December 2026 quiz: host's script

Read the questions aloud. Answers are in blue, with a fact to share.

How to run the quiz

1. Before you start: print one quiz (multiple-choice or open) for each team and the scoring sheet once. Keep the answer pages and this script with you.

2. Make teams of two to five, and mix quick talkers with careful thinkers. A table can be a team.

3. Read each question twice, slowly, facing the room. Read the four answers too if you are playing multiple choice.

4. There is no time limit: wait until every team has written something, then go on.

5. At the end of each round, read the answers and the fact under each one. Teams mark their own sheet or swap with the next table.

6. Add up the scores on the scoring sheet after each round, and use the tie-break if two teams draw.

Say: Welcome to our December quiz. There are four rounds of ten questions. Take your time, talk it over with your team, and write down your best answer: a guess is better than a blank.

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Round 1: General knowledge and words

Say: Round 1 is general knowledge and words. Here is question one.

1. How many sides does a hexagon have?

Answer: Six (C)

Bees build their honeycomb cells as hexagons.

2. What do we call a word that reads the same backwards as forwards, such as level?

Answer: A palindrome (C)

Other palindromes include noon, radar and kayak.

3. What is the capital city of Canada?

Answer: Ottawa (D)

Queen Victoria chose Ottawa as the capital in 1857.

4. How many years of marriage does a golden wedding anniversary mark?

Answer: 50 years (C)

A silver anniversary is 25 years and a diamond anniversary is 60.

5. Which planet is known as the Red Planet?

Answer: Mars (C)

Iron oxide, a kind of rust, in its dust and rocks makes Mars look red.

6. In which year did people first walk on the Moon?

Answer: 1969 (C)

Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on 20 July 1969 (21 July in New Zealand and Australia).

7. How long is a fortnight?

Answer: Two weeks (B)

The word comes from the Old English for fourteen nights.

8. How many keys does a standard modern piano have?

Answer: 88 (B)

There are 52 white keys and 36 black keys.

9. Who painted the Mona Lisa?

Answer: Leonardo da Vinci (B)

The painting hangs in the Louvre in Paris.

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10. Which letter is used most often in written English?

Answer: E (D)

T and A are the next most common letters.

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Round 2: Nature and places

> **Say:** Round 2 is nature and places. Here is question one.

1. What is the largest ocean on Earth?
Answer: The Pacific Ocean (B)
The Pacific covers about a third of the surface of the Earth.

2. Which flightless bird is a national symbol of New Zealand?
Answer: The kiwi (B)
New Zealanders have been nicknamed Kiwis since about the First World War.

3. What is the highest mountain above sea level?
Answer: Mount Everest (B)
Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay first reached the top in May 1953.

4. How many legs does a spider have?
Answer: Eight (D)
Insects have six legs, so a spider is not an insect.

5. What is the longest river in Australia? (Australia question)
Answer: The Murray (C)
The Murray runs for about 2,500 kilometres to the sea in South Australia.

6. In which city does the Statue of Liberty stand?
Answer: New York (D)
It was a gift from the people of France and was dedicated in 1886.

7. Which tree grows acorns?
Answer: The oak (C)
An acorn usually holds a single seed and sits in a little cup.

8. What is the capital city of Scotland?
Answer: Edinburgh (D)
Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland, but Edinburgh is the capital.

9. What is the largest land animal alive today?
Answer: The African elephant (A)
A big male African bush elephant can weigh about six tonnes.

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10. Which is the largest of the Great Lakes of North America?

Answer: Lake Superior (C)

Lake Superior is shared by Canada and the United States.

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Round 3: Food, music and films

Say: Round 3 is food, music and films. Here is question one.

1. The pavlova dessert was named after a famous what?
Answer: A ballerina (C)
It honours the Russian dancer Anna Pavlova, who toured New Zealand and Australia in the 1920s. Both countries claim the dessert.

2. What is the main ingredient of guacamole?
Answer: Avocado (B)
Guacamole comes from Mexico.

3. Which nut is ground to make marzipan?
Answer: Almonds (A)
Marzipan is almonds and sugar, often used to cover a Christmas cake.

4. What kind of fruit is a Granny Smith?
Answer: An apple (B)
It is named after Maria Ann Smith, who grew the first one near Sydney in the 1860s.

5. Which spice comes from the dried threads of a crocus flower?
Answer: Saffron (B)
Saffron is picked by hand, which is why it costs so much.

6. In which 1965 film did Julie Andrews play Maria von Trapp?
Answer: The Sound of Music (D)
Julie Andrews had played Mary Poppins the year before, in 1964.

7. From which English city did the Beatles come?
Answer: Liverpool (D)
The band formed there in 1960.

8. Which singer was called the King of Rock and Roll?
Answer: Elvis Presley (C)
Elvis grew up in Tupelo, Mississippi, and Memphis, Tennessee.

9. Which Swedish group won the Eurovision Song Contest in 1974?
Answer: ABBA (D)
The contest was held in Brighton, England, that year.

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10. Who played Eliza Doolittle in the 1964 film My Fair Lady?

Answer: Audrey Hepburn (D)

Most of her songs in the film were sung by Marni Nixon.

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Round 4: December days

Say: Round 4 is December days. Here is question one.

1. December takes its name from the Latin word for which number?

Answer: Ten (B)

It was the tenth month of the oldest Roman calendar, which began in March.

2. The December solstice is the shortest day in the UK and the US. What is it in New Zealand and Australia?

Answer: The longest day (B)

The solstice falls on 21 or 22 December, so the south has its longest day near Christmas.

3. In which year did the Wright brothers make the first powered aeroplane flight, on 17 December?

Answer: 1903 (B)

The first flight, at Kitty Hawk in North Carolina, lasted 12 seconds.

4. Which explorer led the first team to reach the South Pole, on 14 December 1911?

Answer: Roald Amundsen (C)

Amundsen was Norwegian. Scott reached the Pole about five weeks later.

5. Which Dutch explorer was the first European known to sight New Zealand, in December 1642? (New Zealand question)

Answer: Abel Tasman (B)

The Tasman Sea between New Zealand and Australia is named after him.

6. For how many nights is Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights, celebrated?

Answer: Eight (A)

One more candle is lit each night. In 2026 Hanukkah begins on the evening of 4 December.

7. On 16 December 1773, protesters in Boston threw what into the harbour? (US question)

Answer: Tea (D)

The Boston Tea Party was a protest against a British tax.

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8. In December 1952, a thick smog covered which city for five days? (UK question)

Answer: London (B)

The Great Smog led to Britain’s Clean Air Act of 1956.

9. Which famous yacht race starts in Sydney Harbour on 26 December each year? (Australia question)

Answer: The Sydney to Hobart (C)

The first race was sailed in 1945.

10. Nobel Prizes are presented every 10 December, the anniversary of whose death?

Answer: Alfred Nobel (D)

Nobel, a Swedish chemist, invented dynamite and left his fortune to fund the prizes.

Tie-break: closest answer wins

T. How high is Mount Everest, in metres?

Answer: 8,849 metres (nearest wins)

China and Nepal announced 8,848.86 metres together in 2020, so 8,849 rounded. In feet it is about 29,032.

Say: That is the end of the quiz. Thank you all for playing. Let us add up the scores.