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## **Christmas trees increase Korean tensions**

**12th December, 2011**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1112/111212-christmas\\_trees.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1112/111212-christmas_trees.html)

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## THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas\\_trees.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas_trees.html)

The approach of Christmas is bringing tensions between rival neighbours North and South Korea. The source of the latest friction is the proposed erection of two 30-metre-tall Christmas-tree-shaped towers near the border of the two Koreas. The South Korean government has agreed to a request from Christian groups to put up the towers within sight of the North Korean city of Kaesong. The move has provoked strong reaction from North Korea. Its state-run website has said putting up the towers would amount to 'psychological warfare'. South Korea has denied such claims. It says the huge steel trees are simply a sign of the freedom of expression and religion people in the South enjoy.

Relations on the Korean Peninsular are still low following the sinking of one of South Korea's warships in March 2010 with the loss of 46 lives. It is the first time in seven years that the trees will be visible from the North. The last time it happened, Pyongyang accused Seoul of using the trees to try and spread Christianity to people in atheist North Korea. South Korean religious leaders disagree. Tak Sejin, chairman of the group organising the tree lighting, said: "This is a ceremony for peace on the Korean peninsula and national unity. It is being held with our desire for harmony among our fellow men and between North and South Korea." Mr Sejin added: "We are doing this with the expectation that some day our people can become one."

# WARM-UPS

**1. CHRISTMAS TREES:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about Christmas trees. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Christmas / trees / friction / border / request / strong reaction / psychological / relations / warships / visible / atheist / national unity / harmony / expectation*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. RIVALS:** What kind of rivalry is there between these? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Rivals	What kind of rivalry?	Why?
You and a student		
You and a sibling		
Your favourite team		
Your country		
Your town/city		
An enemy		

**4. UNITY:** Students A **strongly** believe the two Koreas will be one in the near future; Students B **strongly** believe this will never happen. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. TENSIONS:** What gives you most? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- studying English
- money
- family
- job
- neighbours
- people in the street
- banks
- sport

**6. BORDER:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'border'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas\\_trees.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas_trees.html)

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. There is inter-Korean anger over the availability of Xmas trees.      | T / F |
| b. South Korea is angry because the North put Xmas trees on the border.  | T / F |
| c. The North has accused the South of psychological warfare.             | T / F |
| d. The South refuses to acknowledge the Christmas trees.                 | T / F |
| e. Relations between the two Koreas have been good recently.             | T / F |
| f. Christmas trees are erected on the North-South border every year.     | T / F |
| g. The North has accused the South of trying to spread Christianity.     | T / F |
| h. A religious leader said he hopes the trees will unite the two Koreas. | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. approach     | a. non-believing |
| 2. rival        | b. response      |
| 3. proposed     | c. after         |
| 4. reaction     | d. oneness       |
| 5. simply       | e. nearing       |
| 6. following    | f. adversary     |
| 7. accused      | g. assumption    |
| 8. atheist      | h. just          |
| 9. unity        | i. blamed        |
| 10. expectation | j. suggested     |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                       |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. The approach of Christmas          | a. sight of the North   |
| 2. The source of the                  | b. Korean peninsula     |
| 3. put up the towers within           | c. latest friction      |
| 4. The move has provoked              | d. are still low        |
| 5. a sign of the freedom              | e. become one           |
| 6. Relations on the Korean Peninsular | f. strong reaction      |
| 7. the trees will be visible          | g. of expression        |
| 8. spread Christianity to people in   | h. is bringing tensions |
| 9. peace on the                       | i. from the North       |
| 10. some day our people can           | j. atheist North Korea  |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas\\_trees.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas_trees.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The approach of Christmas is bringing (1) \_\_\_\_\_ between rival neighbours North and South Korea. The source of the (2) \_\_\_\_\_ friction is the proposed erection of two 30-metre-tall Christmas-tree-shaped towers near the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ of the two Koreas. The South Korean government has agreed to a request from Christian groups to put up the towers within (4) \_\_\_\_\_ of the North Korean city of Kaesong. The (5) \_\_\_\_\_ has provoked strong reaction from North Korea. Its state-run website has said putting up the towers would (6) \_\_\_\_\_ to 'psychological warfare'. South Korea has (7) \_\_\_\_\_ such claims. It says the huge steel trees are simply a sign of the freedom of expression and religion people in the South (8) \_\_\_\_\_.

*amount*  
*sight*  
*denied*  
*latest*  
*move*  
*tensions*  
*enjoy*  
*border*

Relations on the Korean Peninsular are still (9) \_\_\_\_\_ following the sinking of one of South Korea's warships in March 2010 with the (10) \_\_\_\_\_ of 46 lives. It is the first time in seven years that the trees will be (11) \_\_\_\_\_ from the North. The last time it happened, Pyongyang accused Seoul of using the trees to try and spread Christianity to people in (12) \_\_\_\_\_ North Korea. South Korean religious leaders disagree. Tak Sejin, chairman of the group organising the tree lighting, said: "This is a (13) \_\_\_\_\_ for peace on the Korean peninsula and national (14) \_\_\_\_\_. It is being held with our desire for harmony (15) \_\_\_\_\_ our fellow men and between North and South Korea." Mr Sejin added: "We are doing this with the expectation that some day our people can become (16) \_\_\_\_\_."

*ceremony*  
*atheist*  
*among*  
*loss*  
*one*  
*low*  
*unity*  
*visible*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas\\_trees.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas_trees.html)

The approach of Christmas is bringing \_\_\_\_\_ neighbours North and South Korea. The source of the \_\_\_\_\_ proposed erection of two 30-metre-tall Christmas-tree-shaped towers near the border of the two Koreas. The South Korean government has agreed to a request from Christian groups to put up the towers \_\_\_\_\_ North Korean city of Kaesong. The move has provoked strong reaction from North Korea. Its \_\_\_\_\_ said putting up the towers would amount to '\_\_\_\_\_'. South Korea has denied such claims. It says the huge steel trees are simply a sign of the \_\_\_\_\_ and religion people in the South enjoy.

Relations on the Korean Peninsular are still \_\_\_\_\_ of one of South Korea's warships in March 2010 \_\_\_\_\_ 46 lives. It is the first time in seven years that the trees \_\_\_\_\_ the North. The last time it happened, Pyongyang accused Seoul of using the trees to try and spread Christianity \_\_\_\_\_ North Korea. South Korean religious leaders disagree. Tak Sejin, chairman of the group organising the tree lighting, said: "This is a \_\_\_\_\_ on the Korean peninsula and national unity. It is being held with our desire for \_\_\_\_\_ fellow men and between North and South Korea." Mr Sejin added: "We are doing this with the expectation that some day our people can become one."

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas\\_trees.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas_trees.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'increase' and 'tension'.

increase	tension

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• approach</li><li>• source</li><li>• request</li><li>• strong</li><li>• amount</li><li>• enjoy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• low</li><li>• seven</li><li>• spread</li><li>• ceremony</li><li>• desire</li><li>• one</li></ul>
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# STUDENT CHRISTMAS TREES SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas\\_trees.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas_trees.html)

Write five GOOD questions about christmas trees in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.  
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

# CHRISTMAS TREES DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'Christmas'?
- c) What do you know about the rivalry between the two Koreas?
- d) What do you think of North Korean's reaction to the trees?
- e) How are relations between your country's neighbours?
- f) What do you think of Christmas?
- g) Why would the Christmas trees be a form of 'psychological warfare'?
- h) Are the trees a sign of freedom?
- i) What do you think of Christmas trees?

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# CHRISTMAS TREES DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What can be done to ease tensions between the two Koreas?
- c) Why do you think the South agreed to putting the trees up this year?
- d) What does the North have to fear from the spread of Christianity?
- e) Why do people put up Christmas trees?
- f) What do you think of Christmas trees?
- g) Do you think North and South Korea will unite one day?
- h) Why is the North complaining so much?
- i) What questions would you like to ask North Korea's leader?

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# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas\\_trees.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1112/111212-christmas_trees.html)

The (1) \_\_\_\_ of Christmas is bringing tensions between rival neighbours North and South Korea. The source of the latest (2) \_\_\_\_ is the proposed erection of two 30-metre-tall Christmas-tree-shaped towers near the border of the two Koreas. The South Korean government has agreed (3) \_\_\_\_ a request from Christian groups to put up the towers within sight of the North Korean city of Kaesong. The move has provoked (4) \_\_\_\_ reaction from North Korea. Its state-run website has said putting up the towers would (5) \_\_\_\_ to 'psychological warfare'. South Korea has denied such claims. It says the (6) \_\_\_\_ steel trees are simply a sign of the freedom of expression and religion people in the South enjoy.

Relations on the Korean Peninsular are still low following the (7) \_\_\_\_ of one of South Korea's warships in March 2010 with the loss of 46 lives. It is the first time in seven years that the trees will be (8) \_\_\_\_ from the North. The last time it happened, Pyongyang accused Seoul (9) \_\_\_\_ using the trees to try and spread Christianity to people in (10) \_\_\_\_ North Korea. South Korean religious leaders disagree. Tak Sejin, chairman of the group organising the tree lighting, said: "This is a ceremony for peace on the Korean peninsula and national unity. It is being (11) \_\_\_\_ with our desire for harmony among our fellow men and between North and South Korea." Mr Sejin added: "We are doing this with the expectation that some day our people can become (12) \_\_\_\_."

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |                  |              |               |                |
|-----|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1.  | (a) approachable | (b) reproach | (c) poach     | (d) approach   |
| 2.  | (a) rub          | (b) friction | (c) abrasion  | (d) faction    |
| 3.  | (a) to           | (b) of       | (c) at        | (d) from       |
| 4.  | (a) strength     | (b) strongly | (c) strong    | (d) stronger   |
| 5.  | (a) sum          | (b) value    | (c) amount    | (d) total      |
| 6.  | (a) luge         | (b) huge     | (c) deluge    | (d) refuge     |
| 7.  | (a) sinking      | (b) sank     | (c) sinkable  | (d) unsinkable |
| 8.  | (a) views        | (b) vision   | (c) voluble   | (d) visible    |
| 9.  | (a) by           | (b) of       | (c) so        | (d) as         |
| 10. | (a) atheism      | (b) athletic | (c) atheistic | (d) atheist    |
| 11. | (a) put          | (b) taken    | (c) held      | (d) built      |
| 12. | (a) one          | (b) once     | (c) oneness   | (d) ones       |



# HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about Christmas trees. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. CHRISTMAS TREES:** Make a poster about Christmas trees. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. CHRISTMAS:** Write a magazine article about Christmas. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to one of the Korean leaders. Ask him three questions about the Christmas trees. Give him three of your opinions on this news. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. F      c. T      d. F      e. F      f. T      g. T      h. T

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. approach     | a. nearing       |
| 2. rival        | b. adversary     |
| 3. proposed     | c. suggested     |
| 4. reaction     | d. response      |
| 5. simply       | e. just          |
| 6. following    | f. after         |
| 7. accused      | g. blamed        |
| 8. atheist      | h. non-believing |
| 9. unity        | i. oneness       |
| 10. expectation | j. assumption    |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                       |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. The approach of Christmas          | a. is bringing tensions |
| 2. The source of the                  | b. latest friction      |
| 3. put up the towers within           | c. sight of the North   |
| 4. The move has provoked              | d. strong reaction      |
| 5. a sign of the freedom              | e. of expression        |
| 6. Relations on the Korean Peninsular | f. are still low        |
| 7. the trees will be visible          | g. from the North       |
| 8. spread Christianity to people in   | h. atheist North Korea  |
| 9. peace on the                       | i. Korean peninsula     |
| 10. some day our people can           | j. become one           |

## GAP FILL:

### Christmas trees increase Korean tensions

The approach of Christmas is bringing (1) **tensions** between rival neighbours North and South Korea. The source of the (2) **latest** friction is the proposed erection of two 30-metre-tall Christmas-tree-shaped towers near the (3) **border** of the two Koreas. The South Korean government has agreed to a request from Christian groups to put up the towers within (4) **sight** of the North Korean city of Kaesong. The (5) **move** has provoked strong reaction from North Korea. Its state-run website has said putting up the towers would (6) **amount** to 'psychological warfare'. South Korea has (7) **denied** such claims. It says the huge steel trees are simply a sign of the freedom of expression and religion people in the South (8) **enjoy**.

Relations on the Korean Peninsular are still (9) **low** following the sinking of one of South Korea's warships in March 2010 with the (10) **loss** of 46 lives. It is the first time in seven years that the trees will be (11) **visible** from the North. The last time it happened, Pyongyang accused Seoul of using the trees to try and spread Christianity to people in (12) **atheist** North Korea. South Korean religious leaders disagree. Tak Sejin, chairman of the group organising the tree lighting, said: "This is a (13) **ceremony** for peace on the Korean peninsula and national (14) **unity**. It is being held with our desire for harmony (15) **among** our fellow men and between North and South Korea." Mr Sejin added: "We are doing this with the expectation that some day our people can become (16) **one**."

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d    2 - b    3 - a    4 - c    5 - c    6 - b    7 - a    8 - d    9 - b    10 - d    11 - c    12 - a