



1. wing [wɪŋ]
2. angel ['eɪndʒəl]
3. Star of Bethlehem
[ˌstɑːr əv
'beθlɪhem]
4. stable ['steɪbəl]
5. donkey ['dɒŋki],
ass [æs]
6. ox [ɒks]
7. shepherd ['ʃepəd]
8. sheep [ʃi:p]
9. manger
['meɪndʒə]
10. the Infant Jesus
[ði ɪnfənt
'dʒi:zəs]
11. the Holy Family
[ðə ˌhəʊli 'fæmli]
12. halo ['heɪləʊ]
13. the Three Wise
Men
[ðə ˌθri: wɪz
'men]
14. frankincense
['fræŋkɪn,sens]
15. audience
[ˈɔːdiəns]

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VOCABULARY

A nativity play

Before Christmas, many school-children take part in nativity plays. ANNA HOCHSIEDER presents language to talk about this topic.

MEDIUM PLUS

Good tidings of great joy

Dear Jess

Are you free on Friday the 22nd? If so, do come and watch Evie **perform** in her school's **nativity play**. Evie would be thrilled to have her favourite auntie in the **audience**.

The past few days have been **nerve-racking**. Of course, Evie had hoped to **be cast as** Mary, but an older girl got the **leading role**. First-year pupils are usually just given **bit parts**. Evie was worried she might have to **play a sheep** or a **star**. But she was lucky: she's the **angel** who **announces Christ's birth** to the **shepherds**. She's already **learned her lines** to perfection.

All the mums and dads have been assigned various tasks. Guess who has to make Evie's **costume**! Luke is helping with the **props**. He's just gone to the shops to try to buy some **hay** for the **manger**.

Well, I'd better sign off now and drive Evie to her **rehearsal**.

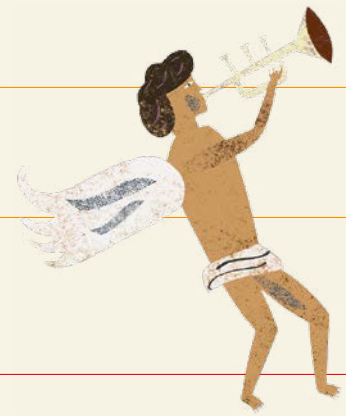
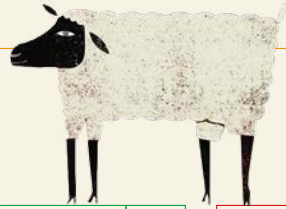
Hope to see you on Friday.

Love from us all, and a big hug from your sister

Polly xx

PRACTICE

Now try the following exercises to practise talking about nativity plays.



Exercise 1

E

Insert the correct words in the definitions below.

- A. A(n) is a play about the birth of Jesus Christ, usually performed by children at Christmas time.
- B. The consists of Jesus, his mother, Mary, and her husband, Joseph.
- C. A(n) is a circle of light around or above the head of a holy person in religious art.
- D. In old-fashioned British English usage, a donkey is also called a(n)
- E. A(n) is an object used by actors in a play or film.

Exercise 3

A

Study the picture and text on the opposite page. Then find the right words to complete the paragraph below.

There was no room at the **inn**, so Mary gave birth to her son in a (A) and laid him in a (B) instead of a bed. An angel announced Christ's birth to the (C), who were watching their **flocks** by night. They brought their (D) along to **worship** the newborn baby. Led by the Star of Bethlehem, Three (E) Men came, **bearing** gifts of gold, (F) and myrrh.

Exercise 2

M

Choose the correct option to complete each sentence.

- A. Evie was thrilled to see her aunt in the **performance / audience**.
- B. Most first-year pupils were given bit **parts / roles**.
- C. Evie spent hours learning her **words / lines**.
- D. Evie played an angel. Her **costume / custom** was a long white dress with a pair of wings.
- E. Evie's dad had difficulty finding **hay / hey** for the manger.

More Christmas vocabulary

Exercise 3 contains further useful words for talking about the birth of Jesus:

- An **inn** is a small hotel or house with rooms, food and drink for travellers. The phrase "no room at the inn" refers to the innkeeper's refusal to give **shelter** to the **pregnant** Mary.
- A **flock** is a group of sheep. The sentence quotes the **Christmas carol** "While shepherds watched their flocks by night", which, **in turn**, is a quotation from the Bible (Luke 2:8).
- To **worship** means "to show one's love and respect for a god". The verb can be used with or without an object.
- To **bear** something means "to carry something somewhere". This verb is used mostly in formal or literary contexts.



Christmas carol

['krɪsməs ,kærəl]
• Weihnachtslied

frankincense

['fræŋkɪn,sens]
• Weihrauch

in turn [ɪn 'tɜ:n]

• wiederum

pregnant ['pregnənt]

• schwanger

shelter ['ʃeltə]

• Schutz

Answers

1. A. nativity play
B. Holy Family
C. halo
D. ass
E. prop
2. A. audience
B. parts
C. lines
D. costume
E. hay
3. A. stable
B. manger
C. shepherds
D. sheep
E. Wise
F. frankincense