

### 1. Santa Claus

This week's lesson is about an iconic figure with a red costume, a white beard, and a sledge pulled by reindeer. For many children, of course, Christmas would not be the same without him.

#### Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

#### How to use the lesson

1. The appropriate amount of prior explanation obviously depends on whether Christmas is celebrated in your students' country, and how familiar they are with the traditions and imagery surrounding Father Christmas / Santa Claus.

If your students have some prior knowledge of Father Christmas, brainstorm on the subject, getting them to say as much as they can in English about him (or his equivalent, e.g. Saint Nicholas, in their country). Are children in your students' country encouraged to believe that Father Christmas is real, and if so, at what age did they stop believing in him? Do children in your students' country request Christmas presents from Father Christmas, for example by writing letters?

You might want to broaden the discussion to include some other cultural traditions relating to Christmas — note, for example, that the text mentions Christmas trees and mince pies; see *Related websites* for additional ideas.

2. Give your students between five and ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Note that some of the words that might be new are not in the glossary because they form part of Exercise 1.

3. Give each student a copy of Worksheet B, then divide the class into pairs and ask students to work together to do Exercise 1, in which they have to find the words to match the definitions.

4. Check answers in open class.

5. Ask the students to turn over their copies of Worksheet A or to give them back to you temporarily. Then, keeping the students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet C and ask them to move on to Exercise 2, in which one word has been omitted from each line of the text. With no indication of what the words were, or any gaps to show exactly where they have been taken from, how many of the words can the students remember and replace? This is not a test of memory alone, however: the students should be able to draw on their grammatical and lexical knowledge, and you should also point out that both the glossary and the students' correct answers to Exercise 1, on Worksheet B, should be of some use. Award a point for each word that is correctly replaced. (You could perhaps award half a point if the students come up with a word that fits the sentence but is not actually the original word — e.g. 'puts', instead of 'places', in line 14.) The pair with the most points is the winner.

6. Check answers in open class.

## *Answers:*

### **Exercise 1**

1. proof 2. deliver 3. jolly 4. encourage 5. sledge 6. alcoholic  
7. goes back a long way 8. fictitious 9. chimney 10. gift 11. merge  
12. detail 13. origin 14. place 15. beard

### **Exercise 2**

1. children 2. costume 3. the 4. encouraged 5. behaved 6. northern 7. live  
8. North 9. pulled 10. fly 11. given 12. at 13. bed 14. places 15. tree  
16. about 17. drink 18. or 19. as 20. reindeer 21. course 22. them 23. In 24. a  
25. seventeenth 26. not 27. green 28. feast 29. name 30. Dutch 31. Claus

## **2. Related websites**

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/Xmas/santa.html>

The 'Father Christmas' page from a website on British culture created by teachers and pupils from a primary school in England, with links on the left-hand side to numerous other Christmas-related topics. Pre-intermediate level and above.

<http://www.thehistoryofchristmas.com/>

A website including 'History of Santa Claus' and a list of different Christmas traditions around the world. Intermediate level and above.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/7778494.stm>

A story from the BBC website (2008), with an accompanying video, about a teacher at a school in northern England who told young pupils that Father Christmas didn't really exist — much to the displeasure of the children's parents. Challenging for intermediate level.