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| **Activity title** |
| **Make your own Christmas cracker at home** |
| **Stay safe** |
| Whether you are a scientist researching a new medicine or an engineer solving climate change, safety always comes first. An adult must always be around and supervising when doing this activity. You are responsible for:    • ensuring that any equipment used for this activity is in good working condition  • behaving sensibly and following any safety instructions so as not to hurt or injure yourself or others    Please note that in the absence of any negligence or other breach of duty by us, this activity is carried out at your own risk. It is important to take extra care at the stages marked with this symbol:⚠ |
| **Time required** |
| 1 hour |
| **Activity summary** |
| Many people use crackers to decorate individual place settings on their Christmas table. They also make great tree decorations and gifts for friends and family. We’re going to show you how to make a simple cracker out of paper. You will learn how to use a ‘net’ (template), develop your practical skills, be creating, and have a lot of fun! |
| **What equipment will you need?** |
| * A printout of the Christmas cracker ‘net’ * A printout of our Christmas jokes * A4 paper * Pens or pencils * Scissors * Glue stick * Ribbon or string * Sticky tape * Biodegradable glitter and stickers (optional) * Christmas icons (optional) * A small gift (optional). |
| **How to do it** |
| **Step 1: Decorate your cracker**   * Print off the cracker ‘net’ (template) * Use pens, pencils and stickers to decorate your cracker (don’t decorate the diamonds – you’ll be cutting those out!)   **Step 2: Cut out your cracker shape**   * Cut carefully along the solid lines to create your cracker shape ⚠   **Step 2: Get folding**   * Fold carefully along each line that crosses a diamond shape – make sure the fold goes through the centre of the diamond * Run a ruler along your fold, to make it really sharp   **Step 3: Cut out the diamonds**   * Cut out the eight diamond shapes carefully ⚠   **Step 4: Get sticking**   * Add glue to tabs A, B and C * Press tab A to its opposite edge, to create the tube for your cracker * Press tab B to its opposite edge, to create the end of the cracker * Repeat the process for tab C   **Step 5: Tie your cracker**   * Cut two 12cm pieces of ribbon or string * Use one piece to tie a double knot in one end of your cracker   **Step 6: Make a hat**   * Decorate both pieces of your hat template * Cut them out carefully ⚠ * Join the two hat pieces together with sticky tape ⚠ * Cut another piece of sticky tape (the same size) and keep it handy! * Wrap the hat template around your head so that it’s a really good fit * Use the sticky tape to create your perfectly sized hat * Carefully cut off any spare paper ⚠   **Step 5: Add the finishing touches**   * Fold your hat and insert it in your cracker * Write a joke, cut it out and add that too ⚠ * Insert a small gift (optional) * Tie a double knot to seal the open end of your cracker |
| **Three Christmas kisses and a wish** |
| It’s always great to reflect on a job well done. Show your cracker creation to a friend or family member and ask them to tell you three good things about it, and one thing that could be improved.  You could then use their feedback on your design to make another cracker that’s even better than the first. In fact, why not make a complete set? You could give them out as presents on Christmas Day or add them to your Christmas table.  Practice makes perfect… |
| **Festive fun** |
| After all that hard work, here are some cracking jokes to make you smile:   * **What do you get if you cross Father Christmas with a duck?**   A Christmas quacker   * **Where does Father Christmas stay on holiday?**   In a ho-ho-hotel   * **What should you use to wash your hands on Christmas Day?**  Hand Santatiser |
| **Did you know?** |
| * Tom Baker invented the **Christmas cracker** more than 150 years ago. Its shape was inspired by a French sugared almond wrapped in tissue paper that was twisted at both ends. Legend has it that the crackling sound made by his log fire gave him the idea of incorporating an explosive pop! After Tom had passed away, one of his sons came up with the idea of putting a paper hat inside the cracker. |
| * In the late 19th and early 20th century, many people loved themed crackers. News stories often got the cracker treatment, including suffragettes (who campaigned for women’s right to vote), coronations (the crowning of a new king or queen) and Charlie Chaplin, the famous actor. A range of crackers for single men included an unusual gift: false teeth! |

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| **Bonus activity – Make a Christmas crown** |
| If you love creating things, this activity is for you. We’re going to show you how to make a Christmas crown to be proud of! In fact, you might even like to make a matching crown for your favourite teddy bear, or even your pet dog or cat… |
| **Here’s what you’ll need:** |
| * String or ribbon * 3 sheets of A4 paper or craft paper * Scissors * Glue * Decorations (stickers, sparkles, ribbons… it’s up to you!) * Mirror |
| **How to do it** |
| **Step 1: Measure your head**   * Starting in the middle of your forehead, use string or ribbon to measure your head * Add another 2cm then cut the string or ribbon * Wrap it round your head again to check that it’s the right length     **Step 2: Make triangles**   * Fold the paper over to make a triangle * Carefully cut away the spare rectangle ⚠ * Carefully cut along the fold ⚠ * Repeat this process twice * You now have six triangles   **Step 2: Overlap the triangles**   * Overlap the triangles on a table * Lay out your string below the straight edge * Adjust your triangles to make the straight edge the same size as the string   **Step 3: Join the triangles**   * Use sticky tape on the short edges to secure the overlap ⚠ * Add a line of sticky tape along the bottom of the crown ⚠ * Turn over the crown and repeat the process   **Step 4: Decorate your crown**   * Add your own unique design magic, to make your crown look really special! * Re-use the string or ribbon by sticking it along the bottom edge of your crown   **Step 5: The final step**   * Cut off a small piece of sticky tape ⚠ * Wrap your crown around your head so that it’s the perfect fit * Add sticky tape and take off the crown * Secure the join with more sticky tape (on the inside of your crown too)⚠   And there you have it – a simple and stylish Christmas crown, made in a matter of minutes! |