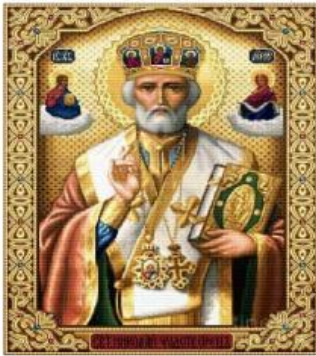


Santa Claus

Santa Claus—otherwise known as Saint Nicholas or Kris Kringle—has a long history **steeped** in Christmas traditions. Today, he is thought of mainly as the **jolly** man in red who brings toys to good girls and boys on Christmas Eve, but his story stretches all the way back to the 3rd century, when Saint Nicholas walked the earth and became the patron saint of children. Find out more about the history of Santa Claus from his earliest origins to the shopping mall Santas of today and discover how two New Yorkers—Clement Clark Moore and Thomas Nast—were major influences on the Santa Claus millions of children wait for each Christmas Eve.



The Legend of St. Nicholas: The Real Santa Claus



The legend of Santa Claus can **be traced back** hundreds of years to a monk named St. Nicholas. It is believed that Nicholas was born sometime around A.D. 280 in Patara, near Myra in modern-day Turkey. Much admired for his **piety** and kindness, St. Nicholas became the subject of many legends. It is said that he gave away all of his **inherited** wealth and travelled the countryside helping the poor and sick. One of the best-known St. Nicholas stories is the time he saved three poor sisters from being sold into slavery or prostitution by their father by providing them with a **dowry** so that they could be married.

Over the course of many years, Nicholas's popularity **spread**, and he became known as the protector of children and sailors. His feast day is celebrated on the anniversary of his death, December 6. This was traditionally considered a lucky day to make large purchases or to get married. By the Renaissance, St. Nicholas was the most popular saint in Europe. Even after the Protestant Reformation, when the **veneration** of saints began to be **discouraged**, St. Nicholas maintained a positive reputation, especially in Holland.



Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/santa-claus#santa-claus-around-the-world>

Match the definitions with the words:

Definitions:

- a. received from a predecessor, typically through genetic or legal means.
- b. to extend over an area or surface; to become widely known or distributed.
- c. to find the origin or history of something.
- d. deeply immersed in or influenced by something.
- e. items bought for a price, acquisitions.
- f. regarding with deep respect or admiration.
- g. a sum of money or property given by a bride's family to her husband at the time of marriage.
- h. cheerful and lively; full of good humour.
- i. having lost confidence or enthusiasm; disheartened.
- j. devotion and reverence to religious principles or practices.

Words:

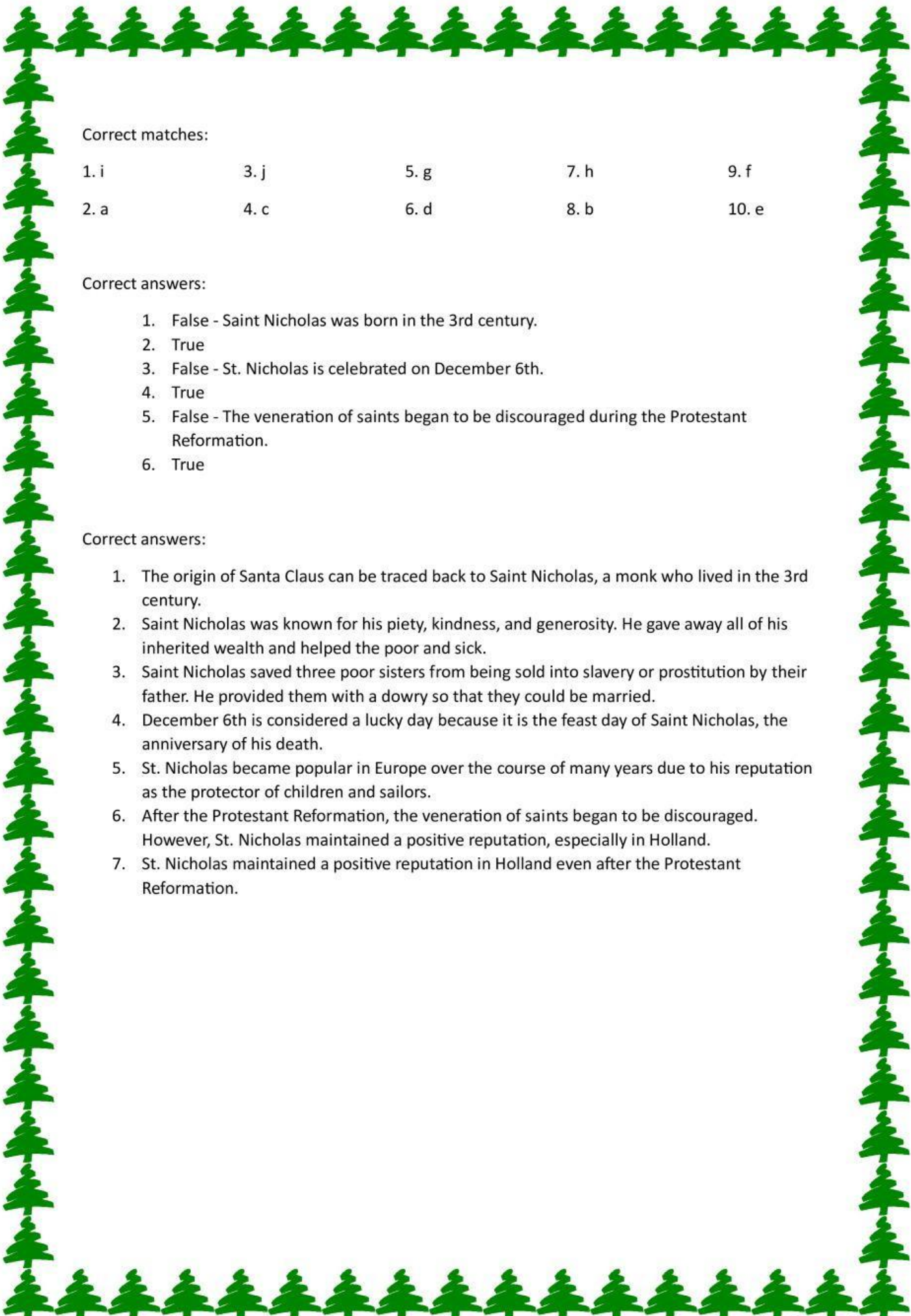
- 1. discouraged
- 2. inherited
- 3. piety
- 4. be traced back
- 5. dowry
- 6. steeped
- 7. jolly
- 8. spread
- 9. veneration
- 10. purchases

Are these sentences TRUE or FALSE? Find evidence in the text:

- 1. Saint Nicholas was born in the 4th century.
- 2. Saint Nicholas is known for his generosity and assistance to the poor and sick.
- 3. St. Nicholas is celebrated on December 25th.
- 4. St. Nicholas was the most popular saint in Europe during the Renaissance.
- 5. The veneration of saints was encouraged during the Protestant Reformation.
- 6. St. Nicholas is especially revered in Holland.

Answer the following questions with your own words using information from the text:

- 1. What is the origin of Santa Claus?
- 2. Who was Saint Nicholas and what made him famous?
- 3. How did Saint Nicholas help three poor sisters?
- 4. Why is December 6th considered a lucky day?
- 5. How did St. Nicholas become popular in Europe?
- 6. What happened to the reputation of St. Nicholas after the Protestant Reformation?
- 7. In which country did St. Nicholas maintain a positive reputation?



Correct matches:

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. i | 3. j | 5. g | 7. h | 9. f |
| 2. a | 4. c | 6. d | 8. b | 10. e |

Correct answers:

1. False - Saint Nicholas was born in the 3rd century.
2. True
3. False - St. Nicholas is celebrated on December 6th.
4. True
5. False - The veneration of saints began to be discouraged during the Protestant Reformation.
6. True

Correct answers:

1. The origin of Santa Claus can be traced back to Saint Nicholas, a monk who lived in the 3rd century.
2. Saint Nicholas was known for his piety, kindness, and generosity. He gave away all of his inherited wealth and helped the poor and sick.
3. Saint Nicholas saved three poor sisters from being sold into slavery or prostitution by their father. He provided them with a dowry so that they could be married.
4. December 6th is considered a lucky day because it is the feast day of Saint Nicholas, the anniversary of his death.
5. St. Nicholas became popular in Europe over the course of many years due to his reputation as the protector of children and sailors.
6. After the Protestant Reformation, the veneration of saints began to be discouraged. However, St. Nicholas maintained a positive reputation, especially in Holland.
7. St. Nicholas maintained a positive reputation in Holland even after the Protestant Reformation.