When I was a young boy, I knew exactly who Santa Claus was. He was a fat, friendly, old man with a long, white beard that (1)____ my home once a year to put lots and lots of toys (2)____ the Christmas tree. He came only if my sister and I had been good – and only if we (3)____ asleep. Then, early the next morning, after we woke up, we (4)____ downstairs to open all our gifts (I never understood (5)____ my parents always seemed so tired on Christmas morning). As I got older, however, I stopped believing in Santa Claus. Many years later, I asked (6)____ the question, "Who is Santa Claus ... really?" The answer surprised me. Santa Claus was a real person. He (7)____ a Greek man, a Christian called Saint Nicholas who lived about 1,700 years ago in the area that is now Turkey. He was famous because he gave many gifts to poor people. About a thousand years later, many people (8)____ Europe began the tradition of giving gifts to children to remember Saint Nicholas.The modern picture of Santa Claus – (9)____ dressed in red and white, with a long white beard – (10)____ about two hundred years ago in the United States and Canada. Nowadays, he is also known as Saint Nick, Father Christmas, Kris Kringle, Santy or just Santa. Saint Nicholas died (11)____ long time ago but I like to believe that the real "Santa Claus" lives in all of us. He is the goodness and love in(12)____ hearts that reminds us that true happiness comes from giving to other people.

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