

What is the origin of Christmas?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jucgAehM2js>

A Visit from St. Nicholas
By Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
 Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
 The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
 In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
 The children were nestled all snug in their beds;
 While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
 And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
 Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,
 When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
 I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
 Away to the window I flew like a flash,
 Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
 The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
 Gave a luster of midday to objects below,
 When what to my wondering eyes did appear,
 But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,
 With a little old driver so lively and quick,
 I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.
 More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
 And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:
 "Now, *Dasher!* now, *Dancer!* now *Prancer* and *Vixen!*
 On, *Comet!* on, *Cupid!* on, *Donner* and *Blitzen!*
 To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
 Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"
 As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
 When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
 So up to the housetop the coursers they flew
 With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too—
 And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
 The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
 As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
 Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
 He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,

Identify three examples of end rhyme in this poem.

1.

2.

3.

4. Identify an example of a simile.

5. How does Moore describe St. Nicholas' means of transportation?

6. Give an example of repetition.

7. How does naming the reindeer make the poem better?

And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
 A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
 And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
 His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!
 His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
 His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
 And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;
 The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
 And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath;
 He had a broad face and a little round belly
 That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
 He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
 And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
 A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
 Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
 He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
 And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
 And laying his finger aside of his nose,
 And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;
 He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
 And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
 But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight—
“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”

Give a detailed description of St. Nicholas.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
List three “Santa” traditions Moore established in this poem.
10.
11.
12.

* * *

For his Santa, Thomas Nast adapted characteristics from his German heritage and from Clement Clark Moore’s famous 1822 poem, but the artist added other qualities developed from his own creative mind and talented pen. The effect was to uncover much of the mystery behind Santa Claus by presenting more complete details of his life, mission, and home. Instead of having him merely delivering gifts, the entire process of his work is detailed from the preparation to the delivery.

In the middle of the drawing he made for *Harper Weekly* magazine, he illustrated what children hope for: Santa stuffing stockings hung on the fireplace as toys lie on the floor. Santa is plump, white-bearded, red-nosed, dressed all in fur, carrying the sack of a peddler, and is still the short elf of Moore’s poetic version (here, Santa needs a chair to reach the mantle).

<https://oldprintgallery.wordpress.com/2011/12/15/thomas-nast-and-the-image-of-santa-claus/>



Along the sides of the drawing, Nast added circles of pictures. To fulfill Santa's traditional job of rewarding nice children and punishing naughty children, Santa uses a telescope to locate good children (upper-left), and records the behavior of children in an enormous book (upper-right). On the center-left, he is seen in his workshop carefully making toys by hand. On the center right, he is taking a well-deserved, post-Christmas rest in a rocking chair placed before a fireplace. On the lower-left, the small Santa used a ladder to decorate the Christmas tree (another German tradition), and on the lower-right, he sewed doll clothing by hand. Three years later, in 1869, "Santa and His Works" was included in a new publication of Moore's poem illustrated by Nast. At that time, Santa's suit was changed to the red color, and it has stayed that color today.

The origin of Santa's home at the North Pole is uncertain, but in "Santa and His Works" Nast may have been the first illustrator to identify the location. In the late 1840s and the 1850s a series of expeditions to the Arctic captured attention, and the area began to be talked about as the home of Santa Claus. Year-round the North Pole had the snow that was becoming linked with Christmas. Furthermore, the North Pole's geographic isolation allowed the jolly old elf to work without interruption, and the North Pole's independence from all nations allowed Santa to be a symbol of universal good will. The reference to the North Pole in the picture is on the curving border in the upper-right and reads "Santa Claussville, N. P." The connection was common enough by 1866 that Nast realized he could abbreviate "North Pole."