

The big debate

Christmas shouldn't start so early

The official countdown to 25 December is upon us, but it's been Christmas on the high street for several weeks now. Does the festive season last too long?

What you need to know

- This year, the Christian period of Advent, which leads up to Christmas Day, officially begins on Sunday 27 November.
- Some retailers have been selling Christmas goods since October, encouraging shoppers to get an early start on their festive preparations.
- A 2014 poll by market-research company Ipsos Mori showed that 50% of British people feel some level of stress about getting ready for Christmas.*



In Christianity, Advent is the four-week period leading up to Christmas Day, during which Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. This year Advent officially starts on Sunday 27 November, but many shops begin getting ready for Christmas long before then – some as early as October. By November, there are decorations in the streets, Christmas adverts on television, carols playing in shops and mince pies piled high on supermarket shelves. For some people, this long run-up to Christmas adds to their excitement, but others complain that it puts them under a lot of pressure. Some say that the focus on shopping takes away from the true spirit of the season. So, should festive preparations be short and sweet or is a big build-up better?

Make it shorter and sweeter

Promoting Christmas in October and November is just a way for shops to make more money. It puts too much focus on present-buying and distracts from the more important aspects of the holiday, such as the religious meaning, the spirit of goodwill and spending time with loved ones. It makes you feel pressured to begin your preparations early, and is especially hard for those who do not have a lot of money to spend. The extended build-up is also unfair on people who do not celebrate Christmas, for example those of different religions, and may make them feel excluded. Besides, if you start preparing for Christmas too early, you'll probably be bored of it by 25 December.

The longer, the better

Why not make Christmas last as long as possible? It's good to have something happy and fun to think about and plan, especially in the dark, cold winter months. With everyone's busy lives, it makes sense to have more time to prepare for Christmas and buy presents. It gives you more time to decide what you want to give to people, and means you do not have to rush around at the last minute when the shops are very crowded. It allows you to look around for bargains and also means you can spread the expense over several weeks rather than having it all in one go. Some people say it is stressful to start preparing for Christmas so early, but they can always choose not to – no-one is forcing them.

3 reasons FOR the statement: Christmas shouldn't start so early

- 1 Starting Christmas so early gives the impression that it's all about spending money – and distracts from the true spirit of the festive season.
- 2 It means that the pressure of preparing for Christmas lasts for too long – some people can find this very stressful.
- 3 People who don't celebrate Christmas may get fed-up with all the fuss and feel excluded.

3 reasons AGAINST the statement: Christmas shouldn't start so early

- 1 Starting early means that you don't have to do everything at the last minute – it actually makes it a less stressful experience.
- 2 You can spread out the expense, and maybe even save money by looking for good deals.
- 3 It's a wonderful, happy time that only comes once a year, so why not let it last as long as possible?

What do you think?

Now you've read a bit more about it, tell us what you think by voting in our online poll at theweekjunior.co.uk/polls. Vote **FOR** if you agree that Christmas shouldn't start so early, or vote **AGAINST** if you think it's fine the way it is. We'll publish the results next week.

Last week's poll



Last week our debate motion was: Classrooms need more male teachers. Most of you felt that having male teachers is good for pupils.

