

Santa Claus

WORKSHEET A

For many people, especially children, Christmas would not be the same without a jolly old man with a white beard and a red costume: Santa Claus.

He is, of course, a fictitious figure whose generosity represents the spirit of Christmas. However, very young children are generally encouraged to believe that he really exists, and that they will receive Christmas presents from him if they have been well behaved.

Because Christmas is in mid-winter in the northern hemisphere, Santa Claus is associated with very cold weather. He is supposed to live somewhere in the far north — Lapland in northern Finland, or Greenland, or even the North Pole — and to transport his presents using a sleigh, pulled by reindeer, which not only travels through snow but can also fly through the sky.

In countries where Christmas presents are given and received on Christmas Day, December 25th, Santa Claus delivers his presents at night on Christmas Eve, December 24th, after all the children have gone to bed. He enters people's homes by coming down the chimney, without waking anyone up, and usually places the presents under or by the side of the Christmas tree. (Many homes, of course, do not have chimneys, but young children are not encouraged to worry about such details.)

Some parents give their children a small amount of food and drink to leave for Santa Claus before they go to bed on Christmas Eve. Traditionally, this is milk and cookies in the USA, and perhaps even includes a treat, such as carrots, for the reindeer. By Christmas morning, the food and drink will have disappeared — which the parents, of course, will say is proof that Santa Claus really has visited, and has nothing at all to do with them!

The idea of Santa Claus goes back a long way. The origin of the name comes from the Dutch name for Saint Nicholas: *Sinterklaas*. St. Nicholas was a wealthy bishop in 300 AD who liked to secretly give people gifts, at night, so they wouldn't know who they were from. He became the patron saint of children, and his feast day is December 6th. In the nineteenth century, it seems this image began to merge with that of "Old Christmas," a jolly old man with a beard who visited people's homes at Christmastime, although he was not connected with children, or presents, and his clothes were green rather than red. Over the years, drawings of Santa Claus began to look more and more like the fat, red-costumed, pipe-smoking cultural icon he is now in the USA.

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WORKSHEET B

Exercise 1

Here are some simple definitions for words that appear in the text on Worksheet A. Find the words they refer to and fill in the blanks.

1. **_ r _ _ f** (noun): information or evidence that shows that something is definitely true or definitely exists
2. **d _ _ _ _ _ r** (verb): to take something (for example a letter or a package) to a place
3. **_ _ ll _** (adjective): friendly and cheerful
4. If you **e _ c _ u _ a _ _** (verb) someone to do something, you suggest that they do it because you think it would be good.
5. A **_ _ e _ _ h** (noun) is a vehicle that is pulled by animals and used for traveling over snow.
6. **p _ _ e** (noun): an object used for smoking tobacco, consisting of a tube with a small bowl at the end
7. If something **goes _ _ ck a l _ _ _ _ a _** (expression), it has existed for a long time.
8. **_ i _ ti _ _ o _ _** (adjective): not real or true; invented
9. **_ _ _ mn _ _** (noun): a tube or passage that takes smoke from a fire up through a building and out through the roof
10. **_ _ f _** (noun): present
11. If two things **m _ _ g _** (verb), they combine or become mixed so that you can no longer tell the difference between them.
12. **d _ t _ _ _** (noun): one of many small facts or pieces of information about a thing or situation
13. **o _ _ _ _ n** (noun): a place or moment where something begins to exist
14. **p _ _ c _** (verb): put
15. **_ _ a _ d** (noun): hair that grows on a man's chin and cheeks

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WORKSHEET C

Exercise 2

One word has been taken out of each line of the text: how many of the missing words can you remember and replace?

- (1) For many people, especially, Christmas would not be the same without a jolly old
- (2) man with a white beard and a red: Santa Claus.
- (3) He is, of course, a fictitious figure whose generosity represents spirit of Christmas.
- (4) However, very young children are generally to believe that he really exists, and
- (5) that they will receive Christmas presents from him if they have been well.
- (6) Because Christmas is in mid-winter in the hemisphere, Santa Claus is
- (7) associated with very cold weather. He is supposed to somewhere in the far north
- (8) — Lapland in northern Finland, or Greenland, or even the Pole — and to transport
- (9) his presents using a sleigh, by reindeer, which not only travels through snow but
- (10) can also through the sky.
- (11) In countries where Christmas presents are and received on Christmas Day,
- (12) December 25th, Santa Claus delivers his presents night on Christmas Eve,
- (13) December 24th, after all the children have gone to. He enters people's homes by
- (14) coming down the chimney, without waking anyone up, and usually the presents
- (15) under or by the side of the Christmas. (Many homes, of course, do not have
- (16) chimneys, but young children are not encouraged to worry such details.)
- (17) Some parents give their children a small amount of food and to leave for Santa
- (18) Claus before they go to bed on Christmas Eve. Traditionally, this is and cookies
- (19) in the USA, and perhaps even includes a treat, such carrots, for the reindeer. By
- (20) Christmas morning, the food and drink will disappeared — which the parents,
- (21) of, will say is proof that Santa Claus really has visited, and has nothing at all to do
- (22) with!
- (23) The idea of Santa Claus goes back a long. The origin of the name comes from the
- (24) Dutch name for Saint Nicholas: *Sinterklaas*. St. Nicholas was wealthy bishop
- (25) in 300 AD who liked secretly give people gifts, at night, so they wouldn't know
- (26) who they were from. He became the patron saint of children, and his day is
- (27) December 6th. In nineteenth century, it seems this image began to merge with that of
- (28) "Old," a jolly old man with a beard who visited people's homes at Christmastime,
- (29) although he was not connected with children, or presents, and his clothes were
- (30) rather than red. Over the years, of Santa Claus began to look more and more like the
- (31) fat, red-costumed, pipe-smoking cultural he is now in the USA.