

# INFORMATIONAL TEXT PASSAGE WRITTEN AT TWO READING LEVELS!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reindeer

When you think of Christmas, the reindeer is probably the first animal to come to your mind. Reindeer are mentioned in songs, featured on cards and used as decorations. People who have never seen a reindeer in person are still able to easily recognize a reindeer. But how did reindeer come to be associated with Christmas?

Reindeer are a deer species found primarily in the Arctic, although they may be found further south. In North America, they are often called caribou. They live in cold climates and thrive in rough, rugged and cold terrain. Their affinity for cold weather makes them the perfect animal to represent winter, but they didn't truly become associated with Christmas or Santa Claus and his flying sleigh until after 1823.

In 1823, Clement Clarke Moore wrote a poem depicting Santa riding in a flying sleigh pulled by eight tiny reindeer. Reindeer were linked to the holiday and to Santa Claus with the success of Moore's poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas." The popularity of the poem caused reindeer to become a major part of the holiday season. That connection has endured for over a century.

The reindeer didn't get noticed until 1939 when Rudolph was listed as the leader of Santa's herd. With his distinctive red nose, Rudolph was the star of a booklet written by Robert May. The book was published by the Montgomery Ward store and was very popular. As an outcast who became the hero, Rudolph's story also taught children the importance of being yourself.

In 1949, Rudolph's story became the basis for the popular song by Gene Autry. The song is still sung today. In 1964, Rudolph became the star of his own movie. It was a stop-motion animated film featuring a snowman who befriends Rudolph. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen were the names of the other reindeer featured in the movie and song. Today, they are still the standard reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh.

Reindeer have continued to be associated with Christmas, even today. Many Christmas movies have reindeer in them, and reindeer adorn Christmas decorations. They are not only important for their association with Christmas. Reindeer are also highly prized and depended upon by the Sami people of the Arctic Circle. Although made most famous for their role in Santa's magical nighttime ride, reindeer are a logical choice to represent Christmas because of their love of cold weather and their location near the North Pole.

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## Reindeer

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Reindeer live primarily in the Arctic. In North America, they are often called caribou. They live in cold climates and thrive in rough and cold terrain. Their affinity for cold weather makes them the perfect animal to represent winter. They didn't become associated with Christmas until after 1823.

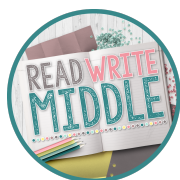
In 1823, Clement Clarke Moore wrote a poem about Santa in a flying sleigh pulled by eight tiny reindeer. Reindeer were linked to the holiday and to Santa Claus because of Moore's poem. The popularity of the poem caused reindeer to become a major part of the holiday season. That connection has endured for over a century.

The reindeer didn't get noticed until 1939. Rudolph was listed as the leader of Santa's herd. With his distinctive red nose, Rudolph was the star of a booklet written by Robert May. The book was printed by the Montgomery Ward store and was very popular. Rudolph's story also taught children the importance of being yourself.

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Reindeer are still associated with Christmas. Many Christmas movies feature reindeer and they adorn Christmas decorations. They are not only important for their association with Christmas. Reindeer are highly prized by the Sami people of the Arctic Circle. Reindeer were made famous for their role in Santa's magical nighttime ride. They are also a logical choice to represent Christmas because they love cold weather and live near the North Pole.

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# DIFFERENTIATED CONTEXT CLUES ACTIVITY!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Context Clues

Look back in the passage and use context clues to determine the meaning of each word. Circle the answer, then write down the context clues from the text that helped you determine the answer.

1. primarily  
a. mainly                      b. favorably                      c. away  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
2. terrain  
a. home                      b. supply                      c. environment  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
3. affinity  
a. fondness                      b. dislike                      c. passion  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
4. endured  
a. lasted                      b. remained                      c. believed  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
5. distinctive  
a. unknown                      b. common                      c. unique  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
6. basis  
a. ending                      b. source                      c. basic  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
7. adorn  
a. decorate                      b. remove                      c. light  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_

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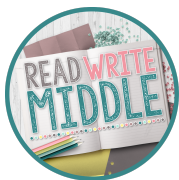
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Context Clues

Look back in the passage and use context clues to determine the meaning of each word. Determine what each word means based on the way it is used in the passage, then write down the context clues from the text that helped you.

1. primarily: \_\_\_\_\_  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
2. terrain: \_\_\_\_\_  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
3. affinity: \_\_\_\_\_  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
4. endured: \_\_\_\_\_  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
5. distinctive: \_\_\_\_\_  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
6. basis: \_\_\_\_\_  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_
7. adorn: \_\_\_\_\_  
context clues: \_\_\_\_\_

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# WRITING ASSIGNMENT AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS ALSO INCLUDED!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension Questions

Answer the following questions using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. What is the central idea of the passage? List two supporting details to support your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The author states that reindeer are a logical choice as animals that represent winter. What evidence in the text supports this claim?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What role did the poem by Clement Clarke Moore play in the connection between reindeer and Christmas?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How did music play a role in the connection between reindeer and Christmas?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What evidence does the author give to show that reindeer are still associated with Christmas?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing Assignment

The story of Rudolph has delighted children for decades, but it also includes a valuable lesson. In the story, children learn that it is important to be yourself. Write a paragraph about a time when you learned that it was important to be yourself. In your writing, be sure to include the following:

- Explain what caused you to learn the importance of being yourself.
- Explain what you learned from the experience.
- Explain how that lesson might help others.
- Make sure you proofread your writing to check for spelling and grammar issues.

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