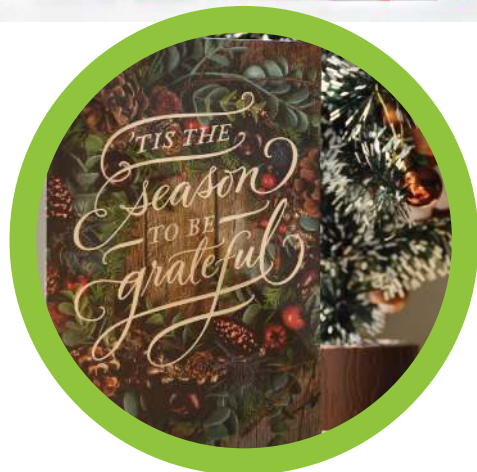


THE NUMBERS

Every year, people across the UK celebrate Christmas. They spend more money than during the rest of the year and send presents to friends and family. Let's have a look at some of the staggering numbers behind it all.

£20 billion

In 2019, people in the UK spent almost £20 billion during Christmas. Most of this went on food, drink and presents.



1 billion cards

Brits send roughly 1 billion Christmas cards each year! This year, don't forget to recycle or reuse any that you can. People in the USA send twice as many as that - over 2 billion cards are delivered each year. The first Christmas card was sent by Sir Henry Cole in 1843. It had written on it: "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." It was sold at an auction in 2001 for \$35,800!

FANTASTIC FADS

Every year, it seems like there is a new "must-have" toy. This isn't anything new. New and exciting "fads" have been taking over Christmas shopping for years. These are two of the ones that caused the most excitement, and the most panic in case you missed out.



TAMAGOTCHI

Released in Japan in 1996, the Tamagotchi took over the rest of the world in 1997. Every child seemed to want the responsibility of looking after a virtual pet - right up until they forgot to feed or exercise them and they died. Something that happened annoyingly often.

FURBY

You'd think people would have learned in 1997, but 1998 brought its own craze. Furbys sold by the millions in the first year - over 40 million had been sold by 2001. It didn't matter that the noises they made were annoying, so many people wanted one that second-hand Furbys were selling for 4 or 5 times their price in the first year!



TOP TOYS

LEGO continues to be one of the most popular toys for children. In 2019, it was one of the most requested toys of the year. In fact, LEGO minifigures are the world's largest population: there are over 4 billion of them out there! During the lead up to Christmas, nearly 30 LEGO sets are sold every second, around the world!



RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. How much did people in the UK spend at Christmas in 2019?
2. How many Christmas cards do people in Britain send each year?
3. How much was the first Christmas card sold for at auction?
4. Which toy became a fad in 1998?
5. How many LEGO sets are sold each second during the Christmas period?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

What is a Christmas “craze”?

I

What does the text suggest you do with your Christmas cards?

S

According to the text, what did children have to do to keep their Tamagotchi alive?

V

Find and copy a word in the text that means “asked for”.

I

Why does the text say that LEGO minifigures are the largest population in the world?

Answers:

1. £20 billion
2. 1 billion
3. \$35,800
4. Furby
5. 30

V: Something that people get crazy about owning or doing over Christmas

I: Recycle or reuse them

S: Feed and exercise them

V: Requested

I: There are 4 billion of them – this is more than any other human population