



12 Notes of Christmas Learning Guide

*Discussion Questions for
The 12 Notes of Christmas Film*

*A Mashup of The Twelve Days of Christmas Song and
Shakespeare's Twelfth Night*

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A. General Questions

What is a play? What other type of entertainment is it most like?

A play usually takes place on a stage or within a space set aside for the actors to perform their stagecraft live in front of an audience.

They are more like music concerts than movies or games.

Sometimes the audience participates in the play performances which is called "breaking the audience wall." Movies, books and games are not usually live. Games often involve the audience/"player."

What extra details do you see in each day's scene?

Four examples:

- *Day 1 in Australia: Shrimp being grilled, 1's Aussie hat,*

- Sydney opera house, and Australian flag
- Day 4 in Italy: Roman Coliseum, 4's laurel leaf headdress, Pizza e Vino Trattoria sign, which means Pizza and Wine Eatery. An Eatery is less formal than a restaurant (ristorante in Italian).
- Day 5 in China: 5's Chinese hat, Great Wall of China, Asian decorations as part of the set.
- Day 6 in Germany: 6's Tyrolean hat, Christmas tree.

How can you tell when an instrument is being played?

Cheeks puff out, hands move

How can you tell the trumpet isn't playing?

The music is quieter. The brass trumpet sound will hide the other instruments.

What is a mashup?

A new song/video/etc. made up of pieces from other sources

Why is "The 12 Notes of Christmas" a mashup?

It combines the "12 Days of Christmas" song with Shakespeare's play "Twelfth Night."

At the end of each day 0 says something in the language of the place we the numbers are visiting. What is it?

Merry Christmas

If December 25 is Christmas Day, why is Jan 6 12th night?

Christian traditions have changed over time and culture. Twelfth night was written when the 12th night of Christmas was celebrated as the end of the Christmas Season on January 6. Working backward, then the 1st day must be on December 26!

Why do the videos open with a curtain and are all "performed" on a stage with a backdrop?

Shakespeare is likely the most famous playwright worldwide. He also wrote many sonnets, some of which are included in his plays. The design of the series was to help celebrate Shakespeare's 400 year legacy, thus involved classic theater themes/icons like curtain, stage, backdrop and props.

Plays are performed on a stage and often have curtains that open and close at the beginning and ending of scenes. Many theater curtains are red in color. The Globe Theatre, however, does not have a curtain.

A backdrop allows the scene to demonstrate location of the scene. Props (short for "properties") or more complex design structures can add more details. Each number showcases an instrument which are "props" of each

scene.

B. Day-Specific Questions

Day 0: December 25

Who was Shakespeare?

He is often considered the greatest English playwright/writer to have ever lived; he wrote plays like Romeo and Juliet as well as many poems.

What is meant by 400 years of legacy (#shakespeare400)?

Shakespeare was born in 1564 (baptized on April 26, 1564 but actual day of birth is not known) and he died on April 23, 1616. Since 2016 is 400 years after 1616, it is 400 years since he passed away, which is often considered the beginning of a person's legacy. Check out #shakespeare400 for global events associated with Shakespeare's legacy.

Why does Shakespeare sound unusual in this series?

He speaks Old English. He talks like people did 400 years ago

What time of year is it?

Christmas/Winter (it's snowing)

What is 0 (zero) playing and why?

A Kettle Drum since it is oval shaped like 0.

The kettle drum sets the structure (tempo, beat) to the band, like 0 does for the number team, Team Ten.

What is Team Ten (The Numberopolis Players) planning to do?

They will surprise Shakespeare by showing up at the Globe Theatre in London to serenade him at the opening of Twelfth Night with the 12 instruments plus the kettle drum.

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What is Twelfth Night?

A traditional western Christian calendar has celebrated 12 days of Christmas starting on or after Christmas day through January 5 or 6. January 6, Epiphany, is also known as Three Kings Day, the day the Wise Men visited the newborn Jesus.

Twelfth Night is a famous comedy written by Shakespeare as entertainment for the close of the Christmas season.

What is Boxing Day?

This is the day after Christmas when traditionally servants who had worked during the holiday were given gifts from their employers, known as a "Christmas Box."

Day 1: December 26

Where does the adventure begin?

Australia, “The Land Down Under”

What does 1 play?

The didgeridoo

What is a didgeridoo?

A wind instrument (you blow into it) first made by people native to Australia. It is a long wooden tube used to make music.

Why does 1 play a didgeridoo?

It is shaped like 1—long and slender.

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Why is Australia called “The Land Down Under?”

On maps and globes Australia is shown at the bottom.

Why is it summer in Australia?

The seasons are opposite in the southern half of the world (Southern Hemisphere) from what they are in the Northern Hemisphere.

What do you see in the background that makes you think it’s Australia?

- **The Sydney Opera House**
- **“Shrimp on the Barbie”**

What is the world’s biggest continent?

Africa

Why is Australia called “Oz?”

Oz is slang for Australia. Aus, often pronounced Oz, is a shortened version for Australia.

Where are 0 and 1 going to meet 2?

West Africa

Day 2: December 27

Who is on stage?

0 and 1 and then 2 joins them

Where are they?

Timbuktu in West Africa. Timbuktu is a World Heritage Site.

What is 2 playing?

The Marimba

What other instrument is like a marimba?

Xylophone

Why does 2 play the marimba?

The marimba is played with 2 mallets. (Did you notice that 2's mallets match the color of her shoes?)

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Where is Timbuktu?

Timbuktu is a very real city located in the West African country of Mali. It is an exotic location, though. Sitting about 12 miles north of the Niger River on the southern border of the Sahara Desert, Timbuktu is home to approximately 50,000 people.

What is Timbuktu's historical significance?

Timbuktu was first permanently settled in the 1100s and became a prominent trading center in the 1300s.

Timbuktu was a center of Islamic scholarship under several African empires, home to a 25,000-student university and other madrasahs that served as wellsprings for the spread of Islam throughout Africa from the 13th to 16th centuries. Sacred Muslim texts, in bound editions, were carried great distances to Timbuktu for the use of eminent scholars from Cairo, Baghdad, Persia, and elsewhere who were in residence at the city. The great teachings of Islam, from astronomy and mathematics to medicine and law, were collected and produced here in several hundred thousand manuscripts. Many of them remain, though in precarious condition, to form a priceless written record of African history.

Although 0 follows many popular conventions that Africa is the "biggest" continent he does not mention what is meant by

“biggest.” What continent has the greatest population and which includes the greatest area/land mass?

Asia is actually the largest by population and area. Africa is 2nd so please remind O to adjust his often “popular” convention that Africa is the biggest one. One of the issues is that Africa is more easily defined but Asia definition boundaries are not as precise and not necessarily the same by all cartographers.

Where is the home of Cleopatra?

Egypt

Day 3: December 28

Where do 0, 1 and 2 begin to look for 3?
Egypt

Why does 3 play a trumpet?
The contemporary trumpet has 3 valves.

What is in the background?
Flag of Egypt
The Great Pyramids of Giza

Why does a pyramid have meaning for 3?
Each side is a triangle: a triangle has three sides and 3 angles.

What do you see on the rock behind 3?
Hieroglyphics, the column-writing style of ancient Egypt

What does 3 have on his head?
Pharaoh's headgear, worn in ancient Egypt

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Where is Egypt?
In northern Africa on the Mediterranean

Where are numbers 0, 1, 2 and 3 going to meet 4 on Day 4?
Italy

**Which living trumpet player has won a Grammy award and
Pulitzer prize for composition?**

Wynton Marsalis

Day 4: December 29

Where are numbers 0-3 meeting 4?
Italy

What is the instrument 4 is playing?
Mandolin. It has 4 sets (pairs) of strings. If 4 pairs, then how many altogether? (Eight)

What is in the background?
The Coliseum of Rome

Why was Italy important to Shakespeare?
Many of his plays were set there. Some of these are Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, and Antony and Cleopatra.

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What does ciao mean (pronounced "chow")
Hello. It also means Good-bye.

What happened in the Coliseum?
It was used as an entertainment venue, like gladiatorial contests and other public spectacles. It could hold about 80,000 people.

What numbering system did the ancient Romans use?
Roman numerals. 0 is sad because there was no 0 in the Roman numbering system.

Where will 0, 1 2, 3 and 4 go to meet 5?
East Asia, China

Day 5: December 30

Where are number 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 to meet 5?
East Asia-China

Why does 5 play Temple Blocks?
Temple blocks generally come in a set of 5 blocks.

What is another name for temple blocks?
Wooden Fish

What is the background of Day 5?
The Great Wall of China, built to prevent invasion from the Huns from the west.

What is something that comes from East Asia?
Tea, fireworks, festival dragons

Where are the numbers 0-5 going to meet 6?
Germany

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Who is Hoteiosho?
A Buddhist Monk in Japan who resembles Santa Claus in America—he brings children presents and is said to have eyes in the back of his head, so children are very good when he is around.

What is the flower on the stage set?
A lotus blossom. In Buddhist symbolism it represents spiritual growth.

Day 6: December 31

Where are numbers 0-5 meeting 6?
Nuremberg, Germany

What are some Christmas traditions from Germany?
Christmas trees, carols

Why does 6 play a fife?
It has 6 finger holes.

Where have you heard of a fife before—perhaps in USA history?
The fife and drum corps during the Revolutionary War
When was the American Revolutionary War? In the 1700s,
after Shakespeare lived.

What is in the background?
The medieval old town center of Nuremberg. It is historically the land of toy making. Also, Nuremberg is where the Gutenberg Bible was printed—the earliest printing press! You can see one at the US Library of Congress.

Where are numbers 0-6 going to meet 7?
India

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What is building style of the houses?
Half-timbered, in German fachwerk; a popular construction method in the Middle Ages, about 1300-1600—the time of Shakespeare!

Day 7: January 1

**Where are number 0-6 meeting 7?
Aggra, India**

**How many people live in India?
1/7th of the world's population, or over 1 billion since there
are about 7 billion people now.**

**When will the population of the world be 8 billion?
About 2025**

**Why does 7 play the sitar?
The "Ravi Shankar" sitar has 7 strings to play. There are
sympathetic strings that vibrate when the 7 played strings
vibrate generating the special duplicate vibrating sound of the
sitar.**

**What famous rock and roll band studied with Ravi Shankar and
included the sitar in some of their music?
Beatles**

**What is in the background?
The Taj Mahal**

**Where are numbers 0-7 going to meet 8?
Scotland**

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**What is the Taj Mahal?
A mausoleum, or tomb. It was built in the 1600s as the
burial place for the emperor's favorite wife—around the
same time as Shakespeare.**

**Why might 0 get rounder if he doesn't move on?
The food is so tasty that he'll eat too much and get fat,
or round.**

**Why does 0 like India?
The current "Arabic" numerals were developed in
India (called Brahmi) and were brought to the West
and Asia by the Arabs who traded in both areas of the
world.**

**Why does 0 say it's good to have a brave heart in Scotland?
It refers to the life of William Wallace, a Scottish freedom
fighter in the 1200s. A popular movie about him was called
Braveheart.**

Day 8: January 2

Where are numbers 0-7 going to find 8?
Scotland

Why does 8 play a bagpipe?
A Scottish bagpipe has 8 playing holes—notice the 3 pipes known as drones.

What is in the background?
Edinburgh Castle

Where are numbers 0-8 going to meet 9?
Belgium

What food we often eat with hamburgers that originated in Belgium?
French Fries

Why called French Fries if from Belgium?
People living in Belgium speak French.

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What famous Shakespeare play takes place in Scotland?
Macbeth, often called the Scottish Play. The 3 witches are famous at the beginning of the play.

Why are the ribbons on the curtains plaid?
Family groups, called clans, wear tartans, or unique plaids, to show they belong to the group.

Day 9: January 3

**Where are numbers 0-8 meeting 9?
Belgium**

Why does 9 play the Kelstone?

It has one board with 9 strings which the player plays like a piano not a guitar. All Kelstones were invented by Jan Van Kelst who lives in Belgium. Here's a link to video to see him playing the 9-stringed Kelstone:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3J_dVqXicw.

What is in the background?

Old Town Bruges, a medieval canal-based city in the Flemish Region of Belgium. It was once the most important commercial city in the world, with its Golden Age the 12th through 15th centuries.

What are some famous foods from Belgium?

Fries, chocolate, mussels, and waffles!

Where are numbers 0-9 going to meet 10?

South America, Andes

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What is the difference between Santa Claus and St. Nicolas?

Saint Nicolas was a 4th century bishop who gave generous gifts to the poor. He is honored by the Catholic Church on December 6th. Some countries honor this day by giving gifts to children. During the Reformation, many people stopped holding saints in such high regard, and over time many traditions (Sinterklaas, Father Christmas, Pere Noel, Christkind) evolved and merged into Santa Claus and the tradition of giving gifts at Christmas.

Day 10: January 4

Where are numbers 0-9 meeting 10?

South America, Machu Picchu in the Andes

How is 10 constructed?

1 and 0 are put together to create 10 and all higher 2-digit (and more) numbers

Why does 10 play the Charango?

It has 10 strings.

What was the back of the charango (the “sounding board”) originally made from?

An armadillo shell

What is an armadillo?

Armadillos are animals with a hard armor-like shell. All but one of the 20 kinds of armadillos live in Latin America.

What is in the background?

Machu Picchu in the Andes Mountains. It was a city of the Incas and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Where are numbers 0-10 going to meet 11?

The Middle East

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What are the Andean countries?

Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador; the Andes mountain range runs along the entire west coast of South America—about 4500 miles.

What ancient culture lived in Andes?

Incas

What mathematical system did they create?

Quipu—knots placed into “woven” clothing or

“jewelry”

What kind of windows did the Incas put into their walls in Machu Picchu?

Trapezoids. Why would you use trapezoids? Rectangles will not hold up well when the earth moves during earthquakes. A trapezoid is a rectangle with triangles added to each end.

Day 11: January 5

**Where are numbers 0-10 going to meet 11?
Middle East**

**Why does 11 play the Oud—an ancient Persian instrument.
It has 11 strings**

**What is Persia called today?
Iran**

**Why is the Middle East so important for Christmas?
Jesus was born in the Middle East—in Bethlehem which is in
current Israel.**

**What is in the background?
Petra, a UNESCO site situated in what is now Jordan, across
the River Jordan from Israel.**

**Where are numbers 0-11 going to meet 12?
Sweden**

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**What does ABBA have to do with Sweden?
ABBA is a Swedish pop musical group from the 1970s**

Day 12: January 6
Scene 1

Where are numbers 0-11 meeting 12?
Sweden

Why does 12 play the Nyckelharpa?
It has 12 strings with tangents (kind of like keys) that serve as frets to make a particular note.

What is in the background?
Lapland—land above the Arctic Circle

What do we call a modern smorgasboard?
Buffet, which may have hot and cold dishes.

DIGGING DEEPER

What is St. Lucia Day?

Also known as St. Lucy's day in English, it falls on Dec. 13. St. Lucia was known for taking food to early Christians in Rome who were hiding in the catacombs (underground passageways or rooms for burial). She wore candles in a crown on her head to light the way so she could have both hands free to carry food. "Lucia" appropriately means "light." On December 13, young girls dressed in white wear lit candles in crowns on their heads to form a procession in celebration of the day.

January 6
Scene 2

When we see Shakespeare, where are we?
Globe Theatre, London, 1616 on January 6.

How many levels of the theatre are the numbers playing on?
2

Where does the phrase, "If music be the food of love, play on!" come from?

It is the opening line from Shakespeare's play Twelfth Night.

Can you think of a way to celebrate Shakespeare and Twelfth Night?
Read the play, act out St. Lucia, etc.

What are the lyrics to The 12 Days of Christmas?
On the twelfth day of Christmas
My true love sent to me:
12 Drummers Drumming
11 Pipers Piping

*10 Lords a Leaping
9 Ladies Dancing
8 Maids a Milking
7 Swans a Swimming
6 Geese a Laying
5 Golden Rings
4 Calling Birds
3 French Hens
2 Turtle Doves
and a
Partridge in a Pear Tree*