

DISCUSS

Discuss the following questions with a partner for at least five minutes.

1. Who is Santa Claus?
2. How much do you know about him?
3. What do you think about the idea of a person who brings gifts to children?

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: You will listen to an article about Santa Claus. The article is a little more than five minutes long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.

Step 2: Look at the questions. Read and understand them, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head. Don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Compare your answers with a partner.

Step 3: Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?

Step 4: Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

QUESTIONS

Answer the questions to check comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it. Then listen again.

1. What are some other names that Santa Claus has?
2. How did the idea of a man who gives gifts to people begin?
3. What folk story in particular has influenced the idea of Santa Claus?
4. Which writers influenced Santa's image in the 19th century?
5. What does Santa do on December 24th each year? How does he do it?
6. What do naughty children receive?
7. Who helps Santa during the year?

the ARTICLE

Santa Claus has become the most popular and well-known image of Christmas around the world. During the holiday season in December, he appears on TV and in newspapers and magazines everywhere. His image is used to sell all kinds of merchandise. And in many shopping malls and department stores, children wait in line to tell him all their Christmas wishes. But how much do you really know about Santa? Do you know his other names, for example? Or do you know where he lives? Is Santa married?

Santa Claus has several other names, such as Father Christmas, Kris Kringle, and Saint Nicolas. The modern idea of a man who gives presents to children began with a real person. In the 4th century, there was a Christian bishop named Nicolas. He lived in Turkey, and was very generous. He often gave gifts to poor people. He later became a saint, and is the inspiration for the Santa Claus of today.

Of course, there have been many changes to Santa's history and image since then. For example, the modern Santa Claus comes from the North Pole, not the warm Mediterranean shores in Turkey! Many folk stories in Europe have influenced the story of Santa. An old god in Germany named Odin has the most influence. Odin often appeared as an old man with a long, white beard, and he gave gifts to children too. Then there are other influences, especially from the 19th century. The popular writers Charles Dickens and Washington Irving took these old stories and traditions, made a few changes, and more or less created Santa Claus of today.

Santa now almost always appears as a fat, happy man with a big, bushy beard the color of snow. He dresses in red. When he laughs, his belly shakes like a bowl full of jelly. Each year on December 24th, he flies around the world with a magical sleigh and reindeer. He slides down the chimney with gifts for children, placing the presents under the Christmas tree or in stockings. But only children who behaved during the year get presents. The naughty, or bad, children don't receive any gifts, but they may sometimes get a lump of coal. Santa Claus keeps a list of naughty and nice children, which he updates throughout the year.

It's a difficult task to get all the presents ready. So he has elves to help him, and together they work all year to prepare for Christmas. The factory is located at the North Pole.

So now that you know more about Santa Claus, there is only one more question to answer: Yes, Santa Claus is married.



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)

1. Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.
2. Listen for these words, understand the context, then try to repeat the information from the sentence.
 - merchandise (paragraph 1)
 - inspiration (paragraph 2)
 - folk stories (paragraph 3)
 - a bowl full of jelly (paragraph 4)
 - a difficult task (paragraph 5)
3. Listen and write the sentences:
 - And in many shopping malls and department stores... (paragraph 1)

 - The popular writers Charles Dickens and Washington Irving took... (paragraph 3)

 - So he has elves to help him, and... (paragraph 5)

4. Now what do you know about Santa Claus? Talk with a partner about him.

ANSWERS

QUESTIONS
1. Santa Claus has several other names, such as Father Christmas, Kris Kringle, and Saint Nicolas.
2. In the 4th century, there was a Christian bishop named Nicolas who gave gifts to poor people.
3. An old god in Germany named Odin has the most influence. He often appeared as an old man with a long, white beard, and he gave gifts to children too.
4. The popular writers Charles Dickens and Washington Irving took these old stories and traditions, and made a few changes.
5. On December 24th, he flies around the world with a magical sleigh and reindeer.
6. The naughty, or bad, children don't receive any gifts, but may sometimes get a lump of coal.
7. Santa has elves to help him, and together they work all year to prepare for Christmas.
EXTENSION ACTIVITIES - Listen and write the sentences.
...children wait in line to tell him all their Christmas wishes.
...these old stories and traditions, made a few changes, and more or less created Santa Claus of today.
... together they work all year to prepare for Christmas.