

Who is Santa Claus?

Santa Claus is also known as Saint Nicholas, Saint Nick, Kris Kringle, or simply Santa is a character in various and other cultures who give presents to children on Christmas Day. The term Santa is as widely used and understood by UK children as Father Christmas.

The name of Santa Claus is derived from the Dutch Sinterklaas, an intermediate figure between the bishop and the Christmas icon. He forms part of the Christmas tradition throughout the English speaking world as well as in Latin America and Japan.

Conventionally Santa Claus is portrayed as a kindly, round-bellied, merry, bespectacled man in a red coat trimmed with white fur, with a long white beard. On Christmas Eve, he rides in his flying sleigh lifted by reindeer from house to house to give presents to children. To get inside the house, he comes down the chimney and lands in the fireplace.

During the rest of the year he lives together with his wife Mrs. Claus and his elves who serve as his toy production staff. His home is usually given as either the North Pole in the US and Canada, but traditions vary.

Throughout the year, Santa would add names of children to either the good or bad list depending on their behaviour. When it got closer to Christmas time, parents would use the belief to encourage children to behave well.

Those who were on the bad list and whose behaviour did not improve before Christmas were said to receive a piece of coal for their 'gift' on Christmas Eve rather than presents.