

Name: _____

Date: _____

Santa's Colorful Wardrobe: A Christmas Surprise



[par. 1] When you think of Santa Claus, it's likely you imagine a jolly, bearded man dressed in a red suit trimmed with white fur. But what if I told you that Santa didn't always wear red? The image of Santa as we know it today has a colorful past, laden with hues of green and even blue.

[par. 2] The story of Santa's outfit begins with St. Nicholas, a real person who lived during the 4th century in what we now call Turkey. St. Nicholas was known for his generosity towards children, leaving small gifts and coins in their shoes. Over time, stories about St. Nicholas evolved, leading to the figure we now lovingly call Santa Claus.

[par. 3] Before his iconic red garb became standard, Santa's attire was influenced by folklore and traditions across various countries. Early depictions often showed him in a long flowing coat, which could be green, blue, or brown. These colors were popular in 19th-century Europe and were used to represent the spirit of nature and the winter season.

[par. 4] One of the most fascinating things about Santa's wardrobe shift involves the transition to red. A significant influence was Coca-Cola's advertising campaign in the 1930s. The company commissioned artist Haddon Sundblom to create illustrations of Santa Claus for their holiday advertisements. Sundblom's portrayal of Santa in a bright red suit with white fur trim resonated with audiences around the world. While it wasn't the first depiction of Santa in red, it helped to solidify this image in contemporary culture.

[par. 5] The color red itself has many meanings that tie into Christmas traditions and why it became symbolic for Santa Claus. In many cultures, red represents warmth, love, and joy—values commonly celebrated during the holiday season. The vivid color also stands out against the wintry landscape, making Santa easily recognizable.

[par. 6] Exploring the changes in Santa's appearance over time can teach us a lot about how traditions evolve. It shows how stories and cultural influences shape the way we celebrate holidays today. So when you see a decoration of Santa next time, remember that you're looking at a figure that has transformed through many cultural and historical changes.

[par. 7] Knowing about Santa's colorful past adds a new layer of magic and excitement to the holiday season. It reminds us that traditions are not set in stone—they are living, breathing practices that grow with our societies. This Christmas, perhaps you can imagine Santa in a green or blue suit, just for fun!

[par. 8] Santa's journey from green to red is more than just a change of clothes; it represents a fascinating part of holiday history. So, as you sip on your hot cocoa and wait for Santa's arrival, think about the vibrant tapestry of color that is woven into Christmas lore. It adds a splash of imagination to our favorite celebration, keeping the spirit of curiosity alive.

Multiple-choice Questions:

1. What was Santa's attire influenced by before it became standardized?

- A. Advertising campaigns
- B. Folklore and traditions
- C. Popular winter colors
- D. St. Nicholas stories

2. Why was the color red ultimately associated with Santa?

- A. It was Coca-Cola's favorite color
- B. It stood out in winter scenery
- C. It made Santa look more joyful
- D. It represented Christmas values of warmth and love

3. What can the evolution of Santa's wardrobe teach us about traditions?

- A. They change with advertising
- B. They are permanent and lasting
- C. They evolve over time
- D. They lose meaning across cultures

4. Which company was influential in defining Santa's red outfit?

- A. Pepsi
- B. Coca-Cola
- C. Ford
- D. Nestle

5. How did Santa's image as we know it today originate?

- A. Through American culture only
- B. From depictions of an artist
- C. From marketing strategies
- D. From St. Nicholas stories

Open-ended Questions:

1. Describe how the appearance of Santa Claus transformed over time.
2. Discuss the role of Coca-Cola in shaping the modern image of Santa Claus.
4. How does Santa's evolving image reflect changes in cultural traditions?

True-False Questions:

1. Santa's traditional outfit was always red.

True
False

2. Coca-Cola played a notable role in solidifying Santa's red attire.

True
False

3. Traditions are static and unchanging.

True
False

4. The color red in Santa's outfit is a universal representation of Christmas spirit.

True
False

5. St. Nicholas influenced the character known today as Santa Claus.

True
False

Answer Key

Multiple-choice Questions:

1. B
2. D
3. C
4. B
5. C

True-False Questions:

1. True
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. True