

A young child with bright red hair is smiling broadly, surrounded by a large number of colorful balls in shades of red, blue, yellow, and pink. The child is wearing a white shirt with a black and red cartoon pattern. The background is a soft-focus mix of these colors.

# **Hit Toys for the 2017 Holiday Season**

**Toy Reviews**

**Tips and Articles**

**Activities for the Kids**

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**TIPS: HOW TO GET ALL OF YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING DONE WITH NO STRESS!**

Everyone looks forward to the holidays, but no one likes the stress that they often deliver. Follow these simple tips and you may just enjoy the holidays with your friends and family as they were intended - experiencing the joy of spending this important time with your loved ones, rather than stressing and worrying about the entire process.

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**LIMIT THE CREDIT PURCHASES**

The average family in the United States spends around \$700 on holiday related expenses annually. If you put that on a charge card with 18% APR interest and pay the minimum each month, it will take you 3 stress-filled years and an additional \$200 in interest to pay off the debt. And that is downright stressful. (Use the next tip to ensure you have enough cash to get all of your holiday shopping done with no credit card stress.)

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**BUDGET TO SAVE FOR HOLIDAY SHOPPING ALL YEAR LONG**

Paying for all of your holiday shopping purchases with cash is a great feeling. Not only does it eliminate the leading cause of holiday stress, you just feel great doing it. Saving just \$20 every week by skipping a few expensive coffees, unhealthy trips to the fast food store or some other indulgence guarantees \$1,000 of stress-free holiday shopping cash at the end of the year. It may be too late to apply it this year, but when you feel stressed now, vow to put this savings plan in place for next year and it'll hopefully bring you some calm!



AND HAPPY

★ NEW YEAR! ★

**[Visit my Christmas Blog](#)**

## SPEND MORE TIME ON ACTIVITIES AND LESS TIME ON "THINGS"

The holidays should be about spending time with your family and friends. Activities enjoying the company of your loved ones are more important than waiting in long lines to get that limited-edition Black Friday toy, aren't they? Socializing actually increases the levels of a hormone in humans called Oxytocin. This eliminates stress, and gives you a calming, peaceful feeling. Spend more time socializing and interacting with your friends and family this holiday season, and less time scrambling around buying gifts.

## SHOP SMART ... PLAN BEFORE YOU GO

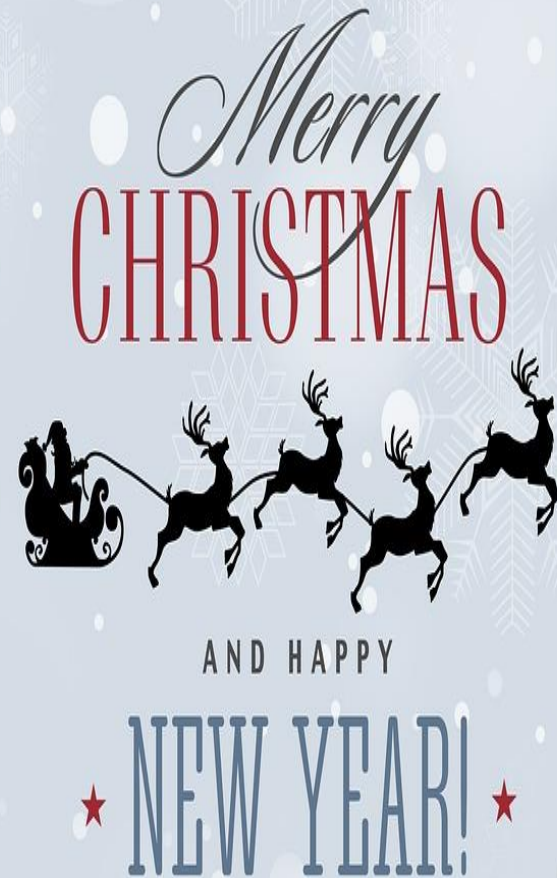
If you plan your shopping activities well before the holidays arrive, you are guaranteed to benefit from less stress. At any time during the year you can make a list of exactly who you need to shop for. Keep this list on you year-round. Refer to it frequently, and pick up those perfect gifts whenever you see them.

And if you absolutely must be a part of the holiday shopping madness, plan before you go. A stress-free way of doing this is to divide your gift purchasing duties among several family members, coordinating with sales and specials in your area.

## HANDLE YOUR PURCHASES ONLINE EXCLUSIVELY

Your smartphone, tablet or PC gives you access to all of the toys, decorations, gifts and products in the world. So why not relax at home and make all of your holiday shopping choices while sipping your favorite beverage? Aside from relieving stress, online shopping puts you within worldwide reach of bargains and specials you cannot access locally.

It also saves you time and money spent on physical shopping and buying fuel for your vehicle. Go online exclusively this year for all of your holiday shopping, and a stress-free, enjoyable holiday.





**REVIEW: AIR DRAWING WITH 3DOODLER START PEN SET**

The [3Doodler Start](#) is a child-safe pen that you can use to create fun plastic sculptures. Little kids and adults will find it a perfect introduction to 3D art and accessory-making. The pen has a nozzle where melted thin plastic ink come out, but that doesn't get too hot, which makes it a safe 3D art printing toy for kids.

The kit consists of a plump pen with packets of plastic filament, as well as silicone molds to start your 3D art projects. To use it, just feed the colored plastic tube of your choice from a port at the back of the pen to melt into ink. Initially, you can use the mold to create designs that you can stick together to create sided structures. It goes with a booklet to help you in making basic figures.

It's easy to use. Read the instructions, and start working on your designs immediately. Make anything from simple keychains to intricate dioramas.

This toy encourages a lot of creativity because your kid can veer away from using the molds and create their 3D designs, once they get used to it. Also, with its BPA-free plastics and no-heat nozzle, it is safe for use by everyone. That said, always

follow the age indication of the toy. While it is safe for young kids aged eight years and above, you may have to wait a little if you want to purchase one for your toddler.

The [3Doodler Start](#) comes with a micro USB charger, so you don't need to buy batteries every single time and no cords to complicate the process. However, make

sure to have your charger ready at all times because this toy can be quite addicting and the possibilities for creation are endless.

The 3Doodler Start is a real improvement from the other pens before it because the plastic tubes melt quickly, but harden slowly. This feature is a good advantage because you can easily correct mistakes in your design

without wasting precious eco-plastic ink.

Two notable things to remember when buying the [3Doodler Start](#) for your kids or yourself, do purchase a lot of plastic filaments so you won't run out in the middle of an art attack. Buy enough colored tubes to help you practice. Also, another tip is to prepare all of your plastic filaments and silicon molds before working, so you won't lose precious ink in the process.



[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**REVIEW: CREATIVE GALAXY ARTY'S TOOL BELT**

Creative Galaxy is a popular art show that many kids love to watch and if you are looking for fun artsy activities for your children to do, then the [Creative Galaxy Arty's Tool Belt](#) comes highly-recommended. This kit comes with a tool belt where you can put all of your crayons and brushes while doing your activities.

It also includes a doodle pad, coloring booklet, stickers, the brushes that you will need, and pads that let you paint with water. You can keep all of them in a nice, adjustable, yellow tool belt.

"Interactive" art will surely blow your kid's mind away. Kids totally love the paint with water pads wherein you can paint colored pictures of arty and the galaxy characters with water to reveal their true colors. There are two pads, which helps if to prevent the kids from fighting over the coloring books.

The pictures are actually dots of two different colors that combine to create a new color when painted with water. The takeaway is that painting with water is less messy than the



usual means of painting. Great for the kids as well as for the parents!

Kids can also create greeting cards to express themselves using the doodle pads and the construction paper as well. Your children can pretty much do whatever they want with the art supplies.

The [Creative Galaxy Arty's Tool Belt](#) is also toddler-friendly. Improve your kid's creativity and fine motor skills. You can paint with your hands, tear, cut (always with supervision), draw, etc. On the flip side, bigger kids can create short picture stories using stickers of various characters.

Creating art is an excellent quiet activity. It helps to improve your children's focus, and the [Creative Galaxy Arty's Tool Belt](#) offers great value for the amount of art that your kids can do with it. Also, the best advantage for parents is that you won't have to buy each of the kids, you can simply make them work on different books, and they'll be quite occupied before you know it.

This is an excellent way of getting your kids interested in art. They can watch the series and do an activity with Arty on each episode. If you plan on getting a toy that requires minimal supervision, then I highly recommend Creative Galaxy Arty's Tool Belt. It will inspire your kids, keep them busy, and prevent them from doing messy activities. Here is where you can get one if you want one for your kids:

[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Buy on Amazon.com)



## REVIEW: ETCH A SKETCH FREESTYLE TOY

This toy bears the name a classic toy, but the resemblance ends there. If you grew up playing with Etch A Sketch, you might have labored for hours turning the knobs to make a drawing, shaking the toy a couple of times when you are not happy with the progress.

This version has transformed and updated the iconic toy for the modern world with a bit of improvement. It's easier to draw with the [Etch A Sketch Freestyle Toy](#). Drawing on the classic Etch A Sketch takes a focused skill. Successfully completing a drawing will take a couple of shakes and starting over again from the beginning when you are not happy with your progress. You either made the lines too short or too long, made a knob-related mistake, or had difficulty using the two knobs together to create what you wanted, which is very frustrating.

This twist allows you to draw with little effort and skill. You use a pen or stylus to draw on it instead of two knobs. The colored lines come out with little effort and they are crisp. It also includes two stamps that allow you to make clouds, circle, crown, and stars on the screen.

The screen is black, and the background colors are fixed. Once you draw on it, the pen and the stamp reveals the pattern. Your drawings come out in the cute colors of the rainbow. Erasing your drawing on the



screen is effortless as well, similar to shaking the classic toy. When you are tired of the image, just turn the toy upside down and give the toy a vigorous up and down shake.

The pen is attached to the toy, but the stamps are not. They snap

back in, and they won't really fall out easily unless you drop the toy. Although they fit securely into the open spots in the toy, you need to take precautions to avoid from losing them. They are also double-sided, so it may take a bit of getting used to. The image on the top is not the image that will show up on the screen.

This is perfect for kids who love to write and draw on things non-stop. A limitless sketching pad will keep them entertained for hours.

The toy itself not very thick and is relatively lightweight. It's a good on-the-go toy that you can bring for car trips, doctor's appointment, or salon appointment. This toy requires a battery, so make sure you have a supply of AG13 replacements. The batteries are screwed to the body of the toy. This prevents accidents since small batteries are choking hazards.

[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Buy on Amazon.com)

**TIPS: CHRISTMAS SHOPPING ONLINE**

When most of us think of Christmas shopping we picture crowded malls and shopping areas, difficulty parking and sales racks in complete disarray. For some people this hectic chaos is what Christmas shopping is all about and they would never consider avoiding the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season for anything. For these individuals this is a very important part of the Christmas season. However, for shoppers who find this scene to be too frustrating and stressful there is an excellent alternative. Christmas shopping online is a relatively new concept but each year more and more people are turning to online shopping to complete all, or even just part of, their Christmas shopping. This article will offer useful tips for completing your Christmas shopping online.

**One of the most useful tips** for [Christmas shopping online](#) is to do your Christmas shopping early but not too early. It is important to complete your online Christmas early enough to have the item shipped to the recipient in time to arrive before Christmas without incurring charges for rushed shipping. This is important because you want your friend or family member to receive the gift on time but you don't want to pay a great deal of extra money for shipping. Standard shipping rates are typically quite reasonable but express shipping rates can be rather expensive. While it is important to complete your online Christmas shopping early enough to get the gift to your friend or family member before Christmas, you do not want the gift to arrive early. While there is technically nothing wrong with this, it may result in the gift being





opened early or the recipient putting the gift in safe spot until Christmas and then forgetting it was ever received.

**One problem which can occur** when you do your Christmas shopping online is that the item you purchase may look better online than it does in reality. To avoid this problem it is best to only purchase items online if you are absolutely sure what the item actually looks like. For example you may have seen a particular model of a coffee maker in stores. When purchasing the item online you should compare the model number to ensure you are purchasing the item you really want. If you do this you, and the recipient of the gift, will likely be pleased with the purchase. If you have never seen the item in person it is important to view the item carefully. You should study all of the given information including the measurements to ensure the item you are

envisioning as you view the online advertisement is the item you friend or family member will receive in the mail.

**Finally when Christmas shopping online**, it is important to only make purchases from reputable retailers. You may be tempted to purchase items which appear to be an incredible bargain but if the retailer has a bad reputation or you cannot verify the reputation of the retailer it might be a better idea to purchase the item from another retailer who has a more well established reputation of providing excellent products and services to their clients. You may wind up paying slightly more in this case but you will gain the security of knowing you are dealing with a reputable retailer and you will not have to worry about the quality of the item you select or the shipping practices of the retailer.





**REVIEW: FURREAL ROARIN' TYLER, THE PLAYFUL TIGER**

Tiger-fans look out! Here comes Tyler! He's an interactive tiger that children will enjoy having as a pet. He is very lifelike, like a real cat, he moves his tail, mouth, head, ears, and eyes. He poses playfully and leans down. You will often forget that he is mechanical.

He roars! But that is not even the best part about Tyler. He doesn't just roar; this pet roars back when you roar at him. He reacts when you pet him, and he will respond to the sound of your voice, like a real cat who wants to play. He has a duck toy, and he will make a sound if you put it in his mouth.

He is life-like. He is as large as a house cat, and he moves. His beautiful, fluttering blue eyes and his



cooing will certainly convince imaginative children that he is real. It will be hard to get over the fact that he is a toy and not a live animal. Young kids may be a bit intimidated with him at first, especially very young children, but they will quickly get over their fears and be intrigued with his cuteness.

He is friendly. In children's mind, Tyler is a breathing and leaving toy that responds to their play, pets, and laughter. The sound of the levers and gears can be heard, but they are hardly noticeable to children with very active imaginations. They will soon forget that he is an animatronic animal. His movements look so authentic and smooth; you will stop thinking of him as

a toy. The inside of his mouth is also very detailed, and his nose has very fine details.



He is very sweet, and his personality, movements, and sounds are very child-friendly. He is always just loving and playful. He never becomes aggressive or intimidating to scare kids. It's like watching a child play with a real cat, without the danger of getting scratched or bitten.

He responds. All of Tyler's movements move in unison, giving the illusion that he is really responding to his playmate. All the little movements of this body, ears, tail, front legs, jaw, eyeballs, and eyelids will ignite

children's imagination. He responds to sound and petting in many areas of his body, including his head and nose. But if you really want him to move, then all you need to do is push the button under the fur on his back.

You can take him anywhere. [Tyler](#) is heavy enough that it feels like you are carrying a real animal when you pick him up. He is also very soft. This tiger's fur is high-quality and great to the touch. He has no sharp objects and children do not need to avoid certain areas of his body. His very sturdy and he will last for a long time.

He does not make too much noise when no one is playing with him. But he does pick up sounds and will respond to any noise, so it might not be wise to let the children sleep with him. He also has the tendency to roar and purr, wanting to play when he senses someone is nearby. You can turn him off if needed. Just find the switch under the fur on his belly to prevent him from waking up anyone in the middle of the night.

When no one is around to play with [Tyler](#), he will go into sleep mode. And once he sleeps, the only way to wake him up is the button on his back. He cost a bit more than other toys of his kind, but he is indeed more interactive.

[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**REVIEW: GREEN TOYS FERRY BOAT WITH MINI CARS BATHTUB TOY**

Looking for a carrier boat with extra vehicles inside and floats in water? The [Green Toys Ferry Boat](#) is an excellent choice if you're looking for a fun and durable bath toy to last your child for years. They detach and dry easily, too, so no need to worry about molds and dirt from growing inside your kid's toys. The set comes with a big ferry boat and two small cars that fit inside the carrier boat and is available in blue and white or green and white color.

This toy set is also BPA-free, and only high-quality recycled plastic materials were used to create it. This feature is important to note because we want to make sure we don't contribute to pollution and that we teach children the value of taking care of the environment.

The [Green Toys Ferry Boat](#) is dishwasher safe, so it is easy to clean. Just right for your child's imaginative play. The plastic is smooth, and no visible bumps or detachable parts and metals can cause your kid to choke or the toy to rust. It is also steady in water because of the pontoon-like bottom, so it won't flip over easily while driving it in the tub. If the boat gets waterlogged, then you can simply flip it over to drain the water, and it'll float excellently again.

It doesn't require batteries, which is a great thing because it doesn't cost a thing to use and it drives the kids to work their imaginations. They can use it indoors or outdoors to bring any cargo with it like small rocks, twigs, or even sand, and it will still float. Also, young kids will be able to carry this toy around without much trouble because, despite its size, it's surprisingly lightweight.

Other Green Toys models and vehicles will be perfect matches for this ferry boat. Kids will love unloading the cars by the side of the tub every time. The vehicles also transition as toys outside the bath, so sometimes, while the boat is left waiting for the next shower, the cars go everywhere the boat won't go.

There are no special instructions for buying the [Green Toys Ferry Boat with Mini Cars Bathtub Toy](#). However, if you want your kids to enjoy bath time, you may also want to consider the other variants like the submarine, seaplane, tugboat, and the other vehicles. Here's a useful link to check out if you're ready to buy the ferry boat:



[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Buy on Amazon.com)



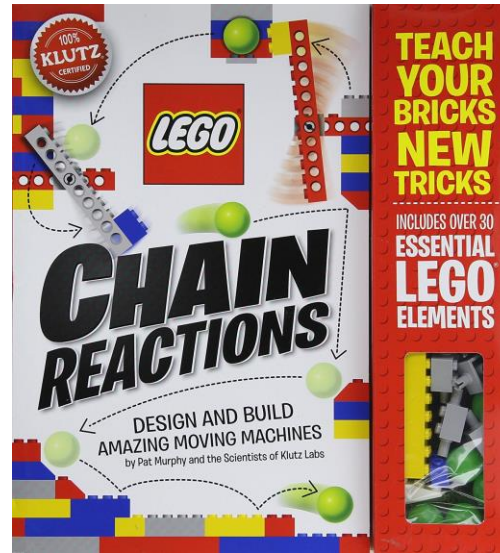
**REVIEW: KLUTZ LEGO CHAIN REACTIONS CRAFT KIT**

If you love playing with Lego and building machines, engineering, projects, and more, this toy set will surely inspire you. You can build 10 wonderful machines with this set, with difficulty levels ranging from easy, medium, to advanced.

The machines do various tasks, such as drop, lift, roll, pivot, swing, and spin. Each of them is awesome on their own, but when you assemble them together, you can create a chain reaction that will educate and fascinate you and your kids. You can experiment and rearrange the machines depending on the task that you want them to perform. All you need is a bit of imagination and patience.

This cleverly thought of educational kit includes a well-illustrated and detailed booklet on how to assemble each machine, guiding you on how to fold the paper components and more.

This Lego set will teach you a lot of persistence and perseverance. With your usual Lego set, all you will have to do is put the pieces together and create a static object to play with. [This Klutz LEGO Chain Reactions Craft Kit](#) is not a static creation. The machines are very challenging to build and will certainly stretch the muscles of your brain. After you've successfully assembled them, they will further challenge your wit.



Making them function will motivate you to succeed, enhance your hand and eye coordination, teach you basic engineering ideas, like pulleys, levers, etc., as well as teach you elementary physics of momentum, angle, weight, motion, etc.

But once you've successfully assembled the first project and get it to run successfully, after several trial and error along the way, nothing will beat the feeling of accomplishment. You will be excited, and you will certainly look forward to completing all the machines.

This toy is radically different from the usual Lego sets and themes that you usually just have to assemble with a minimum number of pieces. The pieces

in this [Klutz LEGO Chain Reactions Craft Kit](#) are specialty pieces. You can complete the first project with the parts that are included in the set.

For projects number 2 through 9, you will need other Lego pieces not included in the set. You will need many regular Lego blocks to complete all the projects, 167 pieces to be exact. It won't be hard to find those bricks. You probably have storage containers filled with the pieces that you need at home. So, before you start on a machine, check the Lego pieces that you already have at home. If you do not have the pieces on hand, you can easily go out and buy the bricks that you need.

[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

## ARTICLE: HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS



Commercial activities during Christmas today are often decried as making the season too materialistic. This has caused comments that the religious aspect of Christmas is so overlooked and overshadowed that its celebration seems to be purely pagan. But today's comparisons aren't the first there has been some link between Christmas and

pagan celebrations. As a religious, church leaders instituted Christmas during winter because that time of year was a popular for the celebrations of many pagan festivals. The hope was that Christmas would also become a holiday that would gain much popularity.

Long before the birth of Jesus Christ, people in various parts of Europe would celebrate light and birth in the darkest days of winter. The winter solstice, when the harshest part of winter was over, was a time of celebration for many peoples because they would look forward to more hours of sunlight during the longer days ahead.

The Norse in Scandinavia celebrated Yule from the winter solstice on December 21 through to January. Men brought home logs that were lighted and a feast

would take place until the log was completely burned. Each spark from the fire was believed to represent a new pig or calf to be born in the coming new year.



The pagan god Odin was honored by Germans during the mid-winter holiday. Odin inspired great fear in the Germans who believed that Odin traveled at nights through the sky to observe people and make a decision about who would perish or prosper in life. This belief caused most people to stay inside during the period.

In Rome it was the god of agriculture, Saturn, who was honored in a holiday called Saturnalia. It was a holiday that started during the week that led up to the winter solstice and continued for a month with hedonistic celebrations. There was plenty of food and drink and the normal social class rules of who had privilege and power in Roman society were totally disregarded as everyone participated in the festivities. Some Romans

also had a feast called Juvenalia to honor children and the birthday of the sun god Mithra was sometimes celebrated by the upper classes.



In the early years of the start of Christianity the main holiday was Easter. It was in the 4th Century that church officials made a decision to have the birth of

Jesus celebrated as a holiday and Pope Julius I chose December 25 as the day of Jesus' birth. The holiday, which was first called the Feast of the Nativity, spread to England by the end of the 6th Century and to Scandinavia by the end of the 8th Century.

Church leaders achieved the goal of having Christmas celebrations, including attendance at church, become popular during the winter solstice, but they were unable to control other pagan-like celebrations during Christmas. Believers would attend church on Christmas and then participate later in raucous and drunken celebrations. But by the Middle Ages, from around the 5th to the 16th Century, Christianity had outgrown paganism as a religion.

The celebration of Christmas in Europe changed in the early 17th Century when Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans gained power in England in 1645. To remove

decadent behavior from the society, Cromwell cancelled Christmas as the Puritans noted that the Bible doesn't mention any date for Jesus' birth. The lack of this information and specific Biblical references to Christmas is also cited by religious groups like Jehovah Witnesses as the reason they don't observe or participate in Christmas. Christmas celebrations returned in England around 1649 when Charles II was restored to the throne.

Christmas wasn't a holiday in early America because the Pilgrims who came to America had even stricter beliefs than Cromwell and the Puritans. Christmas celebrations were even forbidden in Boston from 1659 to 1681. During the same time however, settlers in Jamestown in Virginia were reported to have enjoyed Christmas.

After the American Revolution Christmas again lost popularity and it wasn't until June 26, 1870 that Christmas was declared a federal holiday. Christmas in the United States gained popularity as a holiday period during the 19th Century.

Christmas celebrations also changed at that time to be more family-centered rather than being carnival-like.



[Visit my Christmas Blog](#)



**REVIEW: LASER PEGS T-REX 20-IN-1 LIGHTING UP YOUR KID'S IMAGINATION**

Laser Pegs T-Rex is very much like how you would assemble Legos. However, they are a little different because LED lights illuminate them in the dark, which adds to their appeal. Also, each set can make 20 different animals. They are also compatible with other Laser Pegs sets and building block brands, so you can build unlimited designs using a combination of the pieces.

Each box comes with an instruction manual with number groupings that you can refer to when you start building. Also included are the pieces of the figure, light up power bricks, sound blocks, and pegs with 15 LED light. This toy runs on batteries, so you might want to buy extra ones when you decide to get the toy, but don't worry because the kit got you covered the first time.

This toy works just like other building, and construction toys do. When connecting them, make sure to avoid forcing parts together to avoid damage and bad design. If a piece doesn't go all the way in, look for a different one to attach or set that cluster aside and build a different one, until you finish more groups to put together.

You may have to search for the instructions on how to create the other animals. You'll also find many people who are sharing their designs and patterns over the internet since the pieces are highly-customizable. Moreover, after doing the T-Rex, your kid will more or less have an idea how to build the others based on intuition.

One practical tip to remember is to provide for a container for loose parts since there will surely be plenty left so that you can cover all of the dinosaurs. Doing this will also help you prevent losing them and eventually ending up with an incomplete animal.

Some designs may take more time to assemble, but this is the beauty of the Laser Pegs. We can teach the kids to be patient and to look for ways to solve problems no matter how small they are. All in all, Laser Pegs T-Rex 20-in-1 is an excellent toy if you want your kids to learn the value of perseverance and creativity. Help your kids avoid electronic devices and expose them early on to toys that make them work their minds. Here's a link if you are interested in buying the Laser Pegs animals:



[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Buy on Amazon.com)

[Buy on Amazon.com](#)





**REVIEW: LEGO BOOST CREATIVE TOOLBOX 17101 BUILDING AND CODING KIT (847 PIECES)**

For children who are crazy about Legos and robotics, this [LEGO Boost Creative Toolbox](#) is a ton of fun that will definitely teach them about programming, mechanics, and technology, as well as ignite their creativity, and enhance their problem-solving skills. More importantly, this toy will teach kids to be a builder and not just a user of technology.

With this set, you can create 5 different robots. All you need to do is finish building the test robot with the test program and your good to proceed. It's easy enough that a 6-year-old robotics-enthusiast can assemble it in about 45 minutes.

Once you're done with the test robot, you can choose to build either Vernie (the standing robot), a factory, a guitar, a horizontal rover or a cat. Each robot is a part



experiment and part toy. They are connected to an Application with codes that will make the robots interactive and live.

You will need an Android tablet or an iPad to run the app. The application will guide you through the building of each robot, as well as their programming, with each step unlocking with every success. It's well presented, and it forces you to gradually learn and build by



unlocking each robot capabilities only after you have learned them. You also have the option to customize your robot's movement afterward.

The programming language is also easy, just drag and drop. A cheat sheet will make it easier to program the bots, so search the internet for available copies in case you encounter programming blocks that aren't obvious. Also, you will need to download a printed PDF manual at



<http://robotics.benedettelli.com/lego-boost-17101-building-instructions/> to help you get over some snags along the way since the set does not include one.

Each robot has a vast set of capabilities. The cat can only stand and sit, so don't expect it to run. On the other hand, Vernie, the standing robot, can talk, turn, respond to handshake, even fart. You can plan Vernie's course using the app and let it lose around the house.

If the app crashes, powering your iPad or tablet will resolve the problem. Also, make sure to have your

gadgets fully charged before starting on a robot project. You don't want the gadget to run out of juice halfway through the building.

Since [you can build 5 different robots from the set](#), get ready to open all 11 bags at once. Each robot will need pieces from all the bags. It's best to put the pieces in sturdy containers, and you need to be careful not to mix the pieces up with your existing Lego pieces. Also, make sure not to misplace a piece. If ever, you can probably find a replacement among your

previously owned Lego.

You will need 6 AAA batteries for the move hub. The robots will drain regular batteries rather quickly, so buying rechargeable ones is cost-effective. Moreover, the first thing the app does after you start it up is to establish a connection with the move hub. You won't be able to get any further until it does, so ready your batteries before you start building.

[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

## ARTICLE: CARE AND DISPOSAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES



Since so much time and effort is put into selecting the perfect Christmas tree, it follows that similar consideration should also be given to giving the tree the best possible care. Otherwise, there will be disappointment if needles start to brown or turn yellow, or branches begin to break with days or weeks to go before the season is over. Safety is also an important reason to take proper care of your Christmas tree because a drying Christmas tree also presents a grave danger as a fire hazard. The average Christmas tree should last for about five to six weeks if the proper care is given to it.

After selecting a Christmas tree and getting it home, the first thing that should be done is to make a fresh cut and place it into a stand with water. A Christmas tree shouldn't be mounted dry and the water in its stand should be replenished regularly. A fresh cut is made by cutting about an inch off the bottom in a slight diagonal shape to help the absorption of water. If a fresh cut isn't going to be made immediately after getting the tree home, it should be placed in a container with water and left to stand in a shaded area that is away from the wind.



If a fresh cut isn't made and the Christmas tree is left exposed to air, the vessels for transporting water can become blocked. If this happens, another fresh cut can correct the problem and the tree would need to be immediately put in a container with water.

Your Christmas tree should be secure in its stand and it should be placed away from open flames or sources of heat such as furnaces, fireplaces and air vents, all of which may dry it out. Decoration of the tree should also begin after it has been mounted in its stand. Several

[Visit my Christmas Blog](#)



decoration precautions should be taken to lessen or avoid the Christmas tree being a fire hazard.



Ornaments that have an open flame or candles should never be used for decoration. Christmas tree lights should be checked to make sure the bulbs are working properly, the connections are intact and that no part of the cord is damaged. If there appears to be any exposed wiring or bulbs that are not working or which are working intermittently, that string of Christmas tree lights shouldn't be used.

A good Christmas tree stand should be selected since water is the most important item to getting the longest life out of your Christmas tree. In selecting a stand, find out the amount of water it can hold when a tree is placed in it. Some water will be displaced from the

space taken up by the base of the tree so it is important that a selection is not made based on the total volume of water the stand can hold.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association, the average Christmas tree may absorb up to one gallon of water each day. It is therefore important to check the water everyday and replenish it accordingly. To make sure your Christmas tree gets enough water, the Association recommends that one quart of water is required for each inch of the diameter of the tree's trunk.

After Christmas is over and your wonderfully decorated Christmas tree has provided much joy, it is important to remove it before it dries out. Options to discard your Christmas will likely depend on the services offered by your municipality. Some municipalities will pick up Christmas trees on particular days, with a cut-off date. Some towns may require that residents take their trees to specific locations, while in others Christmas trees will be picked up with the garbage, again up to a certain date. But Christmas trees should never be burned in the fireplace as it can cause the build up of creosote, a colorless, oily substance.

There's also the choice that you can continue to get a different use from your Christmas tree by cutting it to pieces yourself and be environmentally sensitive by using it for mulch.

**REVIEW: LEGO NINJAGO MOVIE DESTINY'S BOUNTY 70618 BUILDING KIT (2292 PIECE)**

Both kids and adults love assembling Lego pieces. Playing with interlocking toy bricks as a kid, and even as an adult, has become a culture of its own since it was first manufactured in 1949. Thousands of sets are available. Various themes, including the Wild West, undersea exploration, dinosaurs, castle, Vikings, trains, pirates, robots, space. There's a theme for every child and adult's imagination, interest, and preferred level of difficulty. Sets inspired from famous movies, cartoons, and video games are also available. The possibilities are endless, and a common set is only limited to one's imagination. These three-dimensional puzzles are not only fun, they are also very educational.

So if your kids are a Lego fan who also loves Ninjas and boats, they will really enjoy assembling this ninja-training base Lego set. Aside from being a source of fun for hours, this particular set

inspired from [Destiny's Bounty, a LEGO Ninjago Movie](#), will hone your children's fine motor skills.

As they learn how to assemble the set, they will twist and turn the pieces to find where they fit and belong. This physical activity helps develop the dexterity of their arms and promote coordination, which they need for crafts, handwriting, and dressing themselves independently.

As they manipulate the pieces, they will learn how to apply different pressures to assemble the set, using various hands-on trial and error methods. This will instinctively teach them

how to apply the right amount of pressure to a pencil for writing.

Playing is children's work. As they work their way to assemble this set, they will learn new skills and perfect





the ones they already know. This will develop their creativity and ignite their imagination.

You will see the excitement on their faces as they put together the different Lego pieces and as the ship slowly comes to life with each piece that they add. Their minds are sure to be filled with pirates, ninjas, sailing, saving the universe, fighting evil guys, slaying dragons, and more while they build the ship with anticipation.



Following the instructions on how to build this ninja ship will enhance their problem-solving skills. As they pick up the pieces of the puzzle, they are bringing order out of chaos. Children also learn persistence. They will learn how to deal with frustration as they find the right pieces that fit together. They will learn to accept the feeling of defeat, along with overcoming a mistake until they can successfully assemble it. Once the ship is assembled, they will be filled with a great



sense of accomplishment. They will beam proudly as they show you their work.

The Destiny's Bounty set will also expose them to other culture. The many intricate and ornate details alone will give children a sense of wonder and excitement. It looks complicated, but a 6-year-old can build this in 4 hours. It won't actually float in water, but it's very sturdy. It's the best ship set out there sold in its price range. You will get your money's worth. You and your family will have a great time with it. Plus, this set is a great display when you've completed the puzzle.

[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**REVIEW: LIONEL MEGA TRACKS – CORKSCREW ASSEMBLY AND FUN**

The [Lionel Mega Tracks](#) are customizable railways that allow cars to race and perform stunts like the corkscrew curve, loops, and the hairpin turns. This set comes with a 20-ft track that you can assemble as you wish, and a car that is a cross between a train and a race car. Clamp the vehicle and watch it perform gravity-defying stunts. It comes with an instructional manual, and although it takes time to put together, it is satisfying to run the car on the track.

To set up the track, look for a flat, broad base like the floor to accommodate the entire thing. Then, group the different beam sizes and find a way to clamp down the areas or structures that touch the base to prevent the track from moving flimsily while the car is running. Also, assign a container for each type of small parts like couplings, joints, and the different kinds of track supports. Ideally, you should set it up for your kids to enjoy.

A useful reminder when buying the [Lionel Mega Tracks](#) is that the controller requires a 9V battery. Buy an extra just in case. Charge the vehicle while you're setting up the tracks. You will find the switch on the left side of the car, plug the jack and make sure the LED light is on to indicate that it's charging.



You can record your runs by setting up the phone holder so that you can take videos of your car running around the track. You can modify the route to your liking if you feel like one part dips too much that the car hits the table or the floor every time. Not all joints will have support to take advantage of the car's momentum. However, too much speed can cause your vehicle to derail sometimes, which is why it is essential to know the right speed for the vehicle to travel without falling.

Consider buying extra feet of track to enjoy the set better and to create even more gravity-defying sections of your set. They are easy to assemble once you get the hang of it and you can also swap the vehicle chassis if you are into that little details. Your child can even design a track for unique stunts each time. Overall, this mega track builder is an excellent toy that improves creativity and imagination.

If you want to purchase the [Lionel Mega Tracks Corkscrew Engine](#), here is a useful link to check out:

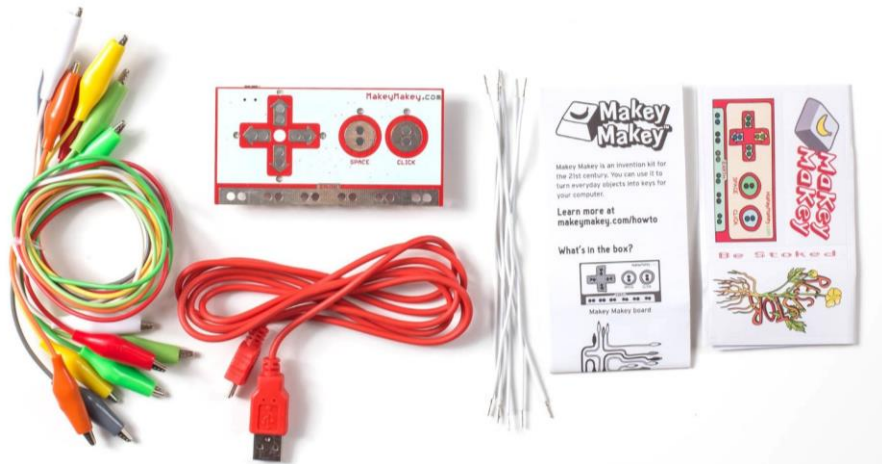
[Buy on Amazon.com](#)



**REVIEW: MAKEY MAKEY A STEM TOY FOR ALL**

Makey Makey is an excellent toy that lets you convert ordinary items into keys and switches to signal to a computer. You can turn humans into drums using the toy as a circuit board. Anything that can conduct a little electricity such as those that contain small amounts of water and metal can help send signals to the computer for a particular reaction.

The little box comes with a rectangular circuit board that has ports corresponding to various functions and controls, ground, wires, and alligator clips to complete the setup.



To use it, connect the circuit board to a computer. It will automatically work. Attach alligator clips to the ports with a particular command that you want. Electricity runs through the wires freely, and the circuit will close if the alligator clips touch, then it creates a switch.



Makey Makey is an excellent toy to teach young children about the basic concepts of coding and circuitry. It is easy to use and is a Sci-Tech-Eng-Math (STEM) toy, a definite plus for parents who are looking for exciting and educational toys apart from the usual consoles and mobile games.

This inventive toy can turn anything into a controller. Fruits, people, graphite, play dough, Jell-o—just connect those alligator clips to ordinary objects instead

of touching them together, and your kids can enjoy the amazing things that circuits can do.

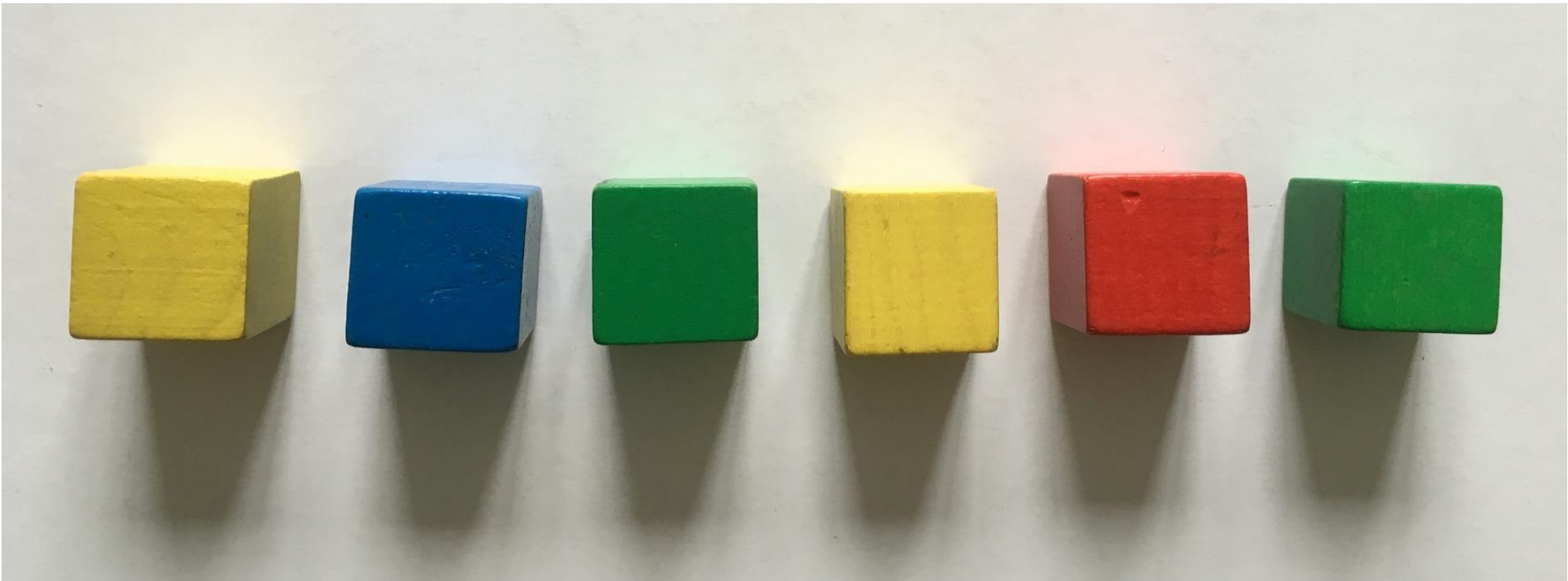
Write simple programs using a basic app and use the Makey Makey on apps that use arrow cursors. Your child can even create music extra creatively, and by that, I mean connecting one end of the circuit board to a fur sweater touching your skin and connecting it to synthesizer software. Kids can also create their very own controller to find different ways to play their favorite video games.

If you want to develop your child's curiosity, the [Makey Makey Invention Kit](#) is a perfect way to make their

imaginations work. There are thousands of possibilities for inventing things that respond to your controls.

If you're considering buying this, make sure to be prepared to search for cool projects that use the Makey Makey in more ingenious ways than is described in the instructions. Also, note that it is an excellent toy to tinker with for school-aged boys and girls. Toddlers and preschoolers will not be able to appreciate this yet, so those are just some considerations. Here is a link if you want to get one for your kid:

[Buy on Amazon.com](#)





**SONG: JINGLE BELLS**

1. Dashing through the snow  
In a one-horse open sleigh  
O're the fields we go  
Laughing all the way.  
Bells on bob-tail ring  
Making spirits bright  
What joy it is to ride and sing  
A sleighing song tonight.

**Chorus:**

**Jingle bells, jingle bells  
Jingle all the way,  
Oh what fun it is to ride  
In a one-horse open sleigh, O  
Jingle bells, jingle bells  
Jingle all the way,  
Oh what fun it is to ride  
In a one-horse open sleigh.**



2. A day or two ago  
I thought I'd take a ride  
And soon Miss Fanny Bright  
Was seated by my side;  
The horse was lean and lank  
Misfortune seemed his lot,  
We ran into a drifted bank  
And there we got upsot.

**Chorus...**

3. A day or two ago  
The story I must tell  
I went out on the snow  
And on my back I fell;  
A gent was riding by  
In a one-horse open sleigh  
He laughed at me as I there sprawling laid  
But quickly drove away.

**Chorus...**

4. Now the ground is white,  
Go it while you're young,  
Take the girls along  
And sing this sleighing song.  
Just bet a bob-tailed bay,  
Two-forty as his speed,  
Hitch him to an open sleigh  
and crack! You'll take the lead.

**Chorus...**

**REVIEW: MELISSA AND DOUG WOODEN SCOOP AND SERVE ICE CREAM COUNTER**

The Melissa and Doug Wooden Scoop and Serve Ice Cream Counter is a simple but fun wooden toy that lets little kids play pretend and develop their sensorial and fine motor skills. Let their creativity shine in this unassuming, but efficient and durable ice cream set. The natural and high-quality materials make this toy a cut above the rest and a priority on your list of toys to buy.

This ice cream set toy is like a wooden counter. It comes with vanilla and chocolate cones, a tub, and eight different stackable scoops or flavors of ice cream for kids to choose. Sprinkles and toppers are available, and paper money as well for an authentic vending experience. The ice cream scoop lets your child lift-release the ice cream flavors like it's the real thing.

The Melissa and Doug ice cream counter also comes with a booklet that shows ice cream combinations, toppings like chocolate fudge and caramel, along with their corresponding prices.

#### How to Play the Ice Cream Counter

Kids of different ages can play this scoop and serve ice cream toy. First, toddlers and smaller children can practice fine motor skills like pinching, clasping, grasping, stacking, and many others to help them fine-

tune their movements. It is a great quiet toy, too. Kids can play it on their own or play it with other children as well.

You can also use the Melissa and Doug ice cream counter to teach them patterns, too. Create unique designs out of the eight different flavors that your kids can copy. Teach them basic sequencing at an early age, which is an essential foundation in Math.

Finally, bigger kids can do simple sums by playing pretend and selling the ice cream based on their prices using the booklet. And since each flavor has a spot on the counter, it is a great toy to teach kids the value of putting away their toys properly.

Melissa and Doug's wooden toys are known for their quality and simplicity. Remember toys don't have to be complicated for kids to appreciate them. I highly recommend it if you are looking

for a classic-looking toy that you can use to teach your children practical skills that they can use later on in life.

The Melissa and Doug Wooden Scoop and Serve Ice Cream Counter can work and develop a kid's imagination in so many ways.



[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Buy on Amazon.com)



**REVIEW: NERF LAZER TAG PHOENIX LTX TAGGER 2-PACK**

This is definitely the ultimate “toys for the boys.” Toy guns are undoubtedly every boy’s (and every man’s) favorite toy. Even girls enjoy playing with it. Among the toy guns in the market, Nerf dart toys are easily everyone’s favorite. They have never run out of style and are the all-time favorite of many children.

Nerf dart toys have been a source of endless fun and games for over 40 years. Who hasn’t played with shooting foam projectiles to unsuspecting siblings at close range while growing up? Even teenagers and adults enjoy running around the house, targeting opponents with this classic toy.

If you loved the classic toy, you will love this modern version of the classic Nerf dart toys better. [These modern Nerf guns use lasers](#). You don’t need foam darts, so no bullets to lose and there is nothing to pick up and clean afterward. Your breakables inside and outside the house are safe because no bullets will

knock them over unless you accidentally knock them over yourself. You can hit a target as far as a hundred feet away, just use the sight for a sure hit for that range or distance.

You can play with it indoors or outdoors with friends, family, officemates, neighbors, and just about anyone would like to play, depending on how many [Nerf Lazer guns](#) you have on hand.

You can select how many times you can get hit before you are out of the game, allowing older people to give the younger players with some advantage. You can set yourself for either 10 or 25 lives, giving yourself a bit

of disadvantage when playing with kids. An indicator tells you how much ammo you and have how many lives you have left. The gun includes sound effects for reloading, trigger, and getting hit.

The guns have this awesome reload feature, which ejects the magazine from the bottom of the handle



when you press a button. To add fresh rounds, you press the magazine back into the handle, reloading the trigger. This makes this toy very realistic without any of the dangers of a real gun or the dangers getting hit with a Nerf dart, especially when it's directly in the eye.

It also has a very clever shield option that makes you invincible for a couple of seconds per round. The gun makes an awesome sound of a bullet ricocheting off steel when you get hit with the shield on.



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A countdown indicates the start of the game once you've set all the option. The timer allows sufficient time for everyone to search for cover. Once a game starts, the players will not be able to switch teams to prevent cheating.

You can play as individuals with every person for themselves or play in teams. The battery will last for at least 6 months and more if you use the guns moderately. Just make sure you turn them off after every game and use quality batteries. Each gun uses 6 pieces AA batteries, which makes it a bit heavy. The toy also has optional scope and shotgun attachments that you can separately buy online to make the game more exciting.



**REVIEW: NERF NITRO FLASH FURY CHAOS**

What are the two toys that boys love the most? Toy guns and cars, of course! But who's to say that girls can't play with them? Who hasn't played with shooting foam projectiles to unsuspecting siblings at close range while growing up? Nerf dart toys have been a source of endless fun and games for over 40 years. On the other hand, car toys are one of the oldest toys known to man. Even the simplest car toys have brought joy to kids all over the world. In their very imaginative minds, these timeless and classic toys are alive and can do wonderful tricks.

Now imagine a foam car shooting through the air! [Nerf Nitro Flash Fury Chaos](#) is a foam car launcher that will bring double fun and smile on your children's faces. It's a clever fusion of the two toys children love the most, particularly boys.

It's a multi-launcher. You can load 3 foam cars at once, so you won't have to reload every launch. You can buy a 3-car add-on set and launch as much as 6 cars with one load. Just load the five cars first, prime the launcher, and add the sixth foam car. Although only



half of the last foam car will fit inside the hopper, it won't be an issue, unless you move and tip the launcher.

It's easy to set-up. Even a 6-year-old can easily put it together with little supervision. It will only take a simple assembly to set it up. Kids just need to load the foam cars in the shooter, pull back the small bar to engage, and then pull the trigger to launch the car. No batteries needed to shoot the foam cars.

It comes with various targets. The launcher will shoot the foam car at a very high speed across the ramp, shooting at obstacles, such as tires, exploding barriers, and barrels in fast rapid pace. Discs will pop up far from the two stands when the foam car hits it. Kids can even use various toys as targets that they already have at home, such as Lego men and Army toys, as well as superhero figures. The cars will hit any target, shooting them in the air with lots of force, which is a lot of fun to watch.

Younger kids, however, may have a bit of trouble cocking it. It will take a little bit of strength than a toddler can handle, but children 6 years old and up will have no trouble loading the foam cars. They may need

to use two hands to cock it, so a bit of parental help may be required.

Children can even enjoy just playing with the foam cars alone without the launcher. The cars are made out of an outer foam body with a light plastic insert to hold the

wheels in place, making them significantly light. And because they are made of foams, there is little chance of it causing injury when launched or thrown against a person.

[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

### SONG: SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

1. Silent night! Holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child.  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild.  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2. Silent night! Holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight!  
Glories stream from heaven afar;  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!



3. Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy Holy Face.  
With the dawn of redeeming grace.  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

4. Silent night, holy night,  
Wondrous star, lend thy light  
With the angels let us sing  
Alleluia to our King  
Christ the Savior is here,  
Jesus the Savior is here!



**REVIEW: PLAY-DOH 36-CAN MEGA PACK - AMAZON EXCLUSIVE**

This classic toy never runs out of style, and it never fails to entertain and provide countless hours of fun to children and adult alike. Who hasn't played with [Play-Doh](#) at childcare or kindergarten? Some of us even have had a taste of this salty toy.

This mega pack is a pot of gold for people of all ages who love to mold, shape, squeeze, roll, squish, smoosh, press, and dash. For a fraction of the price, you get all the colors of the rainbow to play with. It's the most affordable set in the market. The huge pack contains all you need for all of your creative endeavors. You can craft anything to your heart's content with 36 different colors to choose from.

If you are not buying this set for yourself to play with, you won't regret getting them. Once they arrive, invite your friends and neighbors over. Have them bring their kids over, or gather all the grandkids. The children will really love them. You can play with the kids or just leave them to play with each other while you have fun with the adults.

[Play-Doh](#) allows children to slow down, take a break from their gadgets, and play using all of their skills and senses. Flattening, rolling, squashing, and squishing the dough strengthens the muscles of their hands, which develops the fine motor skills that they need for

writing and other skills, such as using tweezers and cutting with scissors. It also enhances their hand-to-eye-coordination when they use various objects and materials while making their artwork.

If you are not playing, you can grab a ball and play with it like a stress ball. You can feel the stress melt away while you squish and mold it with your hands. If this can relax an adult, it will also help release the extra energy that children often have. [Play-Doh](#) also helps develop and improve their concentration and focus.

When children play with other people, it also develops their social skills. Playing with adults and/or with other kids provides opportunities for discussion, talk, and simple conversation. They learn to interact with others, plan, and solve problems they may encounter while making their models. When you encourage them to describe what they are molding, it becomes a great outlet for their emotions and ideas.

Let me warn you, though; children can become too excited with this set. They will certainly want to try out all the colors all at once and mix them all together. You may want to keep most of them hidden away and just take out new ones as needed. It's always fun to open a new color and this way; they will last longer.

**[Amazon Exclusive - Buy on Amazon.com](#)**



**REVIEW: PLAY PRETEND WITH PAW PATROL SEA PATROLLER**

For little ones who love the Paw Patrol series, then this toy should be on top of your list of things to buy. This [Paw Patrol Sea Patroller with Lights and Sounds](#) is quite fun and is surprising for its size and the accessories that come with it. It is a boat that turns into a land vehicle, much like in the cartoon series. In essence, you get a two-in-one toy that your kid can play pretend with and enjoy.

It comes with Ryder figure, who is the main character in the show, his ATV, a baby octopus that kids can save repeatedly, lifesavers and a launcher, an anchor, rescue carrier, a ladder, a crane, vehicles, and more. Your little one can play with this sea vehicle in many ways as a sea vehicle. Launch those orange lifebuoys to the direction of someone they're pretending to save. Attach the anchor to the side and the back and lower it if your child wants to park it. And that's not the most awesome part yet; the sea patroller converts into a land vehicle in just one motion. Push the cockpit forward, and the wheels of the truck will launch. The sounds are even different when it's a sea or a land vehicle. Use three button cell batteries

and make sure to lock the battery cover to prevent small kids from accidentally swallowing them.

The [Paw Patrol Sea Patroller](#) is a truly unique toy.

Inside, your child can find a crane that can lift Ryder up and down on a carrier. Two vehicles can also come in and out of the boat or the truck through a hatch on its rear. Despite it being ½ truck and ½ boat, remind your child not to play with it in water because it will not float, owing to the hatch that opens and closes at the rear and the weight of the extra vehicles it carries within its body.

Kids often love to reenact Paw Patrol scenes when they play, and it helps build their creativity and imagination. If you're planning to

buy this [Paw Patrol Sea Patroller Transforming Vehicle with Lights and Sounds](#), a great companion to this toy that you might want to buy separately are the six rescue dog figures that also star in the show, along with their respective vehicles. Doing so will surely give your child a complete Paw Patrol pretend play experience.



[Buy on Amazon.com](#)



**REVIEW: SPHERO ULTIMATE LIGHTNING MCQUEEN VEHICLE**

What's better and cooler than car toys? Robotic car toys, of course! If you are a fan of Disney's [Lightning McQueen](#), you will certainly want to have this. This toy has the same personality and movements of the amazing racecar. And if you are a fan of remote control cars, you will certainly love this modern version.



It does not just have the attention and detail of the car in the movie. This animatronic wonderfully mimics Lightning McQueen's animated eyes and movements. It's exactly like the car in the cartoons.

The manufacturer of this robots also made an effort to recorded Owen Wilson's voice, McQueen's voice actor in the movie, for all the toy's voice sound, which is nothing less than awesome. It's like the racecar itself magically jump off the screen and into your house. And with the help of the toy's app, you can adjust the volume of the sound coming out from the good-quality on vehicle speaker.

[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Buy on Amazon.com)

McQueen's eyes are clear and bright, adjusting well depending on what the car is doing, as well as its speed and direction where it's heading. Just like the car in the cartoons! The charging port is placed at the car's gas cap, which gives it a real race car look. The car has touch panels on its body, and it will respond when touched. Children will certainly be captivated by it, even the ones who have no idea who [Lightning McQueen](#) is.

It's not an RC car, and it runs differently than an RC car. You won't be able to drive it with an RC control and don't drive it at RC speeds as well. The control interface is quite different. It will take some time to get the hang of the controls, especially if you have driven RC cars in the past, pistol grip or traditional. You may experience a few crashes at first, but you will definitely get the hang with the 'sphero' style control. With practice, it will be easy to run.

You control it through your phone. Once you've installed the app, you will be able to run and control it in no time. Once you have him up and running, [Lightning McQueen](#) moves quite fast, and you can easily navigate him using the phone app. You can also use the app to create a winning racing strategy.

If you don't want to play with him as a racecar, you can easily play hide and with your toddler. Your child will

certainly have so much fun hiding and being found by Lightning McQueen, with you driving the toy, of course.

When you are not training for a race, you can sit back, relax, and watch Cars with [Lightning McQueen](#), and he will react to the movie while you watch.

### SONG: WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

1. We wish you a merry Christmas,  
We wish you a merry Christmas,  
We wish you a merry Christmas,  
And a Happy New Year!

#### Chorus

**Good tidings we bring for you and your kin;  
We wish you a merry Christmas  
And a Happy New Year!**

2. Now bring us some figgy pudding,  
Now bring us some figgy pudding,  
Now bring us some figgy pudding,  
And a cup of good cheer!

#### Chorus



3. We won't go until we get some  
We won't go until we get some  
We won't go until we get some  
So bring it out here!

#### Chorus

4. We all like our figgy pudding;  
We all like our figgy pudding;  
We all like our figgy pudding;  
With all its good cheer.

#### Chorus

5. We wish you a merry Christmas,  
We wish you a merry Christmas,  
We wish you a merry Christmas,  
And a Happy New Year!  
And a Happy New Year!

#### Chorus



**REVIEW: STEP2 MCLAREN RIDE-ON SPORTS CAR**

Ride-on toys like the [Step 2 McLaren 570S](#) are popular among toddlers as they are perfect for sensorial skills development. This toy comes with a bar handle that you can hold and push while strolling with your little one. The design is very much like the real deal with high-quality materials and easy-to-follow instructions.

Be prepared to assemble it using tools like a hammer, screwdriver, pliers, wrench, and a ratchet set. It is important to prepare all of the materials first and go over the instructions several times before building it, so you'll be able to set it up correctly.

The wheels and axels are a little tricky to put together, but you will certainly manage. Make sure to align the wheels properly before putting the hubcap in place, since it can be difficult to remove if you want to fix the assembly. Building the toy will take at least thirty minutes for an inexperienced person to complete. Once the car is complete, you can already use it to push your tot around.

The [Step2 McLaren](#) comes with a bottle holder for the little one and a cup holder for the parent. It rides

smoothly on grass and any other terrain, so no need to worry about getting stuck and a bumpy ride for the tot.

The cockpit has ample room and a secret compartment under the seat for the little one's things to hide. The ride-on toy comes in a bright orange color and a nice realistic revving sound to make it easy for motorists to see. It requires two triple-A batteries if you plan to use this honk feature, but kids love it even without the sound. It also has a sturdy seatbelt snap for an added safety.

Storing the sports car is also easy. The detachable handle lets you keep it in a small area. It is also possible to bring it to keep your kids occupied while on vacation and taking a stroll. You might want to bring a big car if you're planning to take it because it may not fit in a small car compartment.

If you're looking for a push car to keep your toddler occupied during trips or your strolls around the neighborhood, then consider getting

the [Step2 McLaren 570S Push Sports Car Ride-on toy](#). It takes some effort and skills to put together, but the result is worth it. Finally, as a reminder, don't forget to keep the round plastic appliance used to align the hubcap and the axel.



[Buy on Amazon.com](#)

**REVIEW: TOMY BATH FOAM CONE FACTORY**

Do you have kids who are less than happy to stay in the bath for a while? Here is a solution! The [Tomy Bath Foam Cone Factory](#) lets your children play with cone bubbles during bath time. The kit comes with a Tomy Bath Foam unit, with suction caps that allows you to attach it to the wall of your bathroom. You then place a foaming bath formula in the cup, and it's ready to use.

The best advantage from this is that bath time is fun and the children are much easier to coax into the shower because foam and bubbles are always a hit. Also, it doesn't require charging or replacing batteries. Just good old water fun. This foam factory stays on the wall firmly, and it operates smoothly. There is a cone holder on the left and a lever on the right that the child pulls to create soft foam.

Young children can also use it outside for a refreshing water play when the heat picks up. The instructions suggest putting the right amount of bubble bath  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup to three cups water. This ratio is good to last an entire 30-minute bath. Personally, I even add more water to extend the play time, and it works just as fine.

The Tomy foam factory is a great bath time toy for the kids, just remind the tiny ones not to eat the soap cones when no one's looking. The [Tomy Bath Foam Cone Factory](#) is a perfect gift idea for kids who are at least 18 months old. It encourages fine motor skills, independence, and imaginative play.



You can attach it on bathroom tiles, tubs, or any clean, flat surface. Wipe the surface of the wall dry, but wet the surface of the suction caps a little for an added pull so that the toy stays in place. Remember not to set it too high such that a toddler may have to strain to pull down the lever. Adjust the height of the toy when necessary. The closer it is to the children in the tub, the better.

Consider your bathroom walls and your child's balancing ability when purchasing the product. Rough surfaces will not be able to hold the foam cone factory. Other than that, just purchase, attach to a wall where it's safe and convenient, pour the bubble soap mixture and let your little ones enjoy their bath.

Here's a link where you can get one:

[Buy on Amazon.com](http://Buy on Amazon.com)



**REVIEW: ZOOMER SHOW PONY ELECTRONIC PET**

Gone are the days when people had electronic pets in small black and white 2D screens. The [Zoomer Show Pony](#) is an interactive e-pet that will surely amaze and preoccupy your kids for days. This pony responds to various touch stimulus and does tricks as you “command” it using different types of strokes. The pony also comes with an instruction card, which is very easy to understand and kids can refer to when leveling up the tricks.

**How to Play with Show Pony**

Aside from the pony, the box comes with a carrot, apple, comb, and a sugar cube. These items each elicit a specific response from the pony. Kids who play with [Zoomer](#) somewhat require a learning curve to make her perform all of the pre-programmed actions and tricks. First, you’ll need to ensure that you have 4 rechargeable AA batteries available to make it work. Turn on the button on her underbelly.

Moving the apple near her mouth satisfies her hunger as indicated by her eyes. She’ll let you know when she’s full. Using the carrot, in the same way, starts training, and using the sugar cube rewards the pony.



However, be careful not to give her 6 cubes, or she’ll get hyper. Stroke both her cheeks to calm her down. On the other hand, the comb lets the pony know that it’s time for grooming. You’ll hear her purr to tell you she likes it when you fix her hair.

Petting her cheek moves her head in that direction. However, it is different when she’s in training mode, pet her on one cheek, and she’ll do a prancing trick going in that direction. Under show and training modes, can memorize five different moves, which you can arrange in your preferred sequence.

[Zoomer, the Show Pony](#), can also show signs of tiredness. When she falls asleep quickly, it means that the batteries need replacing or recharging. Don’t forget to purchase new batteries if you are interested in buying this toy. Also, when your kid is done playing the pony, don’t forget to turn off the switch in her underbelly to ensure that the batteries do not get drained.

Kids can do a lot with the show pony. Aside from all of the tricks that it can do, children can style her hair every time it gets old. Grooming is a particularly quiet activity that you can share with your Zoomer Show Pony. Here is a link to show you where you can get one:

[Buy on Amazon.com](#)

**ACTIVITIES: CHRISTMAS GAMES AND OTHER FUN ACTIVITIES**

Maybe no other single activity really embraces camaraderie, playfulness and fierce but friendly competition as heartily participating in playing indoor games with friends and family. Christmas games does all those things but also serves the purpose of bringing friends and family together to interact directly with each other in a competitive and happy way.



Participating in Christmas games is another way of sharing, but it is also doing something tangible to get into the festive, jolly and relaxed mode for the holidays. Otherwise, it's easy to get caught up in all the preparation and shopping and become ridden with anxiety. Here are some holiday and Christmas games that will cause fierce but friendly competition and leave everyone in a jolly mood.

**THE 'GIFT WRAP' GAME**

For the 'Gift Wrap' game, items needed will be small gifts, wrapping paper, scotch tape and music that can be turned on and off at will. Each gift item is wrapped in several layers of paper. The number of layers used will depend on the duration you want the game to last. A gift is given to the group which should start passing

around the gift when the music starts. Whenever the music stops, whoever has the gift should remove one layer of gift wrap. This continues until the last layer of paper is removed. Whoever has the gift unwrapped gets to keep it.

**'SOCK GUESSING' CHRISTMAS GAME**

The items needed for the 'Sock Guessing' Christmas game are two or three thick new thermal socks, items used or seen during Christmas, pens, pencils and paper. Each sock is stuffed with 20-25 items that are used or seen during the Christmas season. These can be useful items such as scotch tape, ornaments, decorations etc. Each sock should have the same

items and the opening should be tied with a ribbon so the contents inside aren't visible. The socks are then passed around for each person to try to feel and guess the items then write down what they think is in the sock. The person with the most correct guesses of objects is the winner and can be awarded a separate special gift or token.



### THE 'GIFT GRAB CARD GAME'

The 'Gift Grab Card Game' needs two decks of cards and a few small Christmas gifts that are wrapped to look very interesting and enticing. One deck of cards is passed out one at a time to guests. Each should have an equal number of cards from the deck. The gifts are then placed in the center of the group. Someone then calls out cards from the second deck. Whoever has an identical card gets to choose a gift. When all the gifts

are taken, everyone can steal gifts from each other until the deck is finished and those with gifts get to open and keep them as prizes. The fun increases when the stealing begins because everyone will have different ideas about which gift looks interesting and try to hang onto it by stealing it over and over if it is stolen. Some people will also try to disguise the fact they have a gift, although they should be kept in sight.

### 'PIN THE NOSE ON THE REINDEER'

A children's Christmas game is 'Pin the Nose on the Reindeer,' which is the Christmas game version of 'Pin the tail on the Donkey.' The items needed are a drawing of a reindeer's head with an incomplete drawing of the nose and several noses with the names on one side and tape on the other. The picture should be placed against a wall so that children can reach the nose. Each child then gets a nose. They take turns being blindfolded spun around a couple times to disorient them a little then told to walk to the reindeer and place the nose on the picture. The child who places the nose closes to the reindeer's nose wins.



### 'MATCH THE DESK TO THE ITEM'

A delightful Christmas game for work is the 'Match the Desk to the Item' game. A day or so before the Christmas party at work, someone needs to secretly take one item from each person's desk and assign a

number to each item. At the party, all the items are displayed for everyone to guess whose desk the item belongs to.

## ACTIVITIES: 8 PAGES OF ACTIVITIES TO PRINT OUT

Print out the following 8 pages for loads of fun activities for the kids and the whole family.

**Here are the activities you'll find in these pages:**

**Coloring in** – all 8 pages are images your kids can color-in. Once all 8 pages are ready they can be stapled together to make a nice booklet.

**Write Your Name Book Title** – for the young kids this is a great opportunity to learn and practice writing their name. Once the page is ready (after being colored in, of course) it can be used as the title page for a booklet made out of all 8 pages. This will be a great souvenir from this year's Christmas!

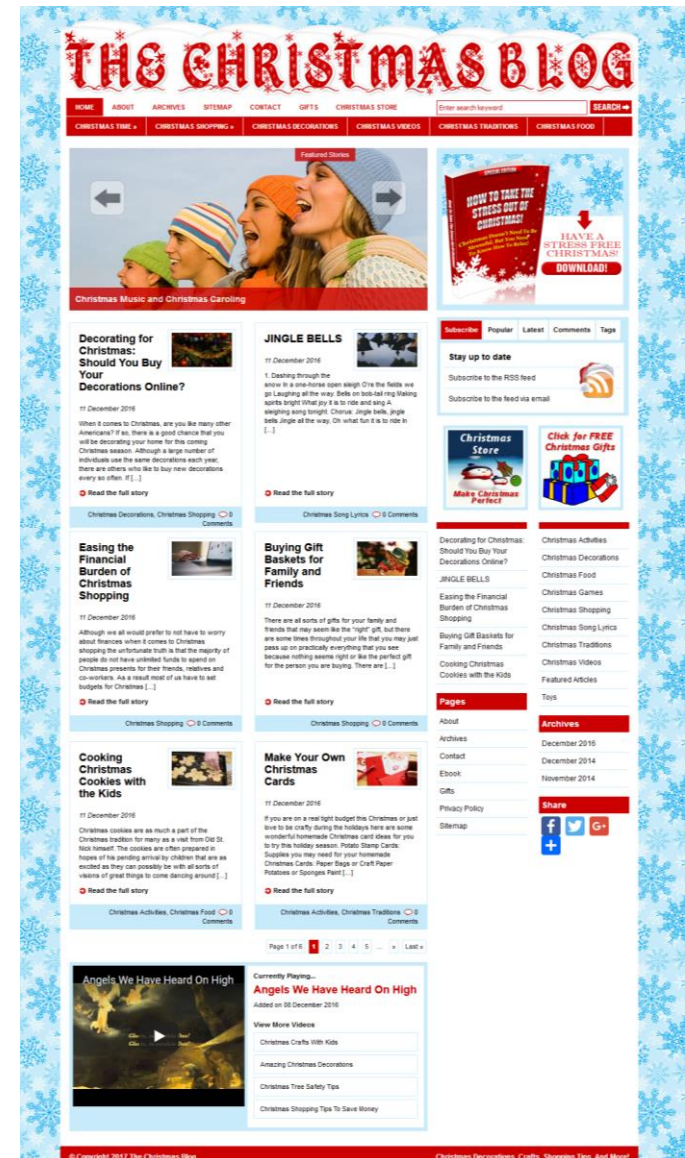
**Draw by Numbers** – this is always a fun activity and double fun when it's a Christmas image they can also color-in.

**"Christmas Hope"** – this one is for the older kids. Ask them to write down what they are hoping for this Christmas. They will practice in formulating ideas clearly while letting you in on what you can do for them to make them extra happy this Christmas.

**Word Search Puzzle** – can you find all the words hidden within the heap of letters? It's always a joy when you find them all!

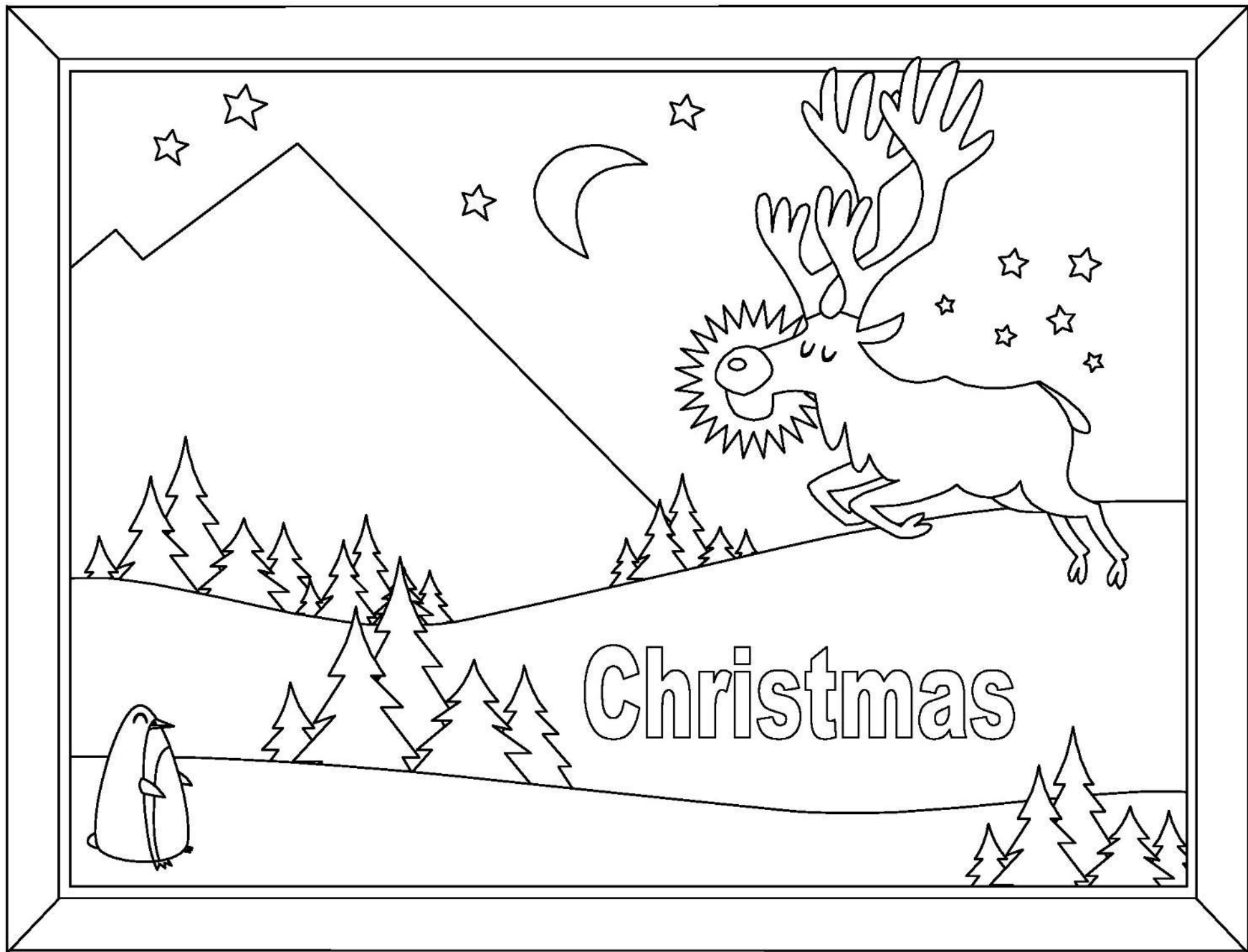
**"Christmas Wishes"** – write down your wishes for Christmas and maybe even some of your New Year resolutions. Writing it down is the first step in making it come true!

**Word Jumble** – want to know where does Santa go on vacation? Solve the Word Jumble and find out!



Visit my  
Christmas Blog



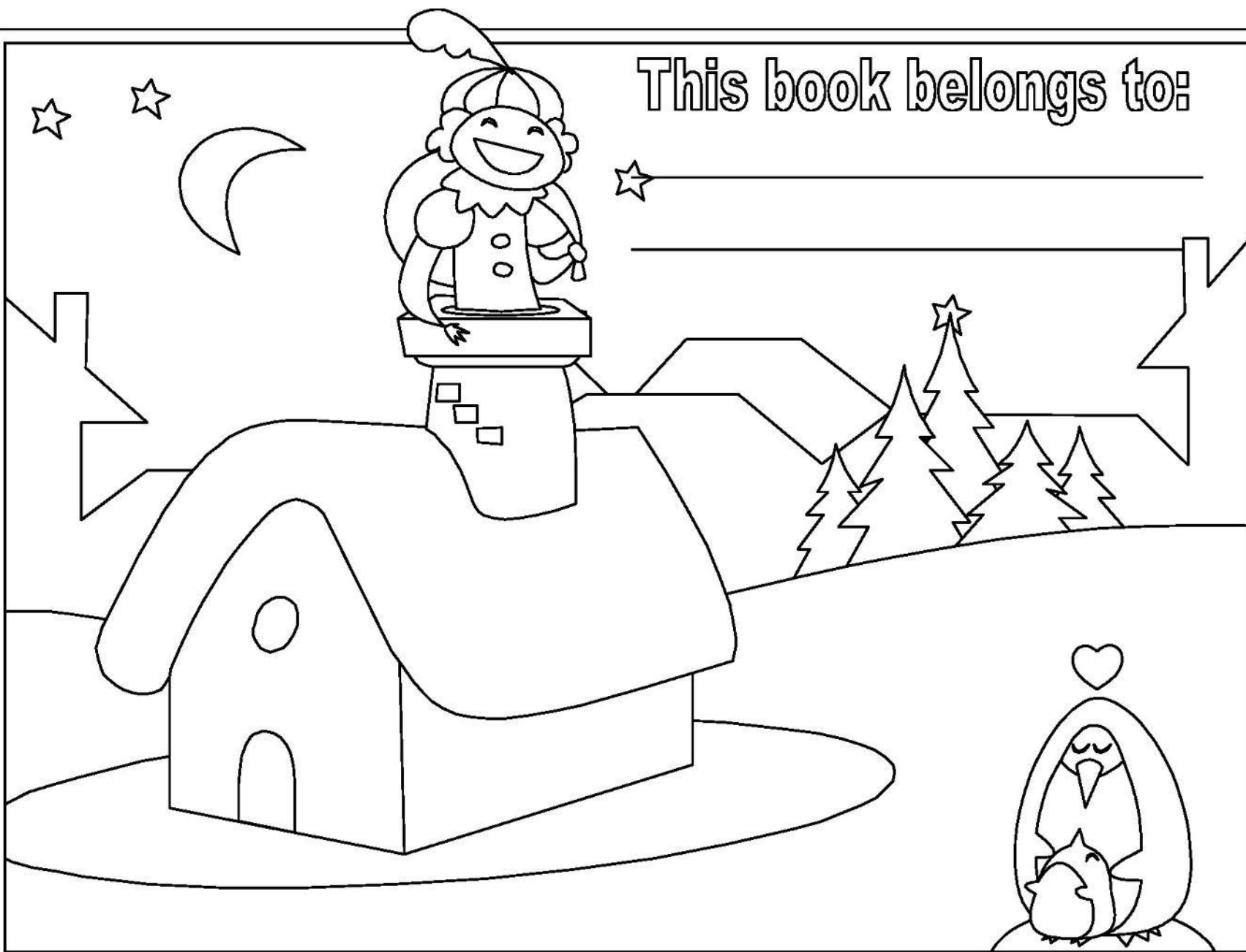


This book belongs to:



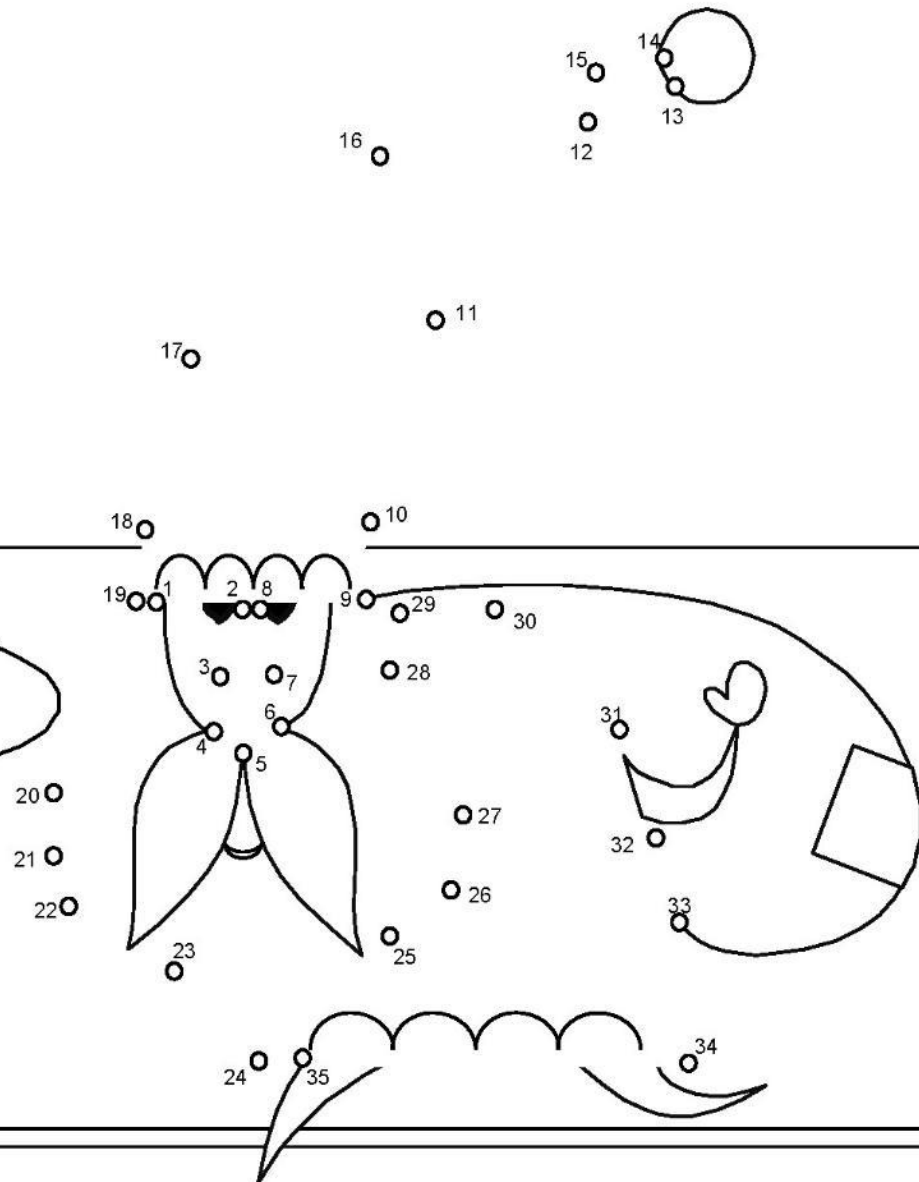
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# Is that you? Santa Claus!





My Christmas hope:

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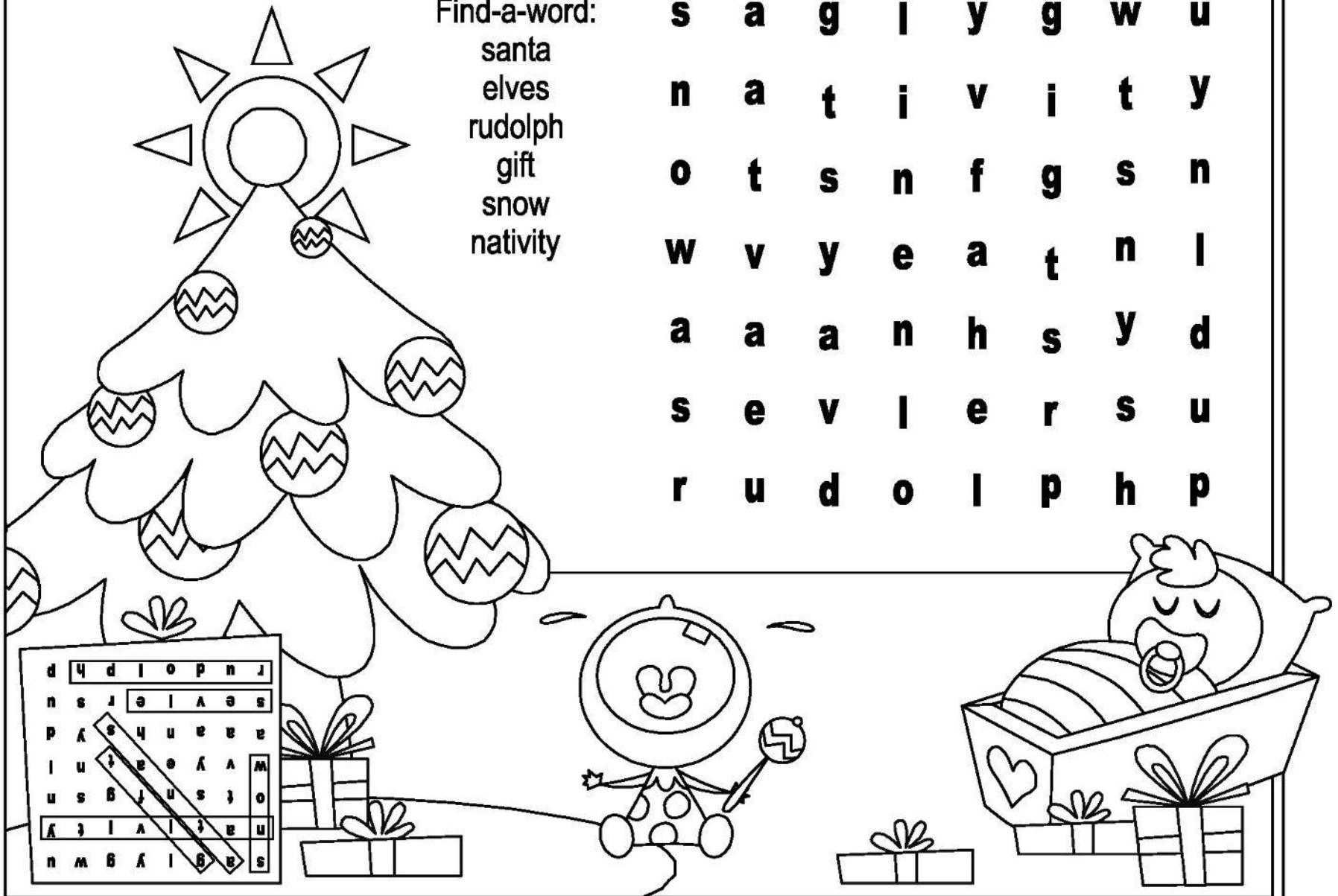
The true meaning of Christmas



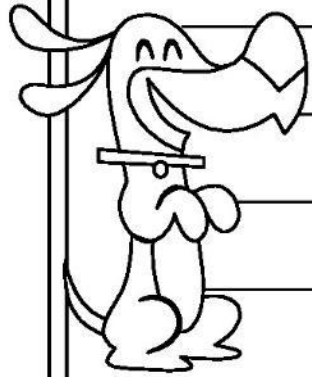
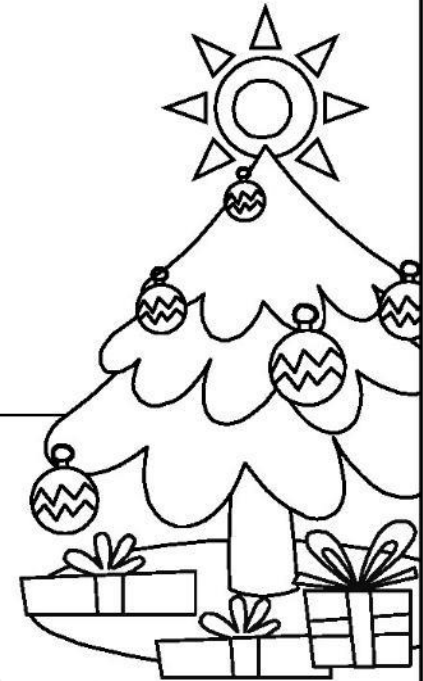
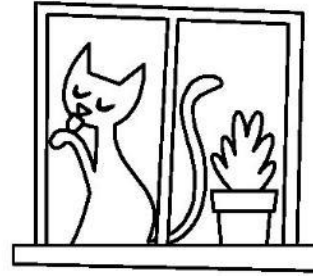
Find-a-word:

santa  
elves  
rudolph  
gift  
snow  
nativity

s	a	g	i	y	g	w	u
n	a	t	i	v	i	t	y
o	t	s	n	f	g	s	n
w	v	y	e	a	t	n	i
a	a	a	n	h	s	y	d
s	e	v	i	e	r	s	u
r	u	d	o	i	p	h	p

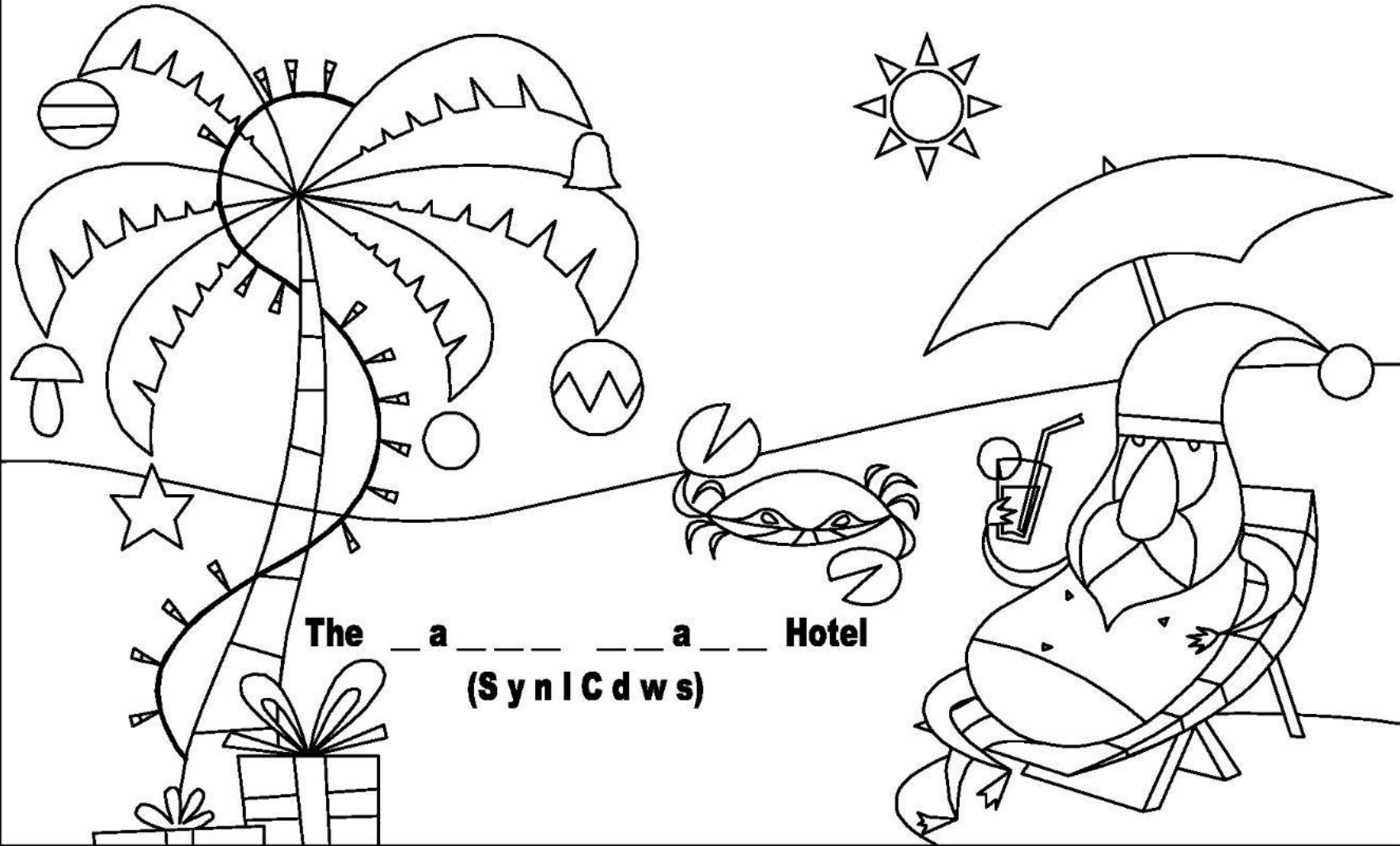


# Christmas Wishes



# WORD JUMBLE:

Where does Santa go on vacation?



The \_ a \_ \_ \_ \_ a \_ \_ Hotel  
(S y n I C d w s)

Answer: The Sandy Claws Hotel