

A Visit From St. Nicholas
The Night Before Christmas
'Twas the Night Before Christmas

The poem we will read today is known by the three names you see above. "A Visit From St. Nicholas" was first published anonymously in a newspaper in Troy, New York in 1823. It is thought to have been written by Clement Moore. The poem is commonly known by the first line of the poem.

The current image of Santa Claus largely comes from the poem. The story describes the man, his sleigh and flying reindeer, and the toys he brings to boys and girls. It gives him the power to go up a chimney by nodding his head. It's the first mention of his eight reindeer by name.

Introduce yourself and tell if you have heard this story before.

The vocabulary is in the order it appears in "'Twas The Night Before Christmas"

'Twas = It was
stirring = movement
nestled = comfortably in place
'kerchief = handkerchief
clatter = noise
sash = window covering that is pulled down from inside the room
shutters = window covering that is opened from outside the window
lustre = glow, illumination
sleigh = Santa Claus' vehicle, also used in Alaska with dogs
St. Nick = Santa Claus
Coursers = Animals which draw a sleigh
Porch = terrace
dash away = move onwards quickly
twinkling = a second
bound = a jump
tarnished = dirty
soot = black waste material found inside a chimney
bundle = bag
peddler = someone who sells things on the street
dimples = indentations on the cheeks
merry = happy
droll = funny
encircled = circle around
belly = stomach
dread = to be afraid of
jerk = quick movement
down of a thistle = the light material on a certain type of weed that floats away in the air
ere = before

Discussion:

Does the poem match your image of Santa Claus? If no, how is he different?

There are a lot of similes and metaphors in the poem (that compare things that are not alike). Name them.

Is there a character who brings gifts to children at Christmastime in your home country?

What other songs, poems, or stories do you know about Santa Claus?