



Getting Started

Welcome, Writers!

Does thinking of yourself as a “writer” make you feel excited? You’re in the right place. Does it make you seriously consider panicking? Don’t worry—we’re going to take it one step at a time, and it won’t be half as bad as you think.

You’re going to start by doing a little bit of research. For each country, you’ll find some questions related to Christmas traditions and foods. Dig into some research material and see what you can find to answer the questions. Make a note of anything that really stands out to you as well as other interesting traditions you discover along the way. The more information you write down now, the easier the next step will be.

The next step is to brainstorm about your writing assignment. You’ll write either a short story or a five-paragraph essay. It’s up to you (or your parent or teacher).

Short story:

- If you’re writing a short story, think of something connected to one of the traditions that your protagonist (main character) wants. Does he or she want nothing more than a quiet, peaceful Christmas dinner? Write that down. Now think of what could prevent that from happening the way the protagonist wants. Could unexpected company, a power outage, a malfunctioning stove, a dog having puppies, or other unplanned events threaten to keep your protagonist from getting what he or she wants?
- Now consider the tone of your story. Are you going to write a humorous story where everything that can go wrong does? Are you going to write with a serious tone and have your protagonist learn something important about handling life when it doesn’t go the way he or she wants it to?
- Finally, choose which of the traditions you learned about that you want to include. Include as many as naturally fit together with the overall story you have in mind.





Five-paragraph essay:

- If you're writing an essay, you need to have an idea of the overall theme and what you want to accomplish. You also need a way to get the reader's attention. What did you find the most interesting or surprising about Christmas in a particular country? Maybe you live in a warm area that never sees snow but in the country you are writing about, heavy snowstorms are common. You might open your essay with, "Imagine waking up Christmas morning to a mountain of snow outside your door."
- If you begin with something that strikes you as very different than what you are used to, maybe the thesis will involve how Christmas in the country you are writing about is very different than what Christmas in your country is like. If this is the case, the "why" behind your essay might be to help someone understand Christmas in another country.
- For your body paragraphs, choose the three traditions you learned about that stood out the most to you or that you could find enough information about to fill out your essay.
- For your conclusion, highlight your main theme again and summarize what you've covered in your essay. Remember not to introduce any new information and to provide a clear takeaway that you want to stick with your reader.

Now it's time to get writing. Don't forget to put a title on your work – but you can do that when it's finished if you prefer. Sometimes, you don't know what is going to happen in your story or essay until you've written it. Characters and information can take twists and surprise you. That's OK—it's all part of the creative writing journey!





Christmas in Argentina

Pesebre

What is a pesebre? _____

What elements does it include, and when is it usually set out? _____

Asado

What is an asado? How is the food usually cooked at one? _____

How is this method connected to Argentinian history? _____

Globos

What are globos? How are they made, and what do families do with them? _____





Christmas in Argentina

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Which day is the biggest day for celebrations in Argentina? What happens on this day?

Foods of Christmas

In addition to the asado, your meal might include niños envueltas, matambre relleno, piononos, tomates rellenos, canapes navideños, mini sandwiches, budín de pan, pan dulce, ensalada de fruta con helado, and garrapiñadas. What other foods are sometimes served? What can you discover about these dishes and what part they play in Christmas?

What are some additional traditions that are part of Christmas in Argentina? _____





Christmas in Argentina

Short Story

Possible character names: _____

Protagonist's goal: _____

Obstacles and/or challenges that could prevent protagonist from reaching it: _____

Tone of story: _____

Traditions to include: _____





Christmas in Argentina

Five-Paragraph Essay

How will you get the reader's attention in the first paragraph? _____

What is your thesis statement? What will you elaborate on or prove in your essay?

Why did you choose this thesis statement (why is this important to the reader)?

What tradition will you describe in the first body paragraph? _____

What tradition will you describe in the second body paragraph? _____

How will you tie all of the essay together? _____





SAMPLE





SAMPLE

