

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** may be vocabulary unfamiliar to the students.

the ARTICLE (for students)

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Notes:

STEP ONE

Title: Speculate and/or discuss the contents of today's article from its title: "Stop Picking on Santa!"

STEP TWO

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 |

STEP THREE

The Article: Read the article, and work with a partner to understand it. Lastly, summarize in your own words.

STEP FOUR

Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

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

STEP FIVE

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.