

December 2020

# BEATITUDES

BRINGING YOU 'BLESSEDNESS' FROM THE CLSMSS ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

## *Determined December*



WHAT'S INSIDE:

Twelve Wonderful Months at CLSMSS - December Thoughts & Christmas Message

Revisiting Grammar Rules - Back to Basics: all about adjectives

The Box of Christmas Delights

Have a Holly Jolly Christmas!

# *Twelve Wonderful Months*

## AT CLSMSS

Here we are - right in the thick of December 2020. 2020 is quickly drawing to a close, with Christmas and New Year's Day greeting us in no time.

It has been a challenging term but to their credit, our students rose to those challenges and seemed to take them in their stride. Teaching staff and supporting staff have been terrific in their steadfast determination to put the students' education and interests first, adapting from face-to-face to online teaching often with little notice. Other staff, including administration, and minor staff, have all done a splendid job and done their best to play their part in providing the stability and security that our students deserve. Everyone deserves a big thank you.

As we head towards Christmas, many of us are perhaps facing the period with a little trepidation, given the pandemic situation in Hong Kong. It may be difficult to celebrate the season like how we have always done so in the past. However, we should also remember that family and friends, wherever they may be, are there to support each other in times just as these.

Christmas should remind us that there are important dimensions to our lives that surpass our everyday worries and that what binds us together, not least as part of the CLSMSS family and beyond, is our firm commitment to these values. It is hope, kindness, gratitude, integrity and resilience that lie at the heart of who we are and what identifies us as CLSMSS.

**“Remember this December, that love weighs more than gold!”**  
**- Josephine Dodge Daskam Bacon**

So, as we approach the festive period, let us raise a glass metaphorically or in real, to those values which bind us through all that life may throw at us. And in this spirit, we look forward to the post-COVID world which we all hope will begin to materialise in the New Year.

With best wishes for an uplifting Christmas.

# WONDERFUL MONTHS AT CLSMSS



## JOYOUS JANUARY

"If all you was just look for things to appreciate, you would live a **joyous**, spectacular life."  
– Abraham Hicks

## FABULOUS FEBRUARY

"If you allow yourself to feel **fabulous**, you are **fabulous**."  
– Natalia Kills

## MAGICAL MARCH

"The world is full of **magical** things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper."  
– W.B. Yeats

## AWESOME APRIL

"**Awesome** people have awesome attitudes and do things awesomely. If you want to build and maintain an awesome attitude, get into the habit of living in the present and doing it now."

## MINDFUL MAY

"The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When **mindfulness** embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers."  
– Thich Nhat Hanh

## JOLLY JUNE

"There might be some credit in being **jolly**."  
– Charles Dickens

## JUBILANT JULY

"Let the fields be **jubilant**, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy."  
– Psalm 96:12

## AMAZING AUGUST

"**Amazing**. There's just no other word for it. Amazing."  
– Darrell Royal

## SUPPORTIVE SEPTEMBER

"It is better to be **supportive** than be superior."  
– Lailah Gifty Akita

## OPTIMISTIC OCTOBER

"**Optimism** is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."  
– Helen Keller

## NOBLE NOVEMBER

"Gratitude is the sign of **noble** souls."  
– Aesop

## DETERMINED DECEMBER

"The path to success is to take massive, **determined** action."  
– Tony Robbins



IT'S THE  
M O S T

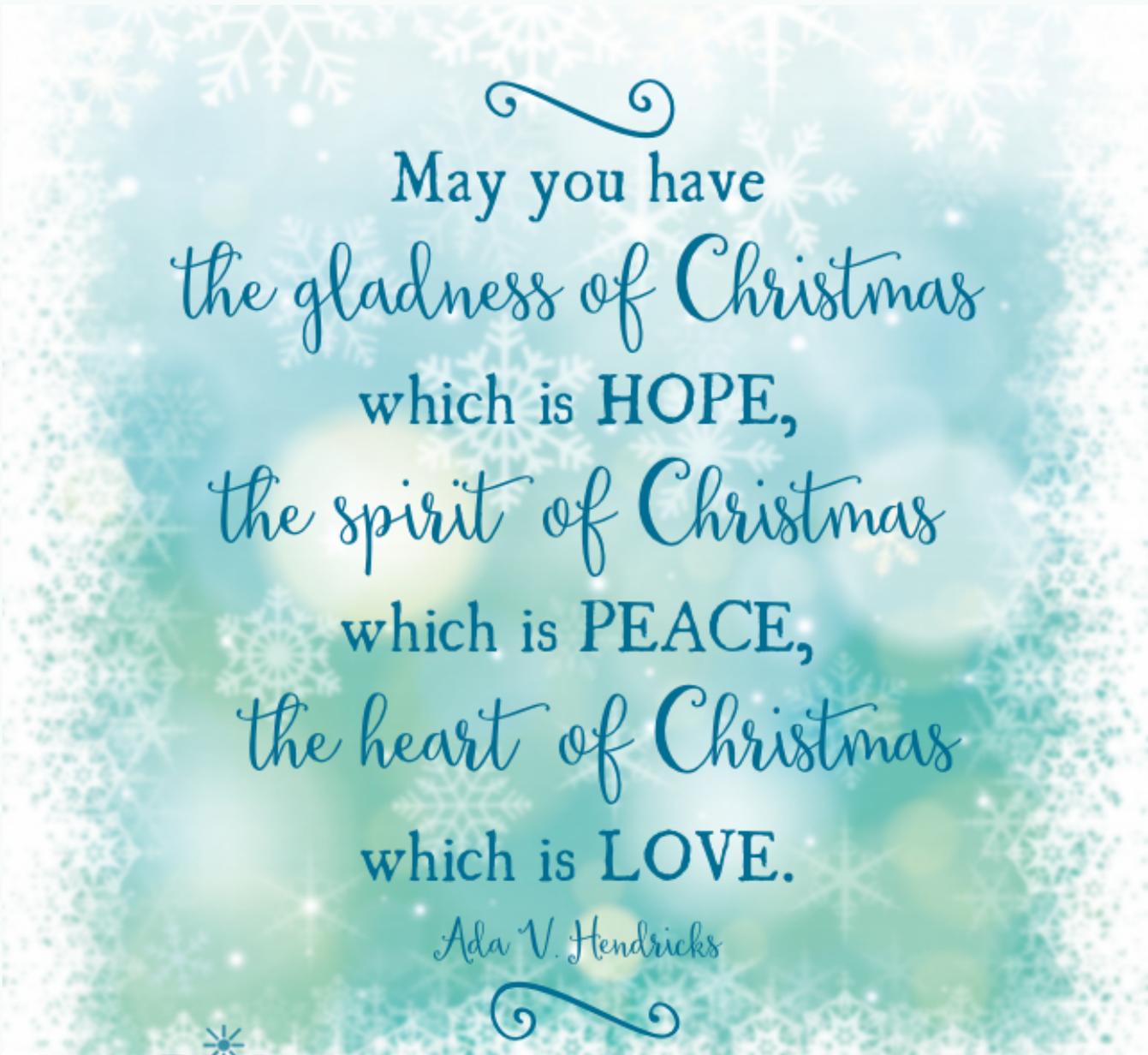
*Wonderful  
time of the Year*

THERE'LL BE MUCH  
MISTLETOEING

—○○○—  
AND HEARTS WILL BE GLOWING

when loved ones are near  
*it's the most wonderful  
time of the year*





May you have  
the gladness of Christmas  
which is HOPE,  
the spirit of Christmas  
which is PEACE,  
the heart of Christmas  
which is LOVE.

*Ada V. Hendricks*

# REVISITING GRAMMAR RULES

## Back to Basics

Now that we have gathered our momentum, and are preparing for our first term examination, let us take a moment to refresh our memory on some grammar rules. In this edition, we will take a look at the basics of adjectives.

### what are ADJECTIVES?

An adjective is a word that describes people, objects, events, substances and ideas. They tell us more about the nouns they describe (e.g. their size, colour, or shape).

Using adjectives to describe the things, people or ideas we are talking about helps our readers and listeners form a more vivid picture of them.

*e.g.*

PLEASE BRING THAT **BEAUTIFUL LEATHER BAG** TO ME.

(expresses a positive opinion)

SHE WAS A **TIMID, NONDESCRIPT** GIRL WHEN SHE WAS IN SCHOOL.

(expresses a negative opinion)

## how to use adjectives

Adjectives may be found in three positions in a sentence:

### **before a noun**

**exciting lesson**  
**empty room**

### **as a complement** (after a linking verb)

**The shop is open**  
**John is sick**

### **after a noun or an indefinite pronoun**

**I wrote to the person concerned**  
**Is there anyone important at the meeting?**

# COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are useful when you want to compare things.

Adjectives have three degrees: **positive**, **comparative**, **superlative**

## POSITIVE

The positive merely describes a noun.

**e.g. a tall child, a fierce lion, a demure boy.**

## COMPARATIVE

The comparative compares one person, animal or object with another.

**e.g. She is taller than her mother.**

## SUPERLATIVE

The superlative compares a person, animal or object with more than one other.

**e.g. She is the tallest in her class.**

# Differences between comparative adjectives

Some adjectives are modified to show comparison by taking the suffix **-er** in the comparative form and **-est** in the superlative.

Other adjectives show comparison by having the word **more** or **most** before the adjective to convey the comparative and superlative respectively.

## “-est” and “-er”

Words containing one or two syllables.

**e.g. taller, faster,  
prettier**

## “more” and “most”

Some adjectives containing two syllables. All adjectives containing three or more syllables.

**e.g. more intelligent,  
most comfortable**

# *The Box of Christmas Delights*



This Christmas break, as you are busy mugging up the different subjects for your examination, it would be wonderful to take a break by snuggling up and watching some Christmas movies.

We all know that everyone deserves a break, and watching a heartwarming holiday flick with your family over a nice, warm mug of hot cocoa is perhaps one of the simplest yet merriest ways to celebrate the season.

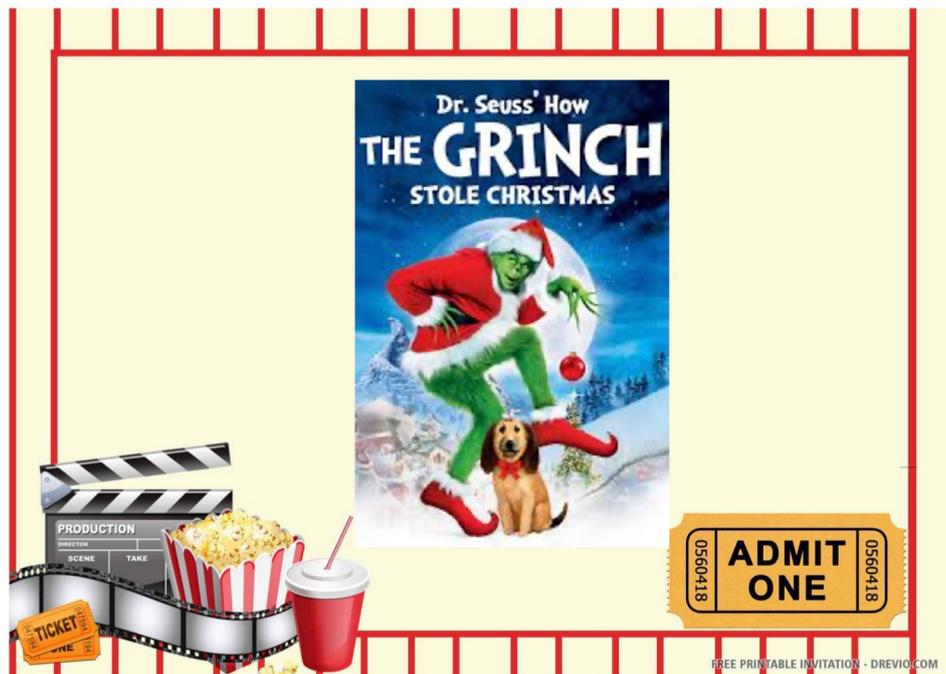
We have selected a list of three holiday films for you to indulge in (based on age), and they certainly could double up as a means of learning English!

**Keep your eyes peeled for a treat (via school Gmail) on Boxing Day! Exciting prizes await participants!**

# Movie One



## HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS



### Suitable for both Junior and Senior Form

Grinch lives in solitude just outside Whoville. He hates the townsfolk and despises Christmas. Cindy Lou, a six-year-old girl who believes in the spirit of the festival, sets out to reform him.

### Positive Message(s)

A reminder that Christmas is about celebrating love, family, and gratefulness. It also demonstrates how even the smallest kindness can change the hardest heart, and rejects the commercialisation of Christmas.

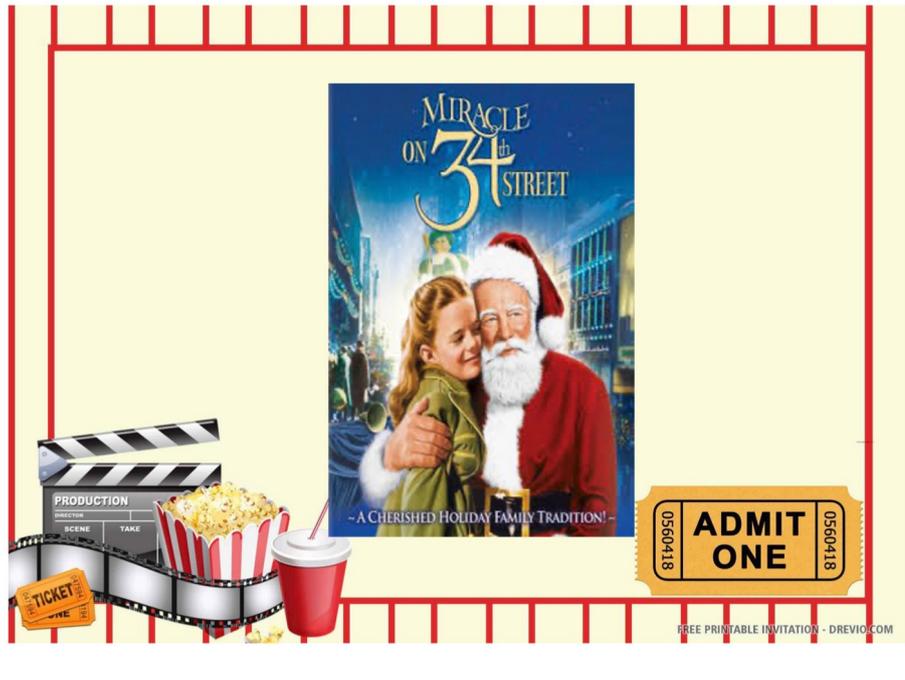


**Value - 4.5**

# Movie Two



## Miracle On 34th Street



### Suitable for both Junior and Senior Form

In this Christmas classic, an old man going by the name of Kris Kringle fills in for an intoxicated Santa in Macy's annual Thanksgiving Day parade. Kringle proves to be such a hit that he is soon appearing regularly at the chain's main store in midtown Manhattan. When Kringle surprises customers and employees alike by claiming that he really is Santa Claus, it leads to a court case to determine his mental health and, more importantly, his authenticity.

### Positive Message(s)

Heartwarming messages about the importance of childhood wonder, trust, integrity, courage, and standing up for what one believes in.



**Value - 4.7**

# Movie Three



## NEW YEAR'S EVE



### Suitable for Senior Form

People from different walks of life get their lives intertwined when they embark on a quest to find happiness on New Year's Eve.

### Positive Message(s)

The many characters in the film demonstrate hope, optimism, forgiveness, and -- most of all -- love.



Value - 4.1

# ARE YOU READY TO HAVE A HOLLY JOLLY CHRISTMAS?

## HAVE A Holly Jolly CHRISTMAS



The holiday season is upon us once again! Gear up for the festivities by decorating your very own Christmas tree and emptying your stockings to receive presents from your friends and family. Before we prepare our bellies for the holiday feasts that are to come, let us take a look at the meanings and origins behind some popular Christmas customs and symbols.



### White Christmas

(phrase)



The phrase 'White Christmas' was first recorded in a song of the same name penned by Irving Berlin in 1940. The term refers to a Christmas in which there is considerable snowfall. In the Northern Hemisphere, Christmas is associated with snow as the festive holiday falls within the period of winter. While Singapore will probably never experience a White Christmas, the term has become so ubiquitous in popular culture that you will often hear the song playing in shopping malls across the country when the festive period rolls around.



### Partridge

(noun)



A partridge is a short-tailed bird with mainly brown feathers. The partridge has become one of the many symbols of Christmas owing to its feature in the popular Christmas carol, 'The Twelve Days of Christmas.'

The exact meaning behind the phrase 'a partridge in a pear tree' is unknown, and many have pointed out that it would be highly unusual for partridges to be found in pear trees since they are ground-nesting birds. Thus, it has been suggested that the line 'in a pear tree' was probably the result of a poor translation of the original French lyric, 'une perdrix'.



## Nutcracker

(noun)



As the word itself suggests, a nutcracker is a tool that is used to crack nuts. How the nutcracker came to be associated with Christmas iconography is a mystery. One popular origin myth suggests that the distinctive toy-soldier dolls that we are familiar with today were conceived in the 17th century by German woodworkers. Subsequently, they were given out as gifts during Christmas as dolls symbolise good luck in German tradition.



## Mistletoe

(noun)



A mistletoe is a plant that grows on a range of trees, including willow, apple and oak trees. The tradition of hanging mistletoe in houses dates back to the ancient Druids, who believed that mistletoe possessed mythical powers that could ward off evil spirits and bring good luck to the household. On the other hand, the custom of kissing under the mistletoe was derived from Norse mythology, for they believed that the mistletoe symbolised love and friendship.



## Eggnog

(noun)



Eggnog is a sweet, creamy, dairy-based beverage that is traditionally made with milk, cream, sugar, and whipped egg whites and egg yolk. It is usually served chilled and is sometimes combined with brandy, rum, or bourbon. Its origins as a wintertime beverage date back to before the 17th century, when it was a popular festive drink among British aristocrats. It has since become a Christmas holiday staple and is commonly served at parties.

“CHRISTMAS WAVES A MAGIC WAND OVER THIS WORLD,  
AND BEHOLD, EVERYTHING IS SOFTER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL.”

– Norman Vincent Peale

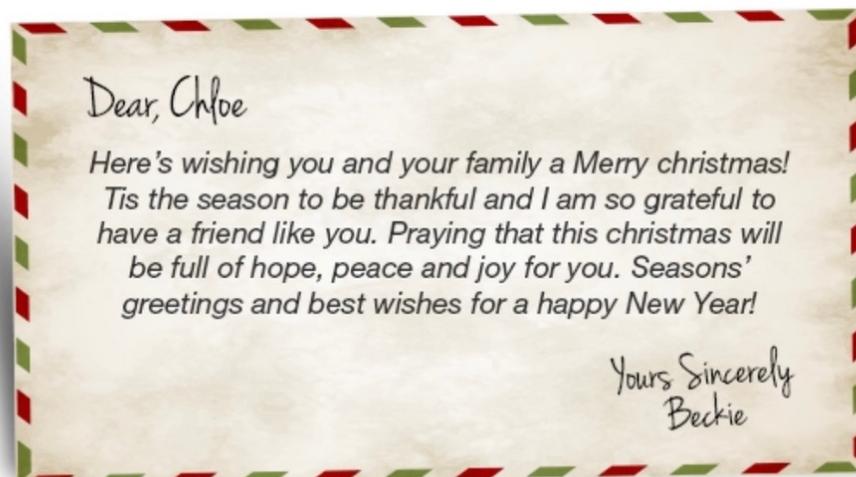


Are you ready to write your  
Christmas cards?



Have you thought about what to write in your Christmas cards? Before you start, let us share with you a few grammar mistakes to avoid in holiday greetings.

Have a look at the following  
greeting card message.  
Can you spot any errors?



# Are you ready to write your Christmas cards?

## Salutation



Dear, Chloe



Dear Chloe,

'Dear' is an adjective that modifies the noun, Chloe. If the salutation in your greeting card starts with 'Dear', place a comma after the name of the person you're directly addressing.

## Capitalization



Merry Christmas!



Wishing you a Merry christmas!



Wishing you a merry Christmas!

### Christmas

The word 'Christmas' is a proper noun and as a rule, the first letter of a proper noun is always capitalized regardless of its position in a sentence. Since 'Christmas' is the name of a specific occasion, it should always be capitalized.

### Merry

On the other hand, the word 'merry' is not a proper noun. As a rule, the first letter of the word should be capitalized only if it begins a sentence. Therefore, if 'merry' occurs in the middle of a sentence, it should be in lower case.

## Apostrophe

**Apostrophes (') are used to either show contractions or possession.**



Seasons' Greetings

The apostrophe used after -s would mean that we are referring to two or more seasons (which is not the case since it is only meant for Christmas season).



Season's Greetings

When someone wishes you 'season's greetings', they are wishing you greetings for the season. The use of apostrophe before -s shows that 'season' is in a possessive form and the greetings belong to a single season.

Are you ready to write your  
Christmas cards?

## Contraction

Contraction refers to a shortened form of words in which letters are removed and substituted with apostrophes.



Tis the season to be thankful.



'Tis the season to be thankful.

'Tis' is a contraction of the words 'it is' and the apostrophe is used to replace the letter 'i'. Therefore, the greeting means 'It is the season to be thankful'.

## Closing



Yours Sincerely

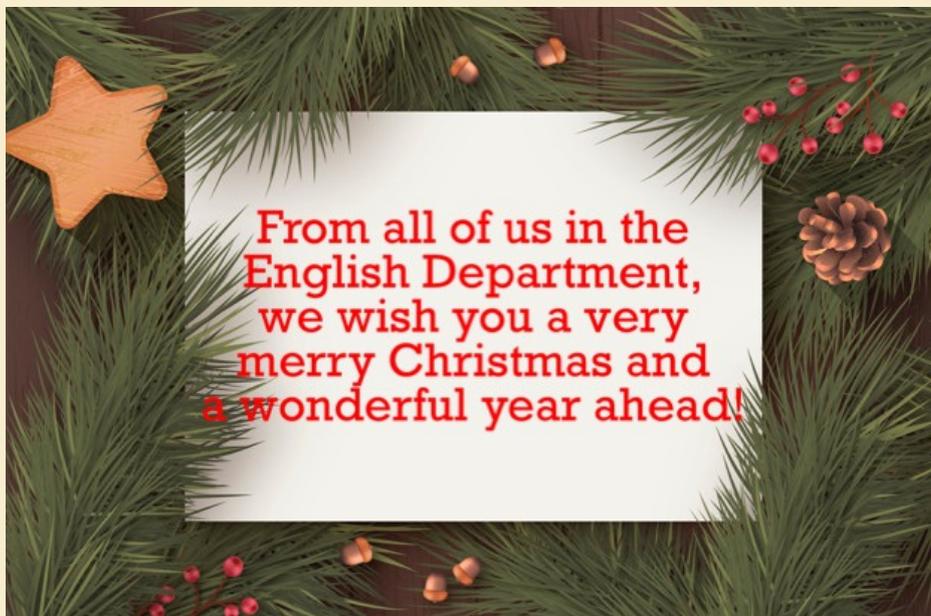


Yours sincerely,



When writing a closing, only the first letter should be capitalized while the rest remains in lower case. The closing always takes a comma.

You may also choose to end your cards with:  
Yours faithfully, / Yours lovingly, / Yours truly, / Best wishes,





"THE HOLIDAY SEASON  
IS A PERFECT TIME  
TO REFLECT ON OUR BLESSINGS  
AND SEEK OUT WAYS TO  
MAKE LIFE BETTER  
FOR THOSE AROUND US."

-TERRI MARSHALL