

the ARTICLE (for instructors)

Stop Picking on Santa

Do-gooders and political correctness fanatics have gone too far. They've picked on Santa Clause and the Christmas tradition. For hundreds of years, jolly Santa has worked hard, persuaded his elves to complete the toys by the December deadline, and checked his naughty and nice list twice. On Christmas Eve, he has managed without fail to circle the globe and visit every home. His "ho ho ho!" echoes through the night, while his belly jiggles like a bowl full of jelly. But now, some have suggested that an overweight Santa provides an unhealthy image for kids. Equally ridiculous, "ha ha ha!" may be better than "ho ho ho!" because the latter terms means "prostitute" in American slang.

Let's face it: It's mom and dad's eating habits, not Santa's, that influence children. And although many First World countries are facing more and more obese children, which then creates alarming health problems, few kids want to have a large stomach because of Santa Clause. Parents and educators should take more responsibility for the diets of the young. Healthy choices should be recommended and regularly eaten.

Equally troublesome are the attacks on Santa's laugh. Although "ho" may have a negative meaning, only an adult would understand the reference. It's American slang as well, so kids (and possibly adults) elsewhere in the world won't likely understand the problem. If a child still believes in the big guy, the boy or girl will only associate "ho ho ho!" with Santa's laugh.

Will this madness never end? Leave Santa Clause's weight and laugh alone.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface are the recommended vocabulary for this lesson.

WARM-UPS

Select one or all of the following warm-up activities.

- 1. Define:** What does "political correctness" mean? Can you use it in a sentence? Can you give examples?
- 2. Brainstorm:** Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "political correctness" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.
- 3. Title:** Speculate and/or discuss the contents of today's article from its title: "Stop Picking on Santa!"

4. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

a.	Santa is an important part of Christmas.
b.	Because Santa Clause is overweight, kids want to be overweight, too.
c.	Political correctness is a good thing.
d.	Santa's image needs to be updated for our modern society.
e.	Christmas, Santa, and presents are a waste of time.

5. Rank It!: How would you update Santa's image? Rank the choices in order. Remember to support your decisions!

a.	sleigh ⇔ jet car
b.	obese ⇔ slim and muscular
c.	baggy, red clothes ⇔ professionally tailored suit ordered made just for him
d.	a laugh which is too loud ⇔ quieter, more reserved chuckle
e.	big bushy beard ⇔ clean shaven

VOCABULARY

Select one of the following vocabulary acquisition activities.

1. **Vocabulary match:** Individually or in pairs/groups, match the words in column A (from the article) with the best choice in column B.

a.	fanatic	q.	shake
b.	pick on	r.	annoying
c.	persuade	s.	affect
d.	manage	t.	attack
e.	jiggle	u.	comment
f.	latter	v.	accomplish
g.	influence	w.	extremist
h.	troublesome	x.	last
i.	reference	y.	link
j.	associate	z.	convince

2. **Fill in the Blanks:** Fill in the blank with the correct word.

	persuaded	fanatics	jiggles	reference	managed
	latter	associate	troublesome	picked on	influence
a.	Do-gooders and political correctness () have gone too far.				
b.	They've () Santa Clause and the Christmas tradition.				
c.	Jolly Santa has worked hard and () his elves to complete the toys by the December deadline				
d.	On Christmas Eve, he has () without fail to circle the globe and visit every home.				
e.	His "ho ho ho!" echoes through the night, while his belly () like a bowl full of jelly.				
f.	"Ha ha ha!" may be better than "ho ho ho!" because the () terms means "prostitute."				
g.	It's mom and dad's eating habits, not Santa's, that () children.				
h.	Equally () are the attacks on Santa's laugh.				
i.	Only an adult would understand the () "ho ho ho!" may have.				
j.	A boy or girl will only () "ho ho ho!" with Santa's augh.				

3. **Define:** Define each word, correctly pronounce it, explain the meaning and/or usage, and offer an example sentence to the class.

a.	fanatic	c.	persuade	e.	jiggle	g.	influence	i.	reference
b.	pick on	d.	manage	f.	latter	h.	troublesome	j.	associate

WORD RECOGNITION

1. **Word Search:** Find the target words (in bold). Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

persuaded latter	fanatics associate	jiggles troublesome	reference picked on	managed influence
<p>V E F Z A P A R D R D A W D R S P C L W E J M E U E P N E G N O I N A R I A T F V T F N S M U X X E S G T Z O R E T C Q T T S E I U G S R L R E I A R R R G C T A L S W E Y T N Z L E K O N Z D E F N F A K L C C T K M U N E S C N N X B T I E A H W E B D E T A I C O S S A L N P L Q L K F D E G A N A M J A W F M E E P I C K E D O N W A N N Z A A S G U O R U U A B Q R I L U H F O L B X J K M T R O U B L E S O M E F D D I U G S G K N N U W B R Q V A L</p>				

2. **Target Word Pool:** Find the target words (in bold) with their exact match. Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

persuaded latter	fanatics associate	jiggles troublesome	reference picked on	managed influence
<p>fantastic troubled picking on jiggles referential ladder managed jiggled latterly troubles associates fanatic referenced persuades influencing persuaded picked up mismanaged influences disassociate fanatics reference later referral persuasive pick on jiggling referencing influenced goggles manages troublesome last persuading troubling fanatically fanaticism influence associating picked on influential persuading pickiness associate manager latter society juggles</p>				

pre- or post-COMPREHENSION

1. **Word Association:** Brainstorm words associated with today's topic for two minutes. Present to the class.

2. **Brainstorm Questions:** Brainstorm questions that you would like to ask about today's topic. Answer the questions without looking at the article.

3. **True or False?:** Guess (before the article) or answer (after the article) whether the sentence is true or false. If false, correct the sentence.

a.	Some people think Santa's image isn't healthy.	T / F
b.	Kids will be influenced by an obese Santa Clause.	T / F
c.	If parents don't eat well, then their children will be similarly unhealthy.	T / F
d.	Santa's laugh could have a negative meaning in American slang.	T / F
e.	The author of the article supports the changes.	T / F

4. **Questions:** Answer the questions to check comprehension.

a.	According to the article, what does Santa Clause do all year?
b.	What have some people suggested for Santa?
c.	According to the article, who is responsible for obese children?
d.	What should parents and educators do for obese children?
e.	Who will understand the negative reference of Santa's laugh?

5. **Vocabulary:** In pairs/groups, remember how the words were used in today's article.

a.	fanatics	c.	persuaded	e.	jiggles	g.	influence	i.	reference
b.	picked on	d.	manage	f.	latter	h.	troublesome	j.	associate

6. **Fragments:** Remember how the fragments were used, and complete the sentence from today's article.

a.	For hundreds of years, jolly Santa has...
b.	On Christmas Eve...
c.	Let's face it...
d.	And although many First World countries are facing more and more...
e.	Although "ho" may have a negative meaning...

post-COMPREHENSION

1. **Vocabulary:** Circle any additional unknown words/phrases in the article. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand the meanings. Present to the class.
2. **Class Questions:** Read through the article once more, and write down any questions that you would like to discuss in pairs/groups or as a class. Discuss.
3. **Summarize:** Work with a partner to summarize the article in your own words.
4. **Discuss:** Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	Did you like this article?
b.	What was your general impression after reading this article?
c.	What do you think about do-gooders? How about in this instance? Why?
d.	What do you think of political correctness? How about in this instance? Why?
e.	What would you do if Santa's image were changed? Why?
f.	If Santa's image were modernized, would it somehow change Christmas? Why/not?
g.	Is Santa's current image harmful to children? Why/not?
h.	Why do some people feel the need to do away with tradition? Is this good or bad? Why do you think so?
i.	Do you agree that parents and educators should assume more responsibility for children's health? Why/not?
j.	Which has a greater influence on children, parents, educators, or the media? Why do you think so?

5. **Role Play:** You and your team are brainstorming ideas for a new Christmas commercial. Discuss the pros and cons of a thin Santa who says "ha ha ha!" in an amicable meeting. At the end, decide on Santa's image.

Person A: Any change to the traditions of Christmas and Santa would be terrible.

Person B: Political correctness can be a bit ridiculous. And the idea of a slim Santa with a different laugh is definitely ridiculous. But maybe that can be advantageous for the commercial. Maybe a different image will make our commercial memorable.

Person C: It doesn't matter what Santa looks like, as long as the commercial is a success. In fact, let's get rid of Santa and create a new Christmas character.

Person D: Advertisers need to be more responsible, too. An unhealthy Santa is an unhealthy role model for children. Santa doesn't need to be skinny, but he should be slimmer. His laugh should be changed, too.

6. **Google Search:** Type "Santa Clause" into Google news and read additional articles on this topic. Discuss or write an essay about your findings.

STUDENT HANDOUT (the article)

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Do-gooders and political correctness fanatics have gone too far. They've picked on Santa Clause and the Christmas tradition. For hundreds of years, jolly Santa has worked hard, persuaded his elves to complete the toys by the December deadline, and checked his naughty and nice list twice. On Christmas Eve, he has managed without fail to circle the globe and visit every home. His "ho ho ho!" echoes through the night, while his belly jiggles like a bowl full of jelly. But now, some have suggested that an overweight Santa provides an unhealthy image for kids. Equally ridiculous, "ha ha ha!" may be better than "ho ho ho!" because the latter terms means "prostitute" in American slang.

Let's face it: It's mom and dad's eating habits, not Santa's, that influence children. And although many First World countries are facing more and more obese children, which then creates alarming health problems, few kids want to have a large stomach because of Santa Clause. Parents and educators should take more responsibility for the diets of the young. Healthy choices should be recommended and regularly eaten.

Equally troublesome are the attacks on Santa's laugh. Although "ho" may have a negative meaning, only an adult would understand the reference. It's American slang as well, so kids (and possibly adults) elsewhere in the world won't likely understand the problem. If a child still believes in the big guy, the boy or girl will only associate "ho ho ho!" with Santa's laugh.

Will this madness never end? Leave Santa Clause's weight and laugh alone.

Notes:

STUDENT HANDOUT (fill in the blank)

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

reference	political	jiggles	picked on	overweight
leave	fanatics	responsibility	associate	influence
managed	latter	troublesome	naughty	persuaded

Stop Picking on Santa!

Do-gooders and (a. _____) correctness (b. _____) have gone too far. They've (c. _____) Santa Clause and the Christmas tradition. For hundreds of years, jolly Santa has worked hard, (d. _____) his elves to complete the toys by the December deadline, and checked his (e. _____) and nice list twice. On Christmas Eve, he has (f. _____) without fail to circle the globe and visit every home. His "ho ho ho!" echoes through the night, while his belly (g. _____) like a bowl full of jelly. But now, some have suggested that an (h. _____) Santa provides an unhealthy image for kids. Equally ridiculous, "ha ha ha!" may be better than "ho ho ho!" because the (i. _____) terms means "prostitute" in American slang.

Let's face it: It's mom and dad's eating habits, not Santa's, that (j. _____) children. And although many First World countries are facing more and more obese children, which then creates alarming health problems, few kids want to have a large stomach because of Santa Clause. Parents and educators should take more (k. _____) for the diets of the young. Healthy choices should be recommended and regularly eaten.

Equally (l. _____) are the attacks on Santa's laugh. Although "ho" may have a negative meaning, only an adult would understand the (m. _____). It's American slang as well, so kids (and possibly adults) elsewhere in the world won't likely understand the problem. If a child still believes in the big guy, the boy or girl will only (n. _____) "ho ho ho!" with Santa's laugh.

Will this madness never end? (o. _____) Santa Clause's weight and laugh alone.

STUDENT HANDOUT (extended listening)

Listen and fill in the missing sentences. Compare answers with a partner, and then listen once more.

Stop Picking on Santa!

Do-gooders and political correctness fanatics have gone too far. They've picked on Santa Clause and the Christmas tradition. For hundreds of years, jolly Santa has worked hard, a) _____, and checked his naughty and nice list twice. On Christmas Eve, he has managed without fail to circle the globe and visit every home. His "ho ho ho!" echoes through the night, while his belly jiggles like a bowl full of jelly. b) _____. Equally ridiculous, "ha ha ha!" may be better than "ho ho ho!" because the latter terms means "prostitute" in American slang.

Let's face it: It's mom and dad's eating habits, not Santa's, that influence children. And although many First World countries are facing more and more obese children, which then creates alarming health problems, few kids want to have a large stomach because of Santa Clause. c) _____. Healthy choices should be recommended and regularly eaten.

Equally troublesome are the attacks on Santa's laugh. Although "ho" may have a negative meaning, only an adult would understand the reference. It's American slang as well, d) _____. If a child still believes in the big guy, the boy or girl will only associate "ho ho ho!" with Santa's laugh.

Will this madness never end? e) _____.

STUDENT HANDOUT (activities)

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary

1. Vocabulary Match:

a.	w	f.	x
b.	t	g.	s
c.	z	h.	r
d.	v	i.	u
e.	q	j.	y

2. Fill in the Blanks:

a.	fanatics	f.	latter
b.	picked on	g.	influence
c.	persuaded	h.	troublesome
d.	managed	i.	reference
e.	jiggles	j.	associate

pre- or post-Comprehension

1. True or False:

a.	T
b.	F
c.	T
d.	T
e.	F

2. Fragments:

a.	worked hard, persuaded his elves to complete the toys by the December deadline, and checked his naughty and nice list twice.
b.	he has managed without fail to circle the globe and visit every home.
c.	It's mom and dad's eating habits, not Santa's, that influence children.
d.	obese children, which then creates alarming health problems, few kids want to have a large stomach because of Santa Clause.
e.	only an adult would understand the reference.

Student Handout

1. Fill in the Blanks

a.	political	i.	latter
b.	fanatics	j.	influence
c.	picked on	k.	responsibility
d.	persuaded	l.	troublesome
e.	naughty	m.	reference
f.	managed	n.	associate
g.	jiggles	o.	Leave
h.	overweight		

2. Extended Listening

a.	persuaded his elves to complete the toys by the December deadline
b.	But now, some have suggested that an overweight Santa provides an unhealthy image for kids
c.	Parents and educators should take more responsibility for the diets of the young
d.	so kids (and possibly adults) elsewhere in the world won't likely understand the problem
e.	Leave Santa Clause's weight and laugh alone