

Festive Puzzles for Writers

10 Puzzle Free Sample

By C. J. Solomon

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1. WORD SEARCH – WINTER HOLIDAYS

Solve the word search by finding this collection of words about the winter holidays. The words might go across the page, up, down or could run diagonally.

This word collection and the many others in this book can be used to provide scene, story or novel ideas, or details for a description.

S	E	I	T	R	A	P	E	Y	A	R	G	A	N	O
A	T	H	S	T	E	E	W	S	L	R	A	D	E	M
E	S	C	E	X	A	L	E	R	O	I	Y	L	E	S
S	N	R	G	E	R	N	G	O	S	E	M	A	G	A
E	O	U	N	A	T	N	O	E	R	P	B	A	I	N
V	I	H	I	T	L	A	G	N	I	K	A	B	F	T
I	T	C	P	S	H	O	L	R	E	S	H	E	N	A
T	U	E	P	D	T	P	G	O	I	N	R	F	L	S
A	L	R	O	R	E	R	N	R	C	E	O	S	O	G
L	O	E	H	A	T	F	I	L	T	O	L	N	O	R
E	S	L	S	C	S	H	U	E	D	R	H	U	C	O
R	E	G	E	S	E	R	N	N	G	I	M	C	I	T
A	R	E	D	R	S	T	N	E	S	E	R	P	E	T
S	S	D	N	E	I	R	F	P	R	A	L	O	F	O
E	R	E	L	L	W	E	T	A	R	B	E	L	E	C

Baking
Cards
Celebrate
Chocolate
Church
Family

Food
Friends
Fun
Games
Parties
Presents

Relatives
Relax
Resolutions
Santa's Grotto
Shopping
Sweets

2. INSPIRATION – NOVEL OPENINGS

Here are the opening lines to some well-known novels that either have a festive theme or strong descriptions of winter. Take a look at how they grab the attention of the reader, making you want to know more, often hinting at a problem or mystery.

‘Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a doornail.’ – “**A Christmas Carol**” by Charles Dickens

‘The little town straggling up the hill was bright with coloured Christmas lights. But George Pratt did not see them. He was leaning over the railing of the iron bridge, staring down moodily at the black water. The current eddied and swirled like liquid glass, and occasionally a bit of ice, detached from the shore, would go gliding downstream to be swallowed up in the shadows.’ – “**The Greatest Gift**” by Philip Van Doren Stern

‘Mabel had known there would be silence. That was the point, after all. No infants cooing or wailing. No neighbour children playfully hollering down the lane. No pad of small feet on wooden stairs worn smooth by generations, or clackety-clack of toys along the kitchen floor. All those sounds of her failure and regret would be left behind, and in their place there would be silence.’ – “**The Snow Child**” by Eowyn Ivey

‘On they went, singing “Eternal Memory”, and whenever they stopped, the sound of their feet, the horses and the gusts of wind seemed to carry on their singing. Passers-by made way for the procession, counted the wreaths and crossed themselves. Some joined in out of curiosity and asked, “Who is being buried?”’ – “**Dr Zhivago**” by Boris Pasternak

‘Every who down in Who-ville liked Christmas a lot.’ – “**The Grinch Who Stole Christmas**” by Dr Seuss

‘The gate was packed with weary travellers, most of them standing and huddled along the walls because the meagre allotment of plastic chairs had long since been taken. Every plane that came and went held at least eighty passengers, yet the gate had seats for only a few dozen.’ – “**Skipping Christmas**” by John Grisham

‘Everything starts somewhere, although many physicists disagree.’ – “**Hogfather**” by Terry Pratchett

‘Snow was falling on Riverside, great white feather-puffs that veiled the cracks in the facades of its ruined houses; slowly softening the harsh contours of jagged roof and fallen beam.’ – “**Swordpoint**” by Ellen Kushner

3. LOGIC PUZZLE – FESTIVAL RESEARCH

Add all the information from the clues into the first grid and, by a process of deduction and elimination, solve the puzzle.

Fiona’s writing group meets once a week to talk about useful subjects for its members. This week the group is discussing Christmas novels and how to go about researching another country’s festival. Work out which writer gives which piece of advice about research methods and about how to use the research.

CLUES	
1	One of the writers suggests reading as much as possible about the festival, both fictional accounts of it and non-fiction, noting down correct spellings for unfamiliar words. He also suggests using multiple sources.
2	Maia agrees that this is a good way to be objective in the research, so as to avoid making wrong assumptions.
3	One of the female writers suggests that visiting the festival is the only way to get a thorough knowledge of it.
4	Someone suggests interviewing people online or over the phone who live in the country where the festival takes place and know all about it.
5	Steve recommends watching documentaries and also suggests that getting feedback on the finished manuscript by at least one person from the other country’s culture is essential.
6	Maia isn’t the person who suggested visiting the festival.

	Festival Research Methods				Using Research			
	Documentaries	Interviews	Read	Visit	Feedback	Multiple	Objective	Respectful
Antonia								
Cliff								
Maia								
Steve								
Feedback								
Multiple								
Objective								
Respectful								

Name	Festival Research Advice	Using Research

4. CROSSWORD – CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS ACROSS THE WORLD

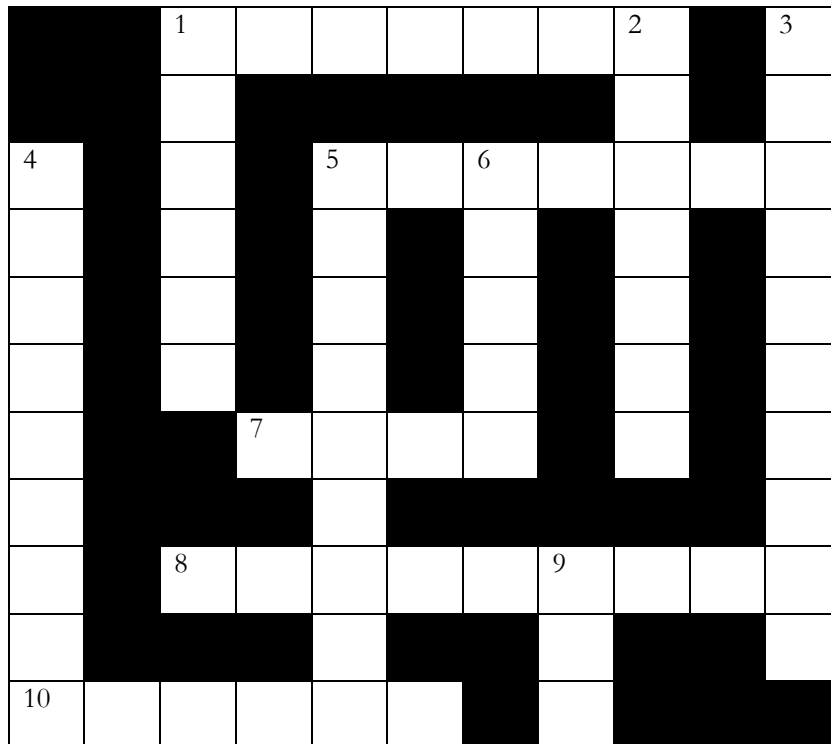
This is the first of 2 crosswords about Christmas traditions in different countries. People will generally only be familiar with the festivities of their own country and novels often reflect this, so by including other countries' customs you could make your story or novel more memorable and unique. You could, for example, have characters visit a different country over Christmas or mention festive customs they saw while previously staying abroad.

Across

- 1 These tiered towers are made for house decorations in China (7)
- 5 These maize kernels are strung together to make a tree decoration in the US (7)
- 7 This celestial decoration is hung in windows in Greenland (4)
- 8 These items of hosiery are hung up to be filled with presents in UK (9)
- 10 A decoration based on the web of this 8-legged insect is used to put on trees in Poland (6)

Down

- 1 Vegetable preserved in vinegar or brine. The image of this is used as a festive ornament in the US (6)
- 2 Popular German Christmas bread (7)
- 3 The name of the main winter event in Hong Kong and in other places (10)
- 4 These hopping animals are said to pull Santa's sleigh in Australia (9)
- 5 Italian Christmas cake (9)
- 6 Parchment used to make lanterns out of in Mexico (5)
- 9 Evergreen plant often used in Christmas wreaths and other decorations, including in Zimbabwe and the UK (3)



5. STORY CROSSWORD

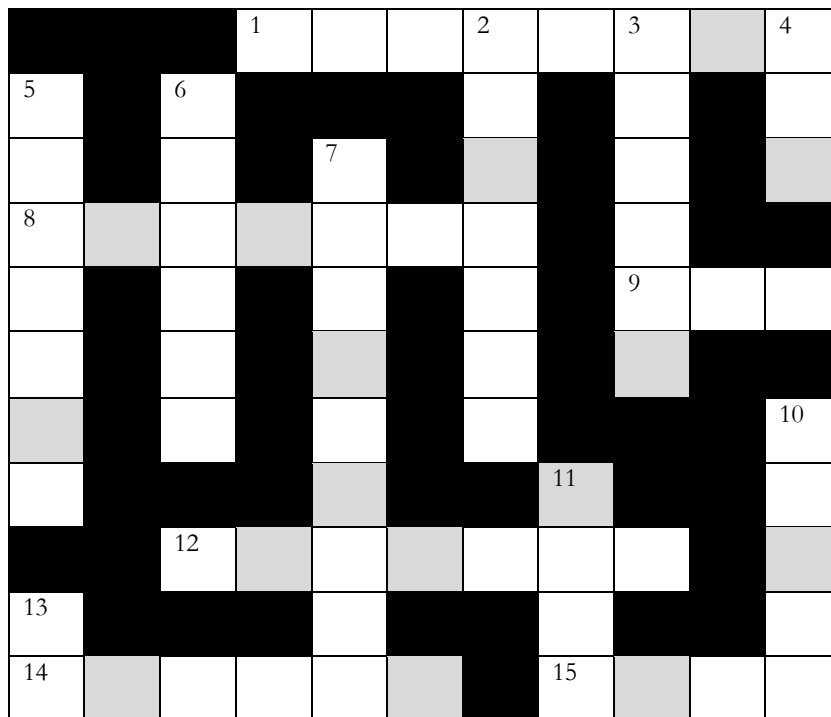
Complete the story and fill in the clues about this famous Christmas novella. The shaded squares are an anagram of its name.

This novella was written by Charles (2d)_____ and was first published on 19 December 1843 with illustrations by John Leech. Having experienced poverty as a boy and later visited poor areas, such as (9a)_____ mines in Cornwall, the author had a strong desire to make his readers aware of such hardships and to (11d)_____ bring about social reforms.

The author had already written a few Christmas (14a)_____ and had read essays about older Christmas traditions, along with experiencing the changing Victorian ideas about the festive season, such as the resurgence of interest in carols and the introduction to England of the Christmas Tree.

In 1843 he was having (7d)_____ problems and, with his fifth child born that year, he needed to earn extra money, so he wrote the entire manuscript of this book in six weeks. (12a)_____ with his vibrant characterisation and humour, the (15a)_____ involves a callous, miserly man who is redeemed after being visited by three ghosts. Through them we find out about the (3d)_____ that made Scrooge who he is and the bleak (6d)_____ that awaits him unless he changes. Regretting his behaviour, Scrooge decides that money is less important than showing (1a)_____ and compassion to those with less.

The book has never been out of (10d)_____ and remains (5d)_____ across the world. Various plays and films have been made, based (13d)___ it, featuring such actors as Alastair (4d)_____, Albert Finney and (8a)_____ Stewart. Its message of charity affected many of its wealthy readers of the time and has remained an important part of the festive season since then.

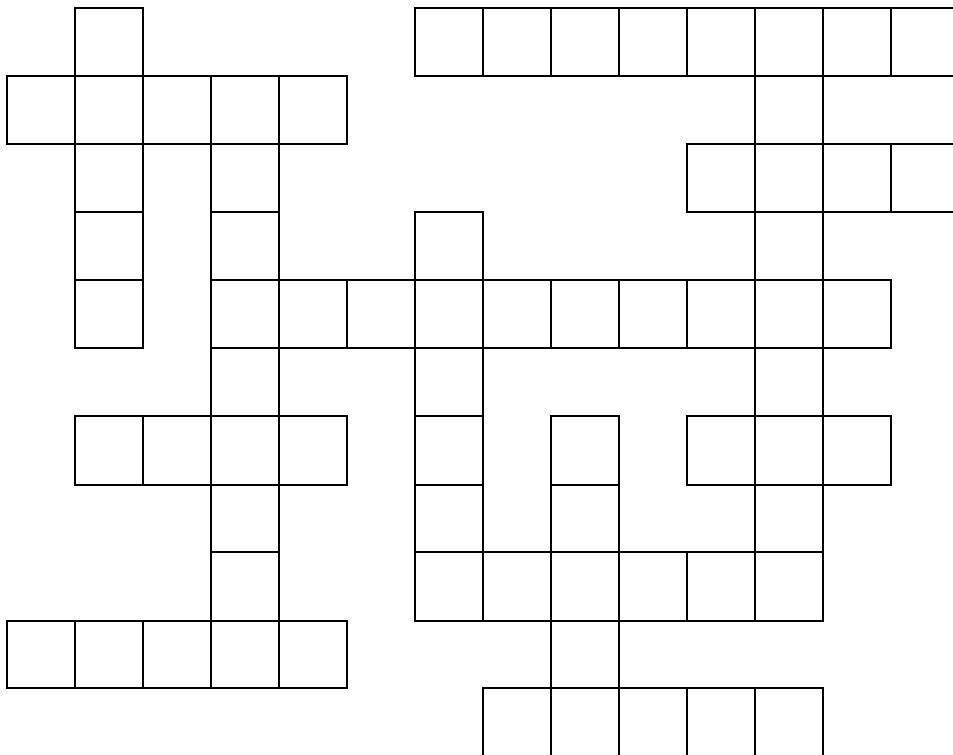


The name of this novella is _____

6. WORD JIGSAW – SNOWY WEATHER

Find a way to fit the words into the jigsaw grid below.

Here is another word list to help with wintry descriptions, story or scene settings, or plot ideas. Who might be caught out in a blizzard or hailstorm? Will they find refuge or someone to help them or will their supposed rescuer be about to attack or murder them?



<u>3-Letter Words</u> Ice	<u>4-Letter Words</u> Cold Hail	<u>5-Letter Words</u> Crisp Frost Sleet Slush White	<u>6-Letter Words</u> Sludge Storms <u>8-Letter Words</u> Blizzard	<u>9-Letter Words</u> Avalanche Snowflake <u>10-Letter Words</u> Winter Coat
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7. FACT JIGSAW - HANUKKAH

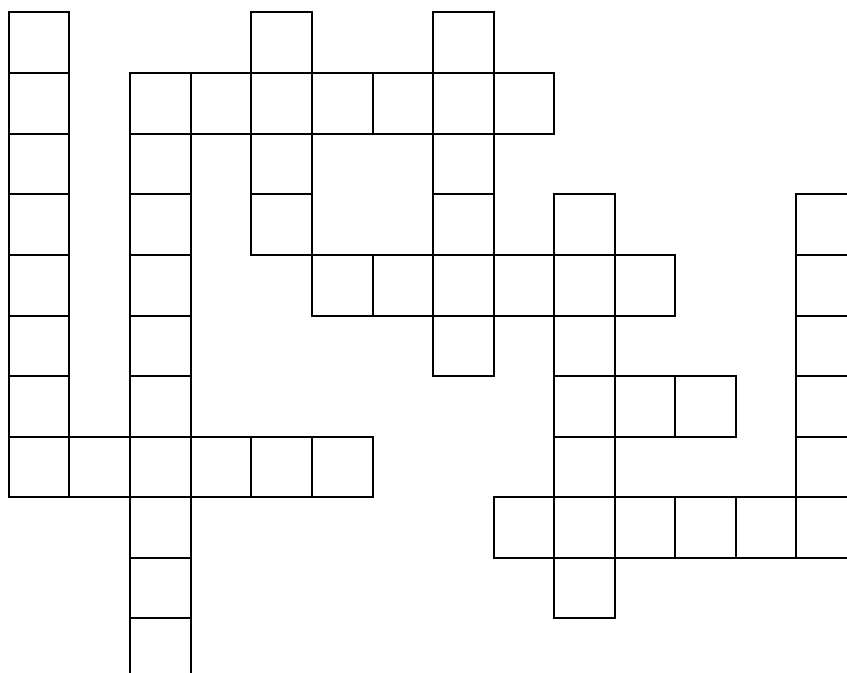
Use the underlined words in the Hanukkah information below to fill in the first grid, according to the number of letters in each word. The number of words in the grid is listed in brackets, i.e. one three-letter word, five six-letter words, etc. Once all the words are added, you can use them to put together the jigsaw.

Hanukkah is a Jewish celebration that is also sometimes called the Festival of Lights or the Festival of Dedication. It lasts for eight days, the date of its beginning being the twenty-fifth day of Kislev, in the Hebrew calendar. Since this date varies, the festival can take place in either November or December.

Hanukkah is dedicated to the re-dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem, referred to in Catholic and Orthodox versions of the Old Testament. The Jewish people had been persecuted by Antiochus, a Hellenistic Greek king, and after a successful revolt against him, their leader celebrated for eight days, with a miracle taking place of sacred oil that should have run out after one day lasting for eight.

In the current-day celebrations a menorah or hanukkiah candle-holder is used and a new candle is lit each night of the holiday. Gifts are exchanged and games played, including a special spinning top called a Dreidel. Hanukkah food is eaten, such as latkes (potato cakes), gelt (chocolate coins) and sufganiyot (doughnuts).

<u>3-Letter Words (1)</u> <u>4-Letter Words (1)</u>	<u>6-Letter Words (5)</u> <u>7-Letter Words (2)</u>	<u>8-Letter Words (1)</u> <u>10-Letter Words (1)</u>
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8. CODE WORDS

Each number corresponds to one letter of the alphabet. Fill in the letters from the starter word and work out which letter represents each number, then use the letters to de-code the quotation on writing by author, TV producer and TV host, Hugh Downs.

5	3	20	9	6	2		18	4	8	25	2	1
20		3		1		20		13		20		8
12	2	3	3	11		15		7	13	11	13	24
13		8		2		9		2		26		13
1	2	10		24	4	6	11	24		20	4	15
22			20			13			21			2
	2	14	5	3	8	11	13	7	2	3	12	
26			2			13			1			17
20	23	5		24	8	24	20	3		20	23	6
A	M	P										
4		4		20		13		20		16		21
23	8	8	21	11		8		11	10	6	1	22
2		8		24		1		11		4		2
21	2	19	13	2	11		7	8	10	2	3	11

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

11	8	23	2	24	26	13	1	22		20	18	8	6	24		20	1		8	3	21	
19	20	11	26	13	8	1	2	21		15	26	4	13	11	24	23	20	11		13	11	
26	20	4	21		24	8		19	8	4	22	2	24									

9. MISSING LINKS - CELEBRATE

Write in the grid the word that comes after the first word and before the second to make a new word or a phrase. Each set of words contains a word related to parties or celebrations, either in the clue or the missing link.

	LINKING WORD	
Birthday		Animal
Make		Christmas
Slow		Moves
Hollow		Celebration
French		Party
Wild		Psychology
Black		Pin
Christmas		Pooper
High		Partner

10. PUNCTUATION PUZZLE

The text below has no punctuation or capital letters, so see if you can add them back to make sense of it.

she could hear only the thud of her feet as she struggled through the deep snow and the sound of her breath coming out in quick gasps she glanced behind her trying to see anything moving amongst the dark shapes of the trees she was pretty sure she had lost him her hand aching and painful from the cold clasped the key he had betrayed her so she had no intention of letting him win without access to the safe and the new will it contained he had murdered his father for nothing

[You can buy the full 100-puzzle novel at Amazon](#)

Solutions

1. Word Search – Winter Holidays

S	E	I	T	R	A	P		Y						
		H	S	T	E	E	W	S	L					
	S	C		X	A	L	E	R		I				S
S	N	R	G	E					S	E	M	A	G	A
E	O	U	N		T							A		N
V	I	H	I			A	G	N	I	K	A	B	F	T
I	T	C	P	S			L							A
T	U		P	D				O				F		S
A	L		O	R					C		O			G
L	O		H	A		F				O				R
E	S		S	C			U		D		H			O
R	E							N				C		T
	R				S	T	N	E	S	E	R	P		T
	S	D	N	E	I	R	F							O
						E	T	A	R	B	E	L	E	C

3. Logic Puzzle – Festival Research

Name	Festival Research Advice	Using Research
Antonia	Visit Festival	Be respectful
Cliff	Read all about it	Use multiple research methods
Maia	Interview people	Be objective in research
Steve	Documentaries	Get feedback

4. Crossword – Christmas Traditions Across the World, part 1

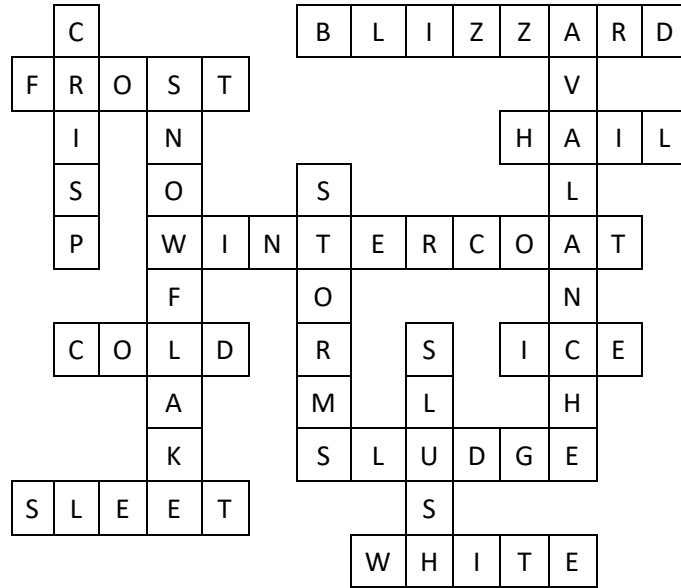
		1	P	A	G	O	D	A	2	S		3	W	
			I							T			I	
4	K		C		5	P	O	6	P	C	O	R	N	
	A		K		A				A		L		T	
	N		L		N				P		L		E	
	G		E		A				E		E		R	
	A			7	S	T	A	R			N		F	
	R					T							E	
	O			8	S	T	O	C	K	9	I	N	G	S
	O					N					V			T
10	S	P	I	D	E	R				Y				

5. Story Crossword

			1	K	I	N	2	D	N	3	E	S	4	S	
5	P		6	F				I		V				I	
	O			U		7	F		C		E			M	
8	P	A	T	R	I	C	K			N					
	U		U		N			E		9	T	I	N		
	L		R		A			N		S					
	A		E		N			S						10	P
	R				C				11	H					R
			12	W	R	I	T	T	E	N					I
13	O				A					L					N
14	N	O	V	E	L	S				15	P	L	O	T	

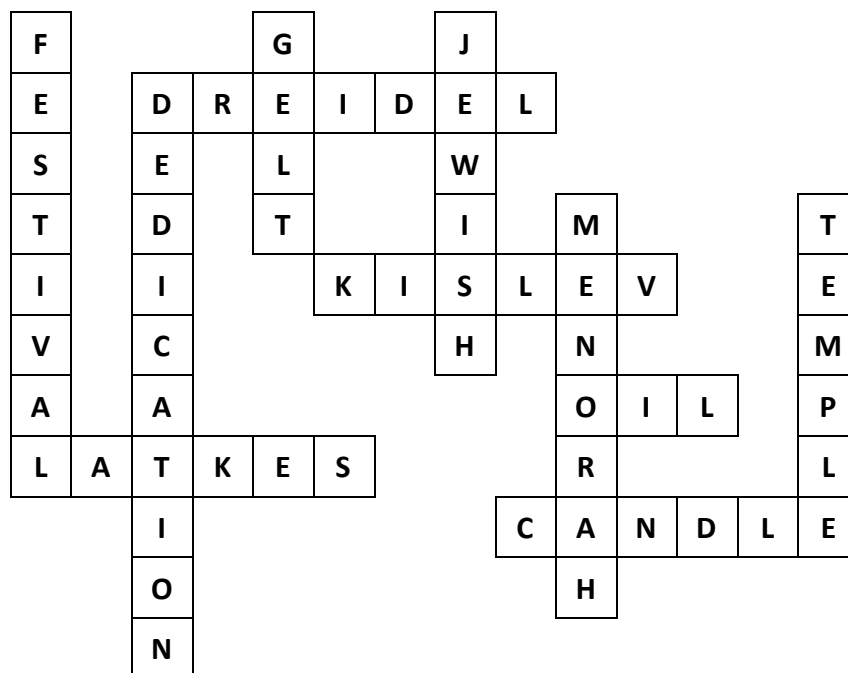
The name of this novella is "A Christmas Carol"

6. Word Jigsaw – Snowy Weather



7. Fact Jigsaw – Hanukkah

<u>3-Letter Words (1)</u> Oil	<u>6-Letter Words (5)</u> Candle Jewish Kislev Latkes Temple	<u>8-Letter Words (1)</u> Festival
<u>4-Letter Words (1)</u> Gelt	<u>7-Letter Words (2)</u> Dreidel Menorah	<u>10-Letter Words (1)</u> Dedication



8. Code Words

5	3	20	9	6	2		18	4	8	25	2	1
P	L	A	Q	U	E		B	R	O	K	E	N
20		3		1		20		13		20		8
A		L		N		A		I		A		O
12	2	3	3	11		15		7	13	11	13	24
Y	E	L	L	S		C		V	I	S	I	T
13		8		2		9		2		26		13
I		O		E		Q		E		H		I
1	2	10		24	4	6	11	24		20	4	15
N	E	W		T	R	U	S	T		A	R	C
22			20			13			21			2
G			A			I			D			E
	2	14	5	3	8	11	13	7	2	3	12	
	E	X	P	L	O	S	I	V	E	L	Y	
26			2			13			1			17
H			E			I			N			J
20	23	5		24	8	24	20	3		20	23	6
A	M	P		T	O	T	A	L		A	M	U
4		4		20		13		20		16		21
R		R		A		I		A		Z		D
23	8	8	21	11		8		11	10	6	1	22
M	O	O	D	S		O		S	W	U	N	G
2		8		24		1		11		4		2
E		O		T		N		S		R		E
21	2	19	13	2	11		7	8	10	2	3	11
D	E	F	I	E	S		V	O	W	E	L	S

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	E	L	R	P	U	V	O	Q	W	S	Y	I
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
X	C	Z	J	B	F	A	D	G	M	T	K	H

11	8	23	2	24	26	13	1	22		20	18	8	6	24		20	1		8	3	21	
S	O	M	E	T	H	I	N	G		A	B	O	U	T		A	N		O	L	D	-
19	20	11	26	13	8	1	2	21		15	26	4	13	11	24	23	20	11		13	11	
F	A	S	H	I	O	N	E	D		C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S		I	S	
26	20	4	21		24	8		19	8	4	22	2	24									
H	A	R	D		T	O		F	O	R	G	E	T	.								

9. Missing Links – Celebrate

	LINKING WORD	
Birthday	Party	Animal
Make	Merry	Christmas
Slow	Dance	Moves
Hollow	Victory	Celebration
French	Hen	Party
Wild	Child	Psychology
Black	Tie	Pin
Christmas	Party	Pooper
High	Life	Partner

10. Punctuation Puzzle

There's no one right way to punctuate the text below but this is how I would do it. As long as you added full stops in the same places as me and broke up the longer sentences with appropriate punctuation, you solved the puzzle.

She could hear only the thud of her feet, as she struggled through the deep snow, and the sound of her breath coming out in quick gasps. She glanced behind her, trying to see anything moving amongst the dark shapes of the trees: she was pretty sure she had lost him. Her hand – aching and painful from the cold – clasped the key. He had betrayed her, so she had no intention of letting him win. Without access to the safe and the new will it contained, he had murdered his father for nothing.