

## Jolly Ol' Saint Nick

Olivia Price, MHA, CTRS, LRT



<https://www.kxnet.com/news/top-stories/who-was-saint-nicholas-the-historical-background-of-a-holiday-icon/>

The figure of SANTA CLAUS, as we know him today, is the result of centuries of traditions, folklore, and cultural blending. His story begins long before the red-suited, jolly man we see in malls and on CHRISTMAS cards. One of the earliest influences on Santa Claus was SAINT NICHOLAS, a CHRISTIAN BISHOP from the 4th century who lived in what is now TURKEY. Saint Nicholas was known for his kindness and generosity, particularly toward children. He would secretly give gifts to those in need and his acts of charity eventually led to the tradition of gift-giving at Christmas.

### Question Type Key

KNOWN - SEMI-OPEN - PRIOR KNOWLEDGE - MATH - OPEN - VAKT



BRAIN2BODY  
THERAPY

Spell: FIGURE JOLLY TRADITION

What was one of the earliest influences on Santa Claus? SAINT NICHOLAS

Saint Nicholas was a Christian \_\_\_\_\_. BISHOP

What century is he from? 4TH CENTURY

What's one trait Saint Nicholas was known for? KINDNESS, GENEROSITY

What is Turkey's largest city? ISTANBUL

If you were Saint Nicholas, what kind of gifts would you give to those in need? Why?

The DUTCH played a significant role in shaping the modern image of Santa Claus. In the 18th century, Dutch settlers in NEW YORK brought with them the tradition of celebrating "SINTERKLAAS," a holiday honoring Saint Nicholas. Sinterklaas was depicted as an elderly man with a long beard, wearing a red robe and a MITRE (pronounced my-tur), a ceremonial hat. On the evening of December 5th, children would put out their shoes, hoping that Sinterklaas would fill them with treats. This tradition eventually evolved into the Santa Claus figure, with his gift-giving customs taking root in AMERICA.

Spell: MODERN CENTURY EVENING

Who played a significant role in shaping modern day Santa Claus? DUTCH

What tradition did Dutch settlers bring with them? SINTERKLAAS

What U.S. state did the settlers bring Sinterklaas to? NEW YORK

Tell me one way Sinterklaas was described. ELDERLY MAN, LONG BEARD, RED ROBE, MITRE

What is a mitre? CEREMONIAL HAT

**Question Type Key**

KNOWN - SEMI-OPEN - PRIOR KNOWLEDGE - MATH - OPEN - VAKT



**BRAIN2BODY**  
THERAPY

These gift-giving customs took root in \_\_\_\_\_. AMERICA

Name another U.S. state.



<https://people.com/pets/santas-reindeer-are-female/>

In the 19th century, American writers and artists began to further shape the image of Santa Claus. One of the most important contributions came from the poem "A VISIT FROM ST NICHOLAS" commonly known as "THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS" written by CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE in 1823. The poem describes Santa Claus as a plump, jolly man with a sleigh pulled by reindeer, who visits children on Christmas Eve. This description solidified Santa's image as a cheerful, magical figure who brings joy and gifts to families. The poem also introduced the famous line, "He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf!"

Spell: POEM PLUMP SLEIGH

What is "A Visit From St. Nicholas" commonly known as? THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

#### Question Type Key

KNOWN - SEMI-OPEN - PRIOR KNOWLEDGE - MATH - OPEN - VAKT



BRAIN2BODY  
THERAPY

Who wrote The Night Before Christmas? CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

What year was it written? 1823

How does the poem describe Santa Claus? PLUMP, JOLLY

What is his sleigh pulled by? REINDEER

What's one thing Santa brings to families? JOY, GIFTS

Name one of Santa's reindeer. DASHER, DANCER, PRANCER, VIXEN, COMET, CUPID, DONNER, BLITZEN, RUDOLPH

VAKT: Read The Night Before Christmas:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43171/a-visit-from-st-nicholas>



<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/coca-cola-christmas-30s/1108708>

In the early 20th century, Santa Claus's image was further popularized by the COCA COLA company. In 1931, the company hired artist HADDON SUNDBLOM to create a series of holiday advertisements featuring Santa. Sundblom's depiction of Santa as a warm, friendly, and plump man with a red suit, black boots, and a white beard became iconic. Coca-Cola's advertisements played a huge role in solidifying the modern image of Santa Claus that we recognize today. These images of Santa were widely

**Question Type Key**

KNOWN - SEMI-OPEN - PRIOR KNOWLEDGE - MATH - OPEN - VAKT



**BRAIN2BODY**  
THERAPY



circulated, especially during the Christmas season, and helped establish the jolly, bearded man as a central figure in holiday celebrations.

Spell: HOLIDAY COMPANY ARTIST

What company popularized the image of Santa Claus? COCA COLA

During what century was this popularized? 20TH CENTURY

Who was the artist hired by Coca Cola? HADDON SUNDBLOM

In what year? 1931

What's one thing Haddon depicted Santa as wearing? RED SUIT, BLACK BOOTS

If you were the artist hired to make these advertisements, what changes, if any, would you have made to Santa's appearance?

While the American version of Santa Claus is most widely known, many other cultures have their own versions of the gift-bringer. In some countries, Santa is known by different names, such as PERE NOEL in FRANCE, FATHER CHRISTMAS in the UK, and WEIHNACHTSMANN in GERMANY. In some parts of the world, Santa's helpers are just as important as the man himself. For example, in Italy, LA BEFANA, a kindly witch, brings gifts to children on January 6th, while in Spain, children receive gifts from the "Three Kings." Despite these differences, the spirit of giving and the joy of the holiday season are universal themes.

Spell: WITCH UNIVERSAL THEME

What name is Santa known by in France? PERE NOEL

What name is Santa known by in the United Kingdom? FATHER CHRISTMAS

In some parts of the world, who is just as important as Santa himself? SANTA'S HELPERS

#### Question Type Key

KNOWN - SEMI-OPEN - PRIOR KNOWLEDGE - MATH - OPEN - VAKT



BRAIN2BODY  
THERAPY

When does La Befana bring gifts? JANUARY 6

What's one universal theme despite differences? SPIRIT OF GIVING, JOY OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Today, Santa Claus is a global symbol of the Christmas holiday, bringing joy to millions of people around the world. He is a central figure in holiday decorations, parades, and films, and his image is often used to promote everything from charity campaigns to holiday sales. While the traditions surrounding Santa Claus continue to evolve, his core message of generosity, kindness, and magic remains timeless. The story of how Santa became the beloved figure he is today shows how a combination of history, culture, and creativity can create a figure that brings joy and excitement to people of all ages.

Spell: EVOLVE CORE MAGIC

What holiday does Santa Claus symbolize? CHRISTMAS

Santa's magic remains \_\_\_\_\_. TIMELESS

Tell me one place Santa Claus is a central figure in. DECORATIONS, PARADES, FILMS

What's one thing his image is used to promote? CHARITY CAMPAIGNS, HOLIDAY SALES

What's another holiday celebrated around this time of year? HANNUKKAH, KWANZAA

Tell me about a holiday tradition that you wish you were a part of.

#### Question Type Key

KNOWN - SEMI-OPEN - PRIOR KNOWLEDGE - MATH - OPEN - VAKT



BRAIN2BODY  
THERAPY