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Auszug aus:

What do you know about Christmas in the USA?

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A short history of Santa Claus

The figure of Santa Claus was brought to America by the Dutch immigrants in the 17th century. The Dutch called him Sintaklaas, the Dutch word for St. Nicholas. Sintaklaas is a figure similar to the Nikolaus we know in Germany. In fact, the two traditions are derived from the same person: the actual St. Nicholas was presumably a bishop in Myra, in Asia Minor, sometime during the 4th century. He was a devoted and generous man, according to tradition he especially enjoyed giving presents to children.



In the USA Santa Claus was not a prominent figure until the novelist Washington Irving put him in a novel in 1809. Irving's Santa Claus was still called St. Nicholas, but he already smoked a pipe and flew around in a wagon. He did not have reindeer yet. His job was to bring presents to children. It was not until 1863 that Santa Claus got the name he still has today. He then also got his red suit and his reindeers.

Poem: "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" by Clement C. Moore

Before St. Nicholas was renamed as Santa Claus, in 1822 Clement C. Moore composed a poem about St. Nicholas as a gift for his children.

A Visit from Saint Nicholas

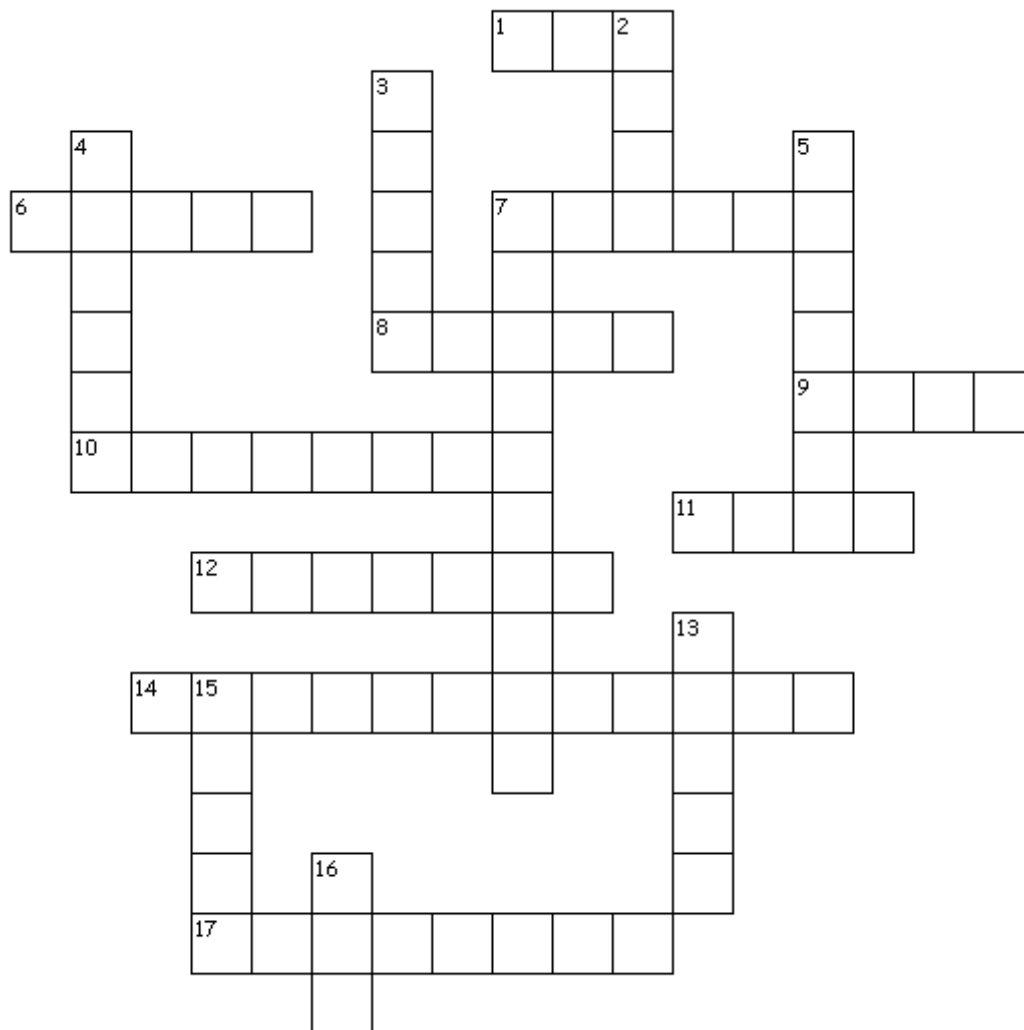
*He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly,
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.*

1.) Draw Saint Nicholas on the left hand side and Santa Claus on the right hand side. Now, hand over the drawings to your partner and discuss:

- a) **What characteristics of St. Nicholas which Moore describes in his poem are the same that Santa Claus has today?**
- b) **What are the differences between St. Nicholas in the poem and Santa Claus today?**



Criss-Cross Puzzle: *Twas the night before Christmas by Clement C. Moore*



Across

- 1. Other word for sleep
- 6. Time of the arrival of Saint Nicholas
- 7. Saint Nicholas moves in it
- 8. Number of Saint Nicholas employees
- 9. Nickname of Saint Nicholas
- 10. Saint Nicholas employees
- 11. Brought by Saint Nicholas for nice children
- 12. Saint Nicholas and the reindeer move like the downs of this plant
- 14. A very special night in December
- 17. Belong to a window

Down

- 2. Saint Nicholas needs it for smoking
- 3. Not creature moves that night, not even a...
- 4. Time of the year of Saint Nicholas' work
- 5. Saint Nicholas disappears through it
- 7. A sweet the children dream of
- 13. His belly is compared to it
- 15. Proper term for reindeer feet
- 16. Saint Nicholas' dress is made of this material



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