

'Twas The Night Before Christmas



'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 the 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 the lustre of mid-day to objects below.
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer.



With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it 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 dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.

So up to the house-top 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,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.

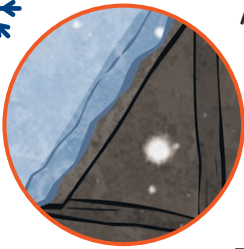
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler, just opening his pack.

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.

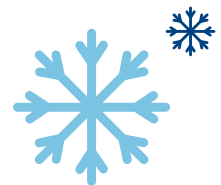


The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.

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!"



Questions

1. Why did the narrator jump out of bed? Tick one.

- His alarm went off.
- He heard a noise outside.
- He saw a bright light.
- He felt a cold breeze.

2. What are St. Nick's courasers? Tick one.

- the children
- his reindeer
- his sleigh
- eagles

3. Find and copy a synonym for dirty.

4. Fill in the missing words.

As dry leaves that before the wild _____ fly, When they meet with
an _____, mount to the sky.

5. Find and copy a simile used to describe St. Nick's appearance.

6. **While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.**

Explain what is meant by this line of the poem.

7. Explain why St. Nicholas whistles to the reindeer.

8. Why are the reindeer and sleigh described as being 'miniature' in the fourth verse of the poem?

Answers

1. Why did the narrator jump out of bed? Tick one.

- His alarm went off.
- He heard a noise outside.**
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2. What are St. Nick's courasers? Tick one.

- the children
- his reindeer**
- his sleigh
- eagles

3. Find and copy a synonym for dirty.

tarnished

4. Fill in the missing words.

As dry leaves that before the wild **hurricane** fly, When they meet with an **obstacle**, mount to the sky.

5. Find and copy a simile used to describe St. Nick's appearance.

Accept any of the following: he looked like a peddler, just opening his pack; his cheeks were like roses; his nose like a cherry; his droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow; the beard on his chin was as white as the snow; the smoke (of his pipe) encircled his head like a wreath; (his belly) shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly; away they all flew like the down of a thistle.

6. **While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.**

Explain what is meant by this line of the poem.

Pupils' own responses, such as: This line means that the children were asleep and

dreaming of sugar-plums.

7. Explain why St. Nicholas whistles to the reindeer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: St. Nicholas whistled to the reindeer to get their attention and to get them ready to pull his sleigh.

8. Explain why St. Nicholas whistles to the reindeer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think they are described as miniature because they were far away in the distance.

Questions

1. When does St. Nick say the sentence, 'Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!?'
Tick one.

- when he first comes down the chimney
- when he fills the stockings with presents
- when he pats the reindeer
- as he drove his sleigh out of sight

2. Which statements about St. Nicholas are **false**? Tick **two**.

- He never stopped talking.
- His clothes were clean.
- He was wearing a fur suit.
- He was smoking a pipe.

3. Find and copy a word which is a synonym for 'brightness'.

4. What are the children doing in the poem?

5. Find and copy **two** similes used to describe St. Nick's appearance.

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- ---

6. How do we know that everything in the house was still and quiet?

7. Who do you think is the narrator of the poem? Explain how you know.

8. Why does St. Nick lay a finger on the side of his nose?

9. Summarise the events of this poem in 30 words or fewer.

Answers

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3. Find and copy a word which is a synonym for 'brightness'.

lustre

4. What are the children doing in the poem?

The children were nestled all snug in their beds.

5. Find and copy **two** similes used to describe St. Nick's appearance.

Accept any two of the following: he looked like a peddler, just opening his pack; his cheeks were like roses; his nose like a cherry; his droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow; the beard on his chin was as white as the snow; the smoke (of his pipe) encircled his head like a wreath; (his belly) shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly; away they all flew like the down of a thistle.

6. How do we know that everything in the house was still and quiet?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The poem says that 'not a creature was stirring' which means nobody was moving.

7. Who do you think is the narrator of the poem? Explain how you know.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The narrator is the father because it tells us that the children are snug in their beds, mamma (mother) is in her 'kerchief and he is in his cap ready for bed.

8. Why does St. Nick lay a finger on the side of his nose?

Pupils' own responses, such as: St. Nick lays a finger on the side of his nose to tell the person watching that it's a secret and not to tell anyone.

9. Summarise the events of this poem in 30 words or fewer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: A man hears a noise from his bed and sees it is St. Nicholas and his sleigh. St. Nick then comes down the chimney and delivers presents before leaving again.

Questions

1. Number the events from 1-5 to show the order in which they occur in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- The narrator looks out of the window.
- The narrator hears sounds on the lawn.
- 1 The people in the house are in bed.
- St. Nicholas fills the stockings.
- St. Nicholas comes down the chimney.

2. Look at the fourth verse of the poem. Which word best describes the moon as it appears in this part of the poem? Tick one.

- shimmering
- bright
- invisible
- large

3. What are St. Nick's coursers?

4. Find and copy **three** similes used to describe St. Nick's appearance.

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- ---
- ---

5. Where does St. Nicholas land his sleigh?

6. **And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.**

What does the phrase 'in spite of myself' suggest about the narrator's laughing?

7. Who is the narrator of the poem and how do you know?

8. How does the narrator know not to be frightened?

9. Were the reindeer and sleigh close by when the narrator first sees them? Explain your answer.

10. Explain how you can tell that this poem is not set in the modern day.

Answers

1. Number the events from 1-5 to show the order in which they occur in the text. The first one has been done for you.

3 The narrator looks out of the window.

2 The narrator hears sounds on the lawn.

1 The people in the house are in bed.

5 St. Nicholas fills the stockings.

4 St. Nicholas comes down the chimney.

2. Look at the fourth verse of the poem. Which word best describes the moon as it appears in this part of the poem? Tick one.

shimmering

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large

3. What are St. Nick's courses?

St. Nick's courses are his reindeer.

4. Find and copy **three** similes used to describe St. Nick's appearance.

Accept any three of the following: he looked like a peddler, just opening his pack; his cheeks were like roses; his nose like a cherry; his droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow; the beard on his chin was as white as the snow; the smoke (of his pipe) encircled his head like a wreath; (his belly) shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly; away they all flew like the down of a thistle.

5. Where does St. Nicholas land his sleigh?

St. Nicholas lands his sleigh on the roof of the house.

6. **And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.**

What does the phrase 'in spite of myself' suggest about the narrator's laughing?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The phrase 'in spite of myself' suggests that the narrator laughed spontaneously without meaning to or realising that they had.

7. Who is the narrator of the poem and how do you know?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The narrator is the father because it tells us that the children are snug in their beds, mamma (mother) is in her 'kerchief and he is in his cap ready for bed.

8. How does the narrator know not to be frightened?

Pupil's own responses, such as: The narrator knows not to be frightened because St. Nicholas turns his head and winks at him.

9. Were the reindeer and sleigh close by when the narrator first sees them? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The reindeer and sleigh were not close by when the narrator first sees them. This is because they are described as being 'miniature' and 'tiny' which suggests that they were in the distance.

10. Explain how you can tell that this poem is not set in the modern day.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I can tell that this poem is not set in the modern day because the windows were sashes with shutters. Mamma is also wearing a 'kerchief and the narrator has a cap on: these are not modern-day examples of nightclothes.