

# personal english

**Presents**



**Merry Kissmas!**

**2016 Edition**

[www.personal-english.com](http://www.personal-english.com)

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### WARNING!



Levels of difficulty have not been marked on purpose. The *Personal English* method relies on the learner's exposure to authentic language: students of any level are therefore welcome to try their hand at any of the activities in this booklet, and to report their difficulties to the teacher upon resuming classes.

*I livelli di difficoltà sono stati omessi intenzionalmente. Il metodo Personal English si basa sull'esposizione dello studente alla lingua reale: tutti gli studenti – qualsiasi sia il loro livello – sono invitati a sperimentare qualsiasi attività contenuta nel presente fascicolo e a comunicare le proprie difficoltà all'insegnante al proprio rientro.*

## KISSES IN CONFECTIONERY



In the English-speaking world the word 'kiss' is applied to a range of small confections, defined by their shape rather than by similar ingredients. Their flat-bottomed **drop**<sup>1</sup>-like shape might have inspired the Austrian confectionery concoction known as '**nipples**<sup>2</sup> of Venus', a variety of chocolate **truffles**<sup>3</sup> that first made their appearance on the international scene in the 1984 film **Amadeus**, where they were said to have been the sweet favored by Antonio Salieri, Mozart's rival at the Hapsburg court in Vienna. The **nipples of Venus** also featured in the 2000 film **Chocolat**, where Juliette Binoche crafted them to lure the strait-laced Comte de Reynaud into sin. A yet further example of silver screen confectionery named 'kiss' is the chocolate truffle created by pastry chef Laura Mahler in the German soap opera **Sturm der Liebe**, and going under the name of Süße Küsse, which translates into English as 'sweet kiss'.

The most famous brand using the name 'kiss' in actual confectionery is the Pennsylvania-based **Hershey Company**, established in 1894. Since **1907** this company has been successfully distributing worldwide its flagship line of bite-size chocolates, known as '**Hershey's Kisses**'. Legend has it that these truffles owe their name to the sound and motion made by machine while depositing the chocolate onto the **conveyor belt**<sup>4</sup> in the production area.

Other than Hershey's Kisses, the word 'kiss' is also sometimes applied to confections with a hard **encasing**<sup>5</sup> and a soft **filling**<sup>6</sup>, such as chocolate-dipped marshmallows, or cookies sandwiched together with a soft **icing**<sup>7</sup>.

1



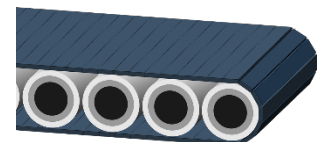
2



3



4



5



6



7



**Merry Kissmas!**



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBgc6P\\_tpfY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBgc6P_tpfY)

**Watch the Video, then Fill in the Recipe Template with the Ingredients:**

**Rewrite the Recipe Using the Quantifiers Provided in the Table Below:**

A few	A little	Some	A pinch of	X Tablespoons of
Much	Many	A lot of	Enough	X Teaspoons of

**Merry Kissmas!**

*Kissing Under the Mistletoe*

The custom of kissing under the mistletoe (also called the *kissing bough*) originated in the Victorian Age. Back in those days, tradition had it that a **berry should be plucked<sup>A</sup>** every time a kiss was stolen; once the berries were all gone, the kissing season was over.

Unlike today's mistletoe **bough<sup>B</sup>**, the Victorian kissing bough was quite a complex construction made of five circles of wire joined together to form a globe with evergreens wrapped around the wires. Apples and candles were then hung in the center of the globe, and a large **bunch<sup>C</sup>** of mistletoe was hung beneath. The mistletoe was often decorated with paper flowers.



Where does the significance of mistletoe come from?



Mistletoe, or "*the golden bough*", was held sacred by Celtic Druids and Norsemen alike. Also known as *heal-all*, it was used in folk medicine to treat a number of diseases. In addition, the gift of mistletoe represented an offer of peace in Scandinavian antiquity. If enemies were run across beneath the mistletoe in a forest, they would lay down their **weapons<sup>D</sup>** and maintain a **truce<sup>E</sup>** until the next day. Also, in Medieval England and Wales farmers would give the Christmas bunch of mistletoe to the first cow that calved in the New Year, as it was thought to bring good luck to the entire **herd<sup>F</sup>**.

Vikings believed that the mistletoe had the power to resurrect the dead, and in their culture it was related to the resurrection of Balder, the god of the summer sun. Celtic Druids in Britain also believed that mistletoe could work miracles, and they would **harvest<sup>G</sup>** it with a golden **sickle<sup>H</sup>** five days after the New Moon following winter solstice. They then distributed the boughs to the people, who would hang them over their doorways as protection against thunder, lightning and other evils.

Kissing under the mistletoe is first found in connection with the Roman festival of Saturnalia and early wedding ceremonies. Mistletoe was believed to have the power of bestowing fertility. These belief lies at the core of the tradition according to which a couple that kiss underneath the mistletoe will have good luck, whether a woman who remains unknissed under the mistletoe will stay single for a yet another year. Accordingly, in the past maidens used to place a **sprig<sup>I</sup>** of mistletoe under their pillow at night so as to find out the identity of their own Prince Charming.

**Merry Kissmas!**

**TRUE OR FALSE?**

**Tick the Right Option**

**1.** In the Victorian Age, Christmastime was a kissing season whose kiss count was determined by the overall number of berries in a kissing ball.

True  
 False

**2.** The Victorian Kissing Ball was identical to today's mistletoe bough, with just a tiny difference: it sported an apple in its center.

True  
 False

**3.** Mistletoe was a sacred plant in the Greek and Latin tradition – hence its connection with kissing at Christmastime.

True  
 False

**4.** In ancient Scandinavia, mistletoe was offered to call a truce.

True  
 False

**5.** In Medieval England and Wales, mistletoe was connected to fertility rites.

True  
 False

**6.** The Viking god Balder was associated to the mistletoe because of his power to resurrect the dead.

True  
 False

**7.** In Celtic culture mistletoe reaping was timed to moon phases.

True  
 False

**8.** Druids would distribute mistletoe among villagers to make them physically stronger against diseases.

True  
 False

**9.** Kissing under the mistletoe is a tradition that can be traced back to the Celts.

True  
 False

**10.** In the past, single women would sleep with a sprig of mistletoe under their pillow to be able to recognize Mr. Right in their dreams.

True  
 False

**Merry Kissmas!**

**VOCABULARY**

**Each of the Pictures below Corresponds to a Lettered Word from the Text.**

**Match the Picture / Word with their Corresponding Definition.**



A. Plucking berries

\_\_\_\_\_



B. Bough

\_\_\_\_\_



C. Bunch (of flowers)

\_\_\_\_\_



D. Weapons

\_\_\_\_\_



E. Truce

\_\_\_\_\_



F. Herd

\_\_\_\_\_



G. Harvest

\_\_\_\_\_



H. Sickle

\_\_\_\_\_



I. Sprig

\_\_\_\_\_

1. A number of things, typically of the same kind, growing or fastened together.
2. An agreement between enemies or opponents to stop fighting or arguing for a certain time.
3. The process or period of gathering in crops.
4. To gather small, roundish, juicy fruits from the woods.
5. Objects designed or used for inflicting bodily harm or physical damage.
6. A short-handled farming tool with a semicircular blade, used for cutting corn, lopping, or trimming.
7. A main branch of a tree.
8. A small stem bearing leaves or flowers, taken from a plant.

## Why Do We Kiss... At All? Kissing Across Cultures



### Romantic vs Non-Romantic Kissing Cultures:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/07/27/romantic-kissing-is-not-a-shared-practice-across-cultures-research-shows/?utm\\_term=.9d62242307b3](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/07/27/romantic-kissing-is-not-a-shared-practice-across-cultures-research-shows/?utm_term=.9d62242307b3)

In **Western culture** kissing originally developed as a social gesture meant to express **lack of hostility** through physical contact without aggression. Throughout the centuries, this gesture has become replete with more **multifaceted emotional and social nuances** conveyed by the choice of the **kissing spot** and the **kissing style**. Take a fascinating journey into the **anthropological** and **psychological** implications of Western kissing habits even while exploring the different meanings they have been attached across space and time.

### AIR KISSING



The most **formal** and **emotionally noncommittal** way of kissing. It consists in pursing the lips (and often giving out the classic *mwah* sound) but without actually touching the other person. As such, air kissing is just a **pretense or display of intimacy**, but without actually committing to touching the person, which implicitly entails avoiding responsibility for any pain or pleasure that may arise from such a contact. This **lack of commitment** may explain why air kissing is favored by (among others) a very specific social group – women for whom society is a jungle where to fight for the ‘best’ (a.k.a. ‘most enviable’) social partner.

Among non-anthropologists this group is sometimes dubbed as **‘bitchy socialites’**, but why such hostility against them? After all, no surprise that members of this social group should keep a distance from other fellow human beings – in a jungle where social survival depends on **competition for the best male partner**, it’s only natural that mistrust should rule. And, after all, keeping the distance presents a yet further advantage – from the psychological point of view, it makes **backstabbing** easier. Just bear this in mind next time you get air-kissed by one of your friends!



## Merry Kissmas!

### KISSING ON THE CHEEKS



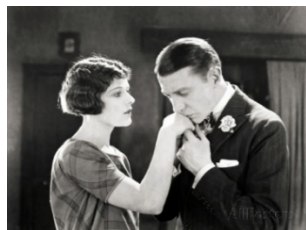
The most complicatedly codified of Western kisses. It marks either **familiarity** or **affection**, but without necessarily crossing the line of intimacy. **The appropriate number of kisses is rather controversial in the Western world:** the French kiss twice, while Americans never know what to do with this European habit, so they either awkwardly kiss once or just skip kissing in favor of hugging. In German-speaking countries kissing three times is customary, as it is thought to bring good luck – this habit has been recently introduced also in Italy, even though kissing twice remains the standard, whereas kissing three times is perceived as more of a youth culture phenomenon.

Cheek-kissing in the UK is socially more problematic insofar as it is perceived as a very Continental (and, thus, foreign) habit the Brits are still getting used to.

Do you want to learn more about cheek-kissing in the UK? Follow the link below:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/magazine/7040259.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7040259.stm)

### HAND-KISSING



Hand kissing is nowadays little used in social situations and, when it is at all, often arises from a misguided attempt on the part of a man to build up his own social image as a **gentleman of yore**. Such an attempt is misguided, though, insofar as social connotations unpleasantly tinge the gesture with **snobbishness** and **inauthenticity**.

The psychological and anthropological origins of this kissing pattern, however, are likely to be very different from that of a man desexualizing his desire for a woman to put his skills at her service, which was probably a later twist taken by this custom in the age of **courtly love** (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries). Rather, it might originally have been the other way around. The only circumstances where hand kissing loses any negative connotation are out of the social context of codified interactions – that is, in the sphere of **intimacy** and **privacy**, rather than of public social contacts. In these circumstances, it is way more frequent for a woman to kiss the man's hands rather than the other way around. Such a practice may be psychologically and anthropologically rooted in the **acknowledgement of the strength inequality between man and woman** – a factor that makes sex and intimacy potentially dangerous for the weaker party. From a psychological standpoint, this gesture is tantamount to saying 'Thanks for using these hands to give me pleasure instead of inflicting pain. I trust you.'

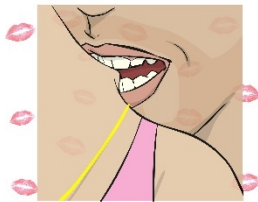
Courtly love may have later reversed the situation to symbolize the pledge of service taken by the lover towards his beloved woman – who was known as '**domina**', that is, 'mistress' – thus socially reversing the original **power balance**. Its connection with the **establishment of power relations** has remained visible (and obvious) throughout the centuries as a **gesture of political submission among aristocrats**, first, and a **worldly custom among ambassadors** and state representatives, later.

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### NOSE KISSING

An unmistakable expression of **desexualized, playful affection** – hence its popularity in fondling babies, toddlers and children. Curiously enough, the practice of rubbing noses against each other is not considered as kissing properly speaking in Western culture, insofar as it doesn't involve the mouth. However, **nose rubbing** (a.k.a. *Eskimo kiss*) is a common form of non-erotic but intimate greeting among many cultures worldwide, ranging from **Inuit people** inhabiting the Arctic Circle (*kunik*) to **Maōri** in New Zealand (*hongi*), the **Hawaiians** in the Pacific Ocean (*honi*) and a few **Asian cultures** spanning between the Gobi Desert in the North and Timor in the South.



### NECK KISSING

Analyzing neck kissing immediately calls the attention to an interesting inconsistency within Western culture in terms of **erogenous zone exposure**. Unlike a number of South American, African and Asian cultures, for centuries (if not indeed millennia) Western culture has prohibited or severely restricted the exposure of such erogenous zones as genitalia, buttocks and female breasts, but has left exposed such equally sensitive inches of skin as the neck and cleavage. Hence an apparent paradox – why is kissing a publicly exposed spot such as the neck perceived as inappropriate in a social context? Because, due to the sensitiveness of this spot, such a gesture is immediately eroticized as being part of the **foreplay** – which, by definition, is more **intimate** and **private** than greetings or general expressions of friendship and affection.



### PECK KISSING

When I was a child I had a grand-uncle who would unfailingly kiss anybody – no matter their gender or their kinship to him – right on the lips. **Never an inch of tongue**, in fairness – still, it looked creepy and slightly weird to me. My father, by contrast, didn't find this habit annoying (even though he would always find an excuse to avoid the chore of greeting him!), but amusing. "Look," he would tell me on spotting him getting out of the car in our driveway "your Russian *tovarish* uncle has arrived."

He would poke gentle fun at him by implying that he must have picked up his bizarre manners from **Communist statesmen** (see Brezhnev and Honecker in the picture), thus pointing out an interesting difference between Eastern and Western European stances towards kissing. Whereas in the West peck kissing is tinged with mild erotic connotations because of the lip contact (considered as a marker of intimacy, rather than a purely public or socially codified gesture), in **Russian culture** smooching has always been an important **social glue**, rather than a marker of intimacy. This explains why **Orthodox Christians** are apparently obsessed with **kissing icons** (in spite of the dubious sanitary

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perks of such a practice) or why in Russia members of a same family usually kiss each other right on the lips without the slightest hint of embarrassment – well, just like my *tovarish* uncle.

### FRENCH KISSING



The **erotic** and **romantic** kiss par excellence in Western culture. French kissing entails contact between the tongues, which presupposes a higher degree of intimacy or commitment than peck kissing. This is also the reason why French kissing is seen as a gateway to foreplay and why it implies trust – hence its romantic overtones. The Romans distinguished three types of smooch: **osculum** meant a friendship kiss on the cheek, **basium** was a kiss of affection on the lips (peck kissing) and **suavium** (later shortened into *savium*) was the kiss of passion and desire.

Latin started to be replaced by vernacular languages in writing only starting from the **Renaissance**, when the *savium* became a **Florentine kiss**, with reference to the (then) sexual openness of Italian society. The schism between **Protestantism** and **Catholicism** that took place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, however, deeply affected the attitudes towards sex in Protestant and Catholic countries, with Catholic countries becoming increasingly **prudish** and **restrictive** about this sphere of human interaction. In less than a century, then, the scale of sexual openness became tipped in favor of the **most secular and anticlerical country in Europe**, that is, **France**, after which this kissing style has been named since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### ORAL SEX



Despite being one of the **most commonly practiced sexual behaviors** among humans (as well as non-humans) across the planet, kissing genitalia in the Western world has become **taboo** in such public culture forms as literature and the visual arts starting from the **Middle Ages**. This chronology corresponds to the **dismemberment of pagan traditions native to Europe** (Latin, Greek, Celtic) – which were all rather sexually open and graphic – in favor of a few new **Abrahamic religious strains** from the Middle East, among which **Christendom** would eventually get the upper hand in both culture and politics.

The Christianization of Europe had a huge anthropological impact on the continent, as it radically changed in time a number of customs – along with introducing a variety of prohibitions and restraints. **Greek and Latin cultures** would both publicly and privately accept oral sex as a form of intimacy, and would depict it on ceremonial cups as well as frescoes. Many Asian cultures have done the same since the dawn of time – think for example of **Kama Sutra** and **Tantric yoga** in India, **Shunga art** in Japan or the paramount social importance played by sex in the pre-Cultural Revolution Chinese society. **The Westernization of culture on a global scale, though, has been jeopardizing 'sexual diversity' worldwide since the British Empire** and its colonization policies based on the so-called '**white man's burden**', that is, the white man's duty to (supposedly) civilize the entire world to meet his own requirements and standards. As a result (and among other things), **Pacific islanders** have progressively covered up erogenous zones that had never been perceived as being inappropriately exposed before, such as female breasts. In a similar manner, such cultures as the **Manchu** and **Telugu** – for which kissing the penis of a

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male infant has always been considered a non-erotic expression of affection – have progressively relinquished their century-old habits with a view to conforming to the Christian white man's expectations.

Curious to learn more about the attitude towards erotica in China and Japan? Follow the links below:

- <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/04/18/asia-pacific/offbeat-asia-pacific/erotic-art-offers-glimpse-of-chinas-lost-sexual-philosophy/#.WGUJRfnhC00>
- <https://www.artelino.com/articles/shunga.asp>

### FOOT KISSING



Foot kissing is often classified in Western culture as a form of **fetishism**, that is, a sexual fixation on a nonliving object or non-genital body part. As you can ascertain from the definition of 'fetishism' provided above, there is nothing intrinsically despicable about it – yet, the word itself is suffused with **negative connotations** of any kind. That's weird as well as inconsistent, given that the **Scriptures**, and especially the **New Testament**, are rife with cultural and symbolical references to what may be rightfully defined as 'podophilia', otherwise known as foot fetishism. Jesus consciously used the **submissive connotations** attached to the gesture in order to put himself on a par with his disciples by washing their feet, thus symbolically erasing hierarchy.

Jesus also passively partook of such a rite not once, but twice in the Scriptures. The first is in **Luke 7:36** where, before Jesus wisely explains to the Pharisee that 'whoever has been forgiven little, loves little' (7:47), a prostitute shows up at the feast to wash Jesus's feet with her tears, dry them with her hair and anoint them with her perfume as a sign of repentance. The second is in **John 12:3**, where Jesus likewise gets his feet anointed by perfume and dried by Mary's hair at a dinner with Lazarus (whom he had raised from the dead) in Bethany.

Foot fetishism is relatively common and socially acceptable in **Japan**, just like most other fetishist forms, such as tentacle erotica, *kinbaku* (bondage), *wakamezake* (food play) and so on and so forth. Japanese culture is on average sexually more open than most Western and Asian cultures due the geographical isolation of the Japanese archipelago, which has therefore been less influenced by the importance attached to **monogamy** by the **Confucian view of marriage** than most mainland Asia has.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

Write a 1-Page Summary of the Text Above Bearing in Mind the Following:

1. Every subchapter corresponds to one paragraph;
2. In order to structure your text clearly, identify the key ideas expressed in every subchapter (consider that each illustrates min. 1 – max. 3 concepts);
3. Reword and rephrase the key ideas illustrated in text bearing in mind that summarizing is NOT amount to plagiarizing;
4. Make sure the logic connections leading from one idea to the next are made clear through the use of linkers (listed below).



**MORE INFORMATION**

And  
In addition  
Furthermore  
Moreover  
Other than that  
As well as  
Too  
On top of that  
Another point is



**COMPARE**

Likewise  
In the same way  
Also  
In a like manner  
Similarly  
As with  
Like  
Equally



**CONTRAST**

But  
By contrast  
Unlike  
However  
I  
Nonetheless  
Whereas  
On the one hand...  
on the other



**SEQUENCE**

Before  
After  
While  
When  
Upon  
Firstly, secondly  
First and foremost  
The former... the latter



**CONDITION**

If  
Provided that  
Whether (...or)  
As long as



**EXPLANATION**

That is to say  
i.d.



**CONCESSION**

Even though  
Although  
Albeit  
Notwithstanding



**ALTERNATIVE**

Or  
Else  
Otherwise



**PURPOSE**

So that  
In order to  
With a view to  
(+ -ing form)



**CAUSE**

Owing to  
Because (of)  
On account that  
Since As  
As a result of  
Due to  
Given



**CONSEQUENCE**

Thus  
So  
Hence  
Therefore  
Consequently  
In consequence



**QUALIFICATION**

Unless  
Except  
Apart from  
Just in case  
Lest

# THE KISSMAS TREE

LEEDS, UK



## Conjugate the Verbs in Brackets into the Right Tense



From: <http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/it-s-kiss-mas-time-at-the-trinity-leeds-centre-1-8221907>

*Click on the link to self-correct this exercise*

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016

CHRISTMAS \_\_\_\_\_ (**to come**) with the official switch-on of the Trinity Leeds shopping centre Christmas lights and the unveiling of the UK's only Kissing Tree.

Around 20,000 people \_\_\_\_\_ (**to watch**) as the tree \_\_\_\_\_ (**to switch on**) with a kiss – and then a proposal. The 66ft Christmas tree, which \_\_\_\_\_ (**to contain**) 25,000 lights, \_\_\_\_\_ (**to illuminate**) when two people kiss beneath it – their lips \_\_\_\_\_ (**to complete**) a circuit which activates the entire display.

Andy Wormald, 29, and partner Lauren Berg, 25, from Pudsey \_\_\_\_\_ (**to win**) a competition among 1,200 entrants to be the first couple to kiss under the tree. Then Andy \_\_\_\_\_ (**to drop**) to one knee and, in front of 20,000 people, \_\_\_\_\_ (**to propose**) and Lauren \_\_\_\_\_ (**to say**) 'yes'. Dan Wharton, Marketing Manager at Trinity Leeds, \_\_\_\_\_ (**to say**): "We are delighted for Andy and Lauren and wish them all the very best with their wedding." The couple \_\_\_\_\_ (**to give**) a £1,000 gift card.

## Merry Kissmas!

### How to Make a Kissing Ball



The kissing ball comes to us from the **Middle Ages**, when villagers would wind together twine and evergreen branches into a ball shape where to place a clay figure of an infant to represent the **baby Jesus**. This would be hung from ceilings to render blessings and good luck to all who passed under the holy infant.



To learn more about the history of the Christmas kissing ball, check out:  
<https://holidappy.com/holidays/The-history-of-the-Christmas-kissing-ball>

### Watch the Video, then Illustrate the Procedure Step by Step



<http://www.marthastewart.com/909408/add-evergreen-kissing-ball-holidays>

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