READING - GRADES 2 AND 3

Christmas Reading Comprehension

12 passages with questions



Six short Christmas stories and six true passages:
Rudolph, the poinsettia, the first famous Christmas tree picture, reindeer, Snowflake Bentley and Christmas in an Australian summer.

Three tick-the-box questions and one written answer each.
Answers at the back for the grown-up.

US Letter - black ink only - grades 2 and 3, ages 7-9

Name _____ Date _____

The Gingerbread Cookies

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

On the first snowy Saturday of December, Mia and her dad baked gingerbread cookies. Mia rolled the dough flat and pressed a star cutter into it. Dad cut out little people with round heads. While the cookies baked, the kitchen smelled of ginger and warm sugar. When they cooled, Mia gave each one white icing buttons and a smile. She put the best six in a tin with a red bow. Those were for Mrs. Lopez next door, who lived alone.

1. **What did Mia and her dad bake?**

   - [ ] pancakes
   - [ ] gingerbread cookies
   - [ ] a cake

2. **What shape cutter did Mia use?**

   - [ ] a star
   - [ ] a heart
   - [ ] a tree

3. **What did the kitchen smell of?**

   - [ ] smoke
   - [ ] ginger and warm sugar
   - [ ] pine trees

4. **Who were the best six cookies for?**

 Name _____ Date _____

How Rudolph Got His Red Nose

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was not part of the old Christmas stories. A man named Robert L. May made him up in 1939. May wrote ads for a big store called Montgomery Ward. The store asked him for a Christmas story it could give to children for free. That year the store gave away almost two and a half million copies. Ten years later the story became a song, and Gene Autry sang it. Today it is one of the best known Christmas songs.

1. **Who made up Rudolph?**

   - [ ] Gene Autry
   - [ ] Robert L. May
   - [ ] Santa

2. **In which year was Rudolph made up?**

   - [ ] 1939
   - [ ] 1850
   - [ ] 2001

3. **What was Montgomery Ward?**

   - [ ] a school
   - [ ] a big store
   - [ ] a farm

4. **What did the story become ten years later?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

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Name _____ Date _____

The Snowman's Hat

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Sam and Ava built a snowman in the front yard. They used two stones for eyes and a carrot for a nose. Sam put his old blue hat on the snowman's head. That night the wind blew hard. In the morning the hat was gone! The children looked under the bushes and behind the fence. At last Ava spotted something blue high up in the apple tree. Dad brought a ladder and got it down. This time Sam tied the hat on with a scarf.

1. **What did they use for the snowman's nose?**

   - [ ] a stone
   - [ ] a carrot
   - [ ] a button

2. **What color was the hat?**

   - [ ] blue
   - [ ] red
   - [ ] green

3. **Where did Ava find the hat?**

   - [ ] under the bushes
   - [ ] in the apple tree
   - [ ] behind the fence

4. **How did Sam keep the hat on this time?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Name _____ Date _____

The Poinsettia

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

The poinsettia is a plant that many people bring home at Christmas. It first grew wild in Mexico. A man named Joel Poinsett was the first United States minister to Mexico. In 1828 he sent some of the plants home to his greenhouse in South Carolina, and the plant was later named after him. Here is a surprise. The big red parts are not petals at all. They are leaves. The real flowers are the tiny yellow buds in the middle.

1. **Where did the poinsettia first grow wild?**

   ☐ Mexico ☐ Canada ☐ France

2. **Who was the plant named after?**

   ☐ Joel Poinsett ☐ a king ☐ a farmer

3. **What are the big red parts?**

   ☐ petals ☐ leaves ☐ seeds

4. **Where are the real flowers?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Name _____ Date _____

A Letter to Grandpa

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Grandpa lives far away, so Noah could not see him at Christmas this year. Noah decided to write him a letter instead. He told Grandpa about the school play, where he was a sheep. He told him that their dog, Pepper, ate a whole candy cane and was fine. At the end Noah drew a picture of the two of them sledding. Mom helped him put a stamp on the envelope. Two weeks later a letter came back with a photo inside.

1. **Why did Noah write a letter?**

   - [ ] Grandpa lives far away
   - [ ] Grandpa was sick
   - [ ] his teacher asked

2. **What was Noah in the school play?**

   - [ ] a star
   - [ ] a sheep
   - [ ] a tree

3. **What did Pepper eat?**

   - [ ] a cookie
   - [ ] a whole candy cane
   - [ ] a sock

4. **What came back two weeks later?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

 Name _____ Date _____

A Tree in a Picture

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Long ago, people in Germany brought evergreen trees into their homes in winter. Queen Victoria of England married Prince Albert, who was from Germany. In 1848 a London newspaper printed a picture of the royal family standing around a tree covered in candles and small gifts. People loved the picture. Soon many families in England wanted a tree of their own. Two years later an American magazine printed the picture too, and Christmas trees spread across America.

1. **Where did people first bring evergreen trees inside?**

   - [ ] Germany
   - [ ] Mexico
   - [ ] Japan

2. **Who did Queen Victoria marry?**

   - [ ] Prince Albert
   - [ ] King John
   - [ ] a farmer

3. **In which year was the picture printed in London?**

   - [ ] 1848
   - [ ] 1939
   - [ ] 1700

4. **What was on the tree in the picture?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

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Name _____ Date _____

The Lost Mitten

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Lucy had a pair of red mittens that Grandma knitted for her. After sledding one afternoon, she came home with only one. Lucy felt sad all through dinner. The next morning she walked back up the hill with her brother, Max. The new snow had covered everything. Then Max saw a small red bump near the top of the hill. He dug with his hands, and there it was. Lucy hugged the wet mitten and said she would keep both in her pocket.

1. **Who knitted the mittens?**

   ☐ Mom ☐ Grandma ☐ Lucy

2. **What color were the mittens?**

   ☐ red ☐ blue ☐ white

3. **Who found the lost mitten?**

   ☐ Lucy ☐ Max ☐ a dog

4. **Where did Lucy say she would keep her mittens?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

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 Name _____ Date _____

Reindeer

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Reindeer live in the far north, where winters are long and cold. In North America they are called caribou. Reindeer have thick fur and wide hooves that help them walk on snow. In winter they dig through the snow with their hooves to find lichen, a plant that grows on the ground and on rocks. Reindeer are different from other deer in one way. Both the males and the females grow antlers. Reindeer are also strong swimmers.

1. **What are reindeer called in North America?**

   - [ ] moose
   - [ ] caribou
   - [ ] elk

2. **What do reindeer dig for in winter?**

   - [ ] lichen
   - [ ] carrots
   - [ ] fish

3. **Which reindeer grow antlers?**

   - [ ] only the males
   - [ ] both the males and the females
   - [ ] only the babies

4. **What helps reindeer walk on snow?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Name _____ Date _____

Decorating the Tree

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

The Patel family put up their tree on the second Sunday of December. Dad set it in the corner by the window. Priya and her little brother, Dev, hung the glass balls very carefully. Mom wound the lights around and around. Dev wanted to put the star on top, but he was too short. So Dad lifted him up high on his shoulders. When Mom turned off the big light, the tree glowed in the dark room. Everyone clapped, even Dev.

1. Where did Dad set the tree?

- [ ] in the kitchen
- [ ] in the corner by the window
- [ ] outside

2. What did Priya and Dev hang?

- [ ] the glass balls
- [ ] the lights
- [ ] socks

3. Why could Dev not reach the top?

- [ ] he was too short
- [ ] he was asleep
- [ ] the star was lost

4. How did Dev put the star on top?

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

 Name _____ Date _____

Snowflake Bentley

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Wilson Bentley grew up on a farm in Vermont. As a boy he loved snowflakes, but they melted before he could draw them. So he joined a camera to a microscope. On January 15, 1885, he took the first photo of a single snowflake. Over his life he took photos of more than 5,000 snowflakes. He saw that every snowflake has six sides or six arms, and he never found two that looked exactly the same. People called him Snowflake Bentley.

1. **Where did Wilson Bentley grow up?**

   - [ ] a city
   - [ ] a farm in Vermont
   - [ ] a ship

2. **What did he join to a microscope?**

   - [ ] a camera
   - [ ] a radio
   - [ ] a lamp

3. **How many sides does a snowflake have?**

   - [ ] four
   - [ ] six
   - [ ] ten

4. **What did people call him?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Name _____ Date _____

The Secret Gift

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Ella wanted to make a gift for her big sister, Rose. Rose loved to read but always lost her place in her books. So Ella made a bookmark from a strip of green card. She drew a holly leaf at the top and wrote ROSE in gold pen. Then she wrapped it in tissue paper and hid it under her bed. On Christmas morning Rose opened it and smiled. She put the bookmark in her book right away and said it was her favorite gift.

1. **Who was the gift for?**

   - [ ] Ella's mom
   - [ ] Ella's sister, Rose
   - [ ] Ella's friend

2. **What did Ella make?**

   - [ ] a bookmark
   - [ ] a card
   - [ ] a necklace

3. **Where did Ella hide the gift?**

   - [ ] in a drawer
   - [ ] under her bed
   - [ ] in the tree

4. **What did Rose say about the bookmark?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Name _____ Date _____

Christmas in Summer

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

In Australia, Christmas comes in the middle of summer. That is because Australia is in the southern half of the world, where December is warm. Many families spend Christmas Day at the beach or in a park. Some have a barbecue outside instead of a hot meal in the kitchen. Cold food like salads and shrimp, which Australians call prawns, is popular. In the evening, crowds gather outdoors to sing carols by candlelight under the stars.

1. What season is Christmas in Australia?

- [ ] winter
- [ ] summer
- [ ] spring

2. Where do many families spend Christmas Day?

- [ ] at the beach or in a park
- [ ] at school
- [ ] in the snow

3. What do Australians call shrimp?

- [ ] prawns
- [ ] crabs
- [ ] cookies

4. What do crowds do in the evening?

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

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ANSWERS

Christmas Reading Comprehension

For the grown-up.

Sheet 1: gingerbread cookies a star
ginger and warm sugar Mrs. Lopez next door

Sheet 2: Robert L. May 1939
a big store a song

Sheet 3: a carrot blue
in the apple tree he tied it on with a scarf

Sheet 4: Mexico Joel Poinsett
leaves the tiny yellow buds in the middle

Sheet 5: Grandpa lives far away a sheep
a whole candy cane a letter with a photo inside

Sheet 6: Germany Prince Albert
1848 candles and small gifts

Sheet 7: Grandma red
Max in her pocket

Sheet 8: caribou lichen
both the males and the females wide hooves

Sheet 9: in the corner by the window the glass balls
he was too short Dad lifted him up on his shoulders

Sheet 10: a farm in Vermont a camera
six Snowflake Bentley

Sheet 11: Rose a bookmark
under her bed it was her favorite gift

Sheet 12: summer at the beach or in a park
prawns sing carols by candlelight