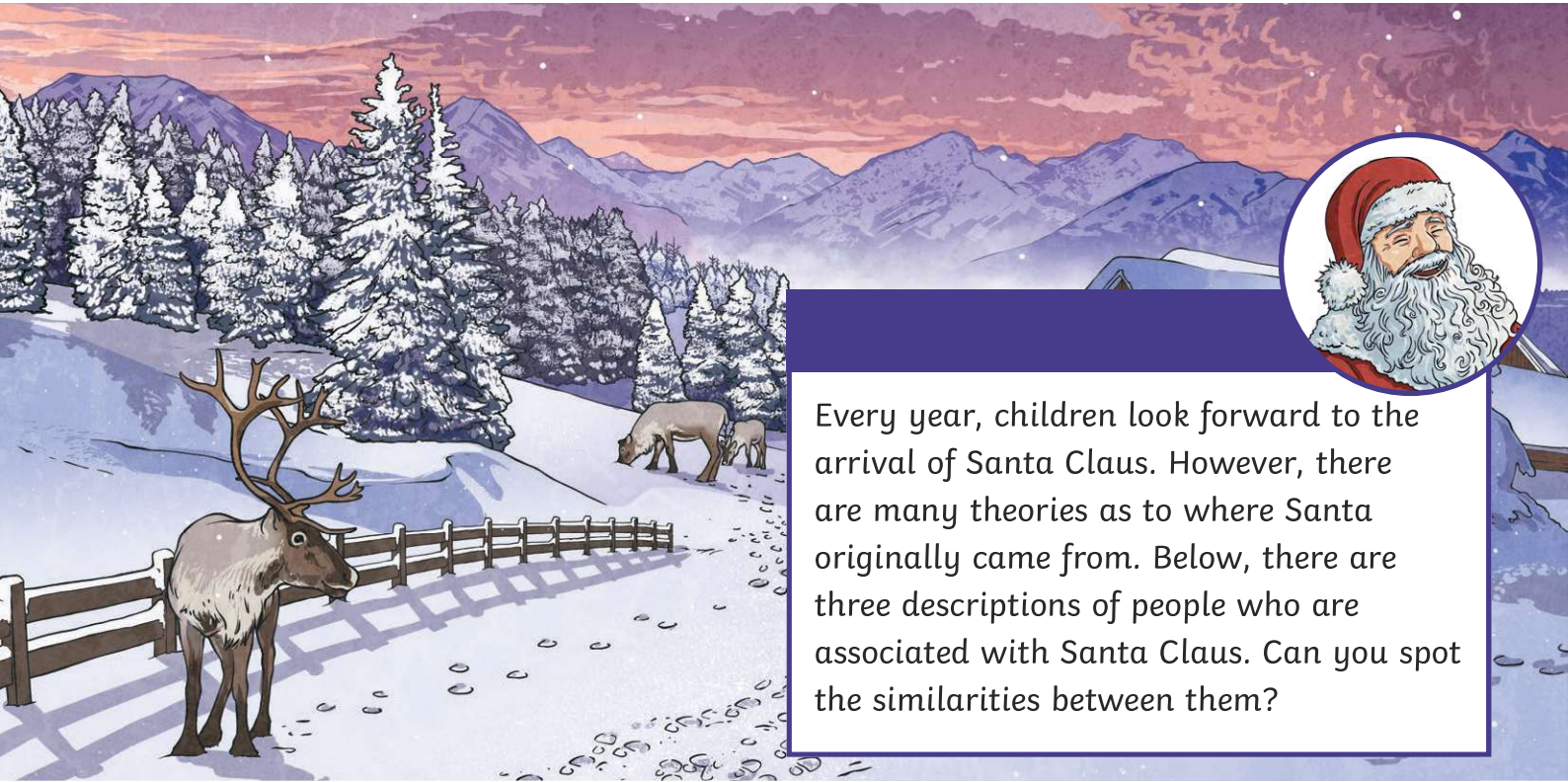


# The History of Santa Claus



Every year, children look forward to the arrival of Santa Claus. However, there are many theories as to where Santa originally came from. Below, there are three descriptions of people who are associated with Santa Claus. Can you spot the similarities between them?

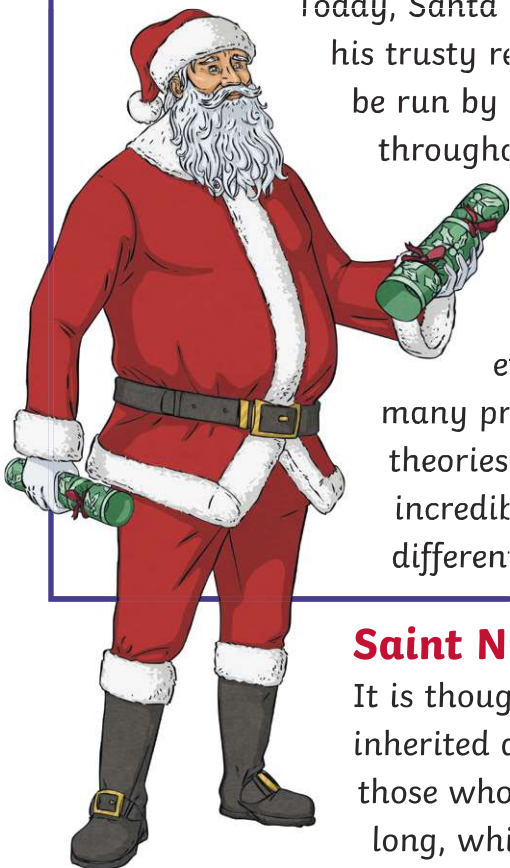
## Modern-Day Santa Claus

Today, Santa Claus is thought to reside somewhere cold and isolated with his trusty reindeer. It is here that Santa's secluded workshop is said to be run by elves. According to some Christmas tales, the elves work hard throughout the year to create toys for well-behaved children to receive on Christmas Eve.

On the night of 24<sup>th</sup> December, Santa Claus is said to deliver presents to all of the children on his 'nice list' in a single evening. Nobody knows for sure how he manages to deliver so many presents with such a limited time frame. This has led to many theories and speculations, such as Santa Claus's sleigh having an incredibly powerful engine or even that he can teleport to different countries!

## Saint Nicholas

It is thought that Saint Nicholas was born around AD 300. He had inherited a large sum of money from his parents and used this to help those who were less fortunate. Saint Nicholas is often pictured with a long, white beard and wearing red robes.



One story of Saint Nicholas tells the tale of him generously saving three daughters who were on the verge of being forced into a life of enslavement. Over three nights, Saint Nicholas secretly delivered three bags of gold, leaving one for each daughter. By the third night, the father of the three girls was so desperate to thank the kind stranger that he stayed awake. Being a shy man and feeling no need for praise, Saint Nicholas delivered the third bag down the chimney so as not to be caught. When the bag reached the bottom of the chimney, it is said to have landed in a pair of stockings which were hanging by the fire.

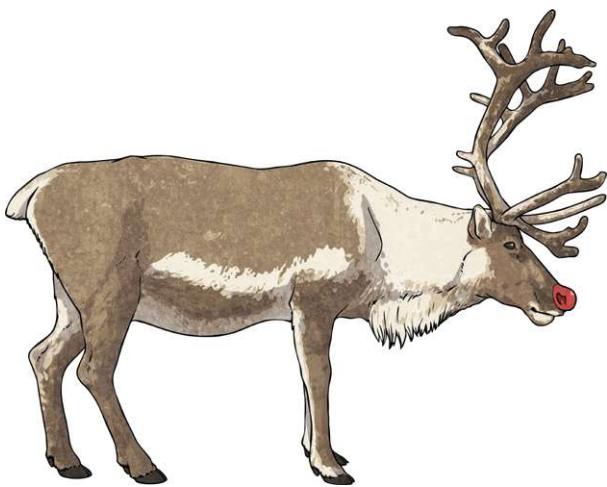
## Odin

Odin is a powerful god from Norse mythology. Odin is said to be the god of many things, including wisdom, poetry and knowledge. He is also father to Thor who is thought to be the god of thunder and lightning.



One tale of Odin describes him travelling through the air on his chariot which was being hauled by an eight-legged horse named Sleipnir. The tale also describes Odin as leaving gifts in the shoes of children who had been well behaved. Interestingly, some people also believe that Odin has the ability to determine whether a person has been good or bad.

All over the world, there are tales of figures who bring cheer during the winter months and give gifts to children who deserve them. Although some may have different names, many of them share a likeness with the three people mentioned in this text. For example, Père Noël in France, Joulupukki in Finland and Weihnachtsmann in Germany.



Wherever you believe Santa Claus originated from and however you think he manages to deliver so many gifts in such a short space of time, don't forget to look out of your window for signs of him on Christmas Eve!