and the state it came from?

A. Norway spruce from New York
B. Colorado blue spruce from Colorado
C. Balsam fir from Vermont
D. Colorado blue spruce from Pennsylvania

Correct answer: D. Colorado blue spruce from Pennsylvania
The 1973 tree was a living Colorado blue spruce from Pennsylvania. The species name and the state where the tree grew are different.

14. In 1980, the National Christmas Tree was fully lit for 417 seconds during a special tribute. What did each second represent?

A. One day the American hostages in Iran had been held
B. One hour since a national day of mourning began
C. One year since the first decoration of a Christmas tree
D. One broadcaster carrying the national ceremony

Correct answer: A. One day the American hostages in Iran had been held
The Park Service describes a second of full lighting for each day the hostages had been held by then.

15. Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret helped stage Christmas pantomimes at Windsor during World War II. What did the Wool Fund buy with money raised by those shows?

A. Stage curtains for theaters damaged in the war
B. Blankets to equip touring theater companies
C. Wool for making military clothing
D. Paper for printing Christmas cards for evacuees

Correct answer: C. Wool for making military clothing
The pantomimes raised money for the Wool Fund. Its purchases supplied wool used in clothing for military personnel.