Why Santa?

- We decided on Santa because of all the tales surrounding him, both true stories, and legends.
- Another reason for us to choose this topic was because he is known all around the globe, and a very important part of Christmas.
Santa and Saint Nick

- **Saint Nicholas**, His real life in Myra/Turkey as a beloved saint and helper of the poor.

- **Santa Claus**, whom everyone looks for on Christmas Eve, the bringer of gifts and happiness.
Stories and Legends of Santa Claus

The Legend of Santa
The Man Who Colored Santa

- Norman Rockwell, a famous artist, was the man who changed Santa's colour. Before that, Santa was commonly known as green, the same colour as the elves who work for him. Rockwell made Santa red in order to make him the mascot for Coca-cola.

- Rockwell was born in New York City in 1894, and at the age of 16, he had already decided to become an artist. He painted many paintings which later became quite famous.

- But the most well known paintings he made were probably the ones of Santa.
The First Act of Santa

After Nicholas's death, there were lots of tales and legends made about him. One of the oldest tales was about him protecting children.

The story goes like this: One day, the townspeople were celebrating a special holiday when a band of pirates came. The pirates stole treasures and many things that they liked. Then, while leaving, they kidnapped a young boy to make into a slave. As the next feast day arrived, the boy’s parents did not join the celebration, as it was a day of sadness for them. Instead, the mother prayed at home for the safety of the boy. Apparently, as it was later told, while the boy was working, he was ‘whisked’ away. Then Saint Nicholas appeared in front of the boy, blessed him, and set him down at his home in the town. And so the boy magically appeared in front of his parents still holding one of the king’s treasures: a golden cup.

This is one of the first stories told of Saint Nicholas protecting children.
Today, in Australia and many countries, Santa, Father Christmas, appears on Christmas Eve and gives children splendid gifts. In some countries, he is shown as a plump old man, with a snow white beard, wearing a red suit and hat. Yet, in other countries, Santa is not fat and wears a long red robe and a saint hat.
Santa’s Magic

On Christmas Eve, when all are asleep, legend has it that Santa silently creeps down the chimney and places the child’s Christmas present either in a stocking or under the beautifully decorated Christmas tree. Sometimes, families will leave out milk, cookies and carrots for Santa and his reindeers to eat, in return for the wondrous gifts he leaves.
Santa’s Faithful Reindeers

- In the tales of Santa Claus that we often hear, most of them will tell us about him and his reindeer.

- Santa’s group of flying reindeer pulls his sleigh to help him deliver gifts on Christmas Eve.

- The most commonly known reindeers are named: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner (sometimes spelled as Dunder or Doner), Blitzen (sometimes spelled as Blixen or Blixen) and Rudolf.
Rudolf The Red-nosed Reindeer

# Rudolf is a male reindeer with a red glowing nose, known as Santa’s 9th reindeer and often shown as the lead reindeer in paintings and drawings.

# Rudolph first appeared in a booklet written by Robert L. May in 1939 and published by Montgomery Ward.
Recipes for a Red Nose

There are a lot of legends about how Rudolph got a red nose. Here are two we believe are the most common.

He was struck by lightning. The story said that one Christmas, everyone got a cold, all but Rudolph. He was delivering presents when a streak of lightning struck him, then, as he was falling, another streak struck him and started up his heart, his nose was then left sparkling with electricity.

He got a cold. In a famous Rudolph movie, the story starts with a baby Rudolph sneezing loudly, and his nose glowing brightly from the sneeze.
Timeline

The legend of Santa evolved over time, this is a rough timeline of it.

842AD: First written life of St. Nicholas listing all his miracles, by Methodius, Bishop of Constantinople.

850AD: The Clergy of Cologne Cathedral were commemorating the death of the saint by giving fruit and cookies to the boys of the cathedral school, on the 6th December.

1300AD: Until this time Nicholas was said to have a short dark beard. Belief in Odin, who has a long white beard was mixed and Nicholas developed a white beard. In Germanic countries he was further changed with the character of 'Winterman' who supposedly came down from the mountains with the snows, dressed in furs and skins, heralding winter. This character was also known in Scandinavia, where the Lapps believed that he herded the reindeer down to lower pastures, and this was a sign that the winter snows were coming. Lapp homes had one opening, which was both door and smoke hole. They were dome shaped houses, usually covered with skins, and usually with top openings, a reason for the story that Santa comes down the chimney.

1931AD: Coca Cola began their major promotion using Santa to promote their drink. It is the Coca-Cola Santa which springs to mind now as the traditional Santa.
Saint Nicholas, His real life in Myra/turkey as a beloved saint and donator to the poor.

End page
The Life and Times of Saint Nicholas

What Was He Really Like?
# The Start of Santa

Most people think of Santa as a merry old man with a snow white beard, and find it hard to imagine him any other way. But he was very young when he first started caring for the unfortunate.

In 270 AD, little Nicholas was born in a place called Patara, which was in Greece. The area is now renamed Arsinoe, in Turkey.
This is the map of Patara, Nicholas’s home town.
Nick’s Parents

The names of Nicholas’s parents remains a mystery. Apparently, no known, and proven true, records contain their names.

It is said that the two people were faithful Christians, and raised their only son, Nicholas, to be one too. But, sadly, they both died, leaving Nicholas, still quite young, alone.
How they lived

- During Nicholas’s time, violence was common. The human rights were unknown, and the gap between women and men, rich and poor, was huge.

- Pirates, thieves, robbers, and outlaws would have been everywhere, and a big problem to rich and poor alike.

- Despite that, kind people like Nicholas existed. Those people would have saved many families from horrible lives.
How he lived

Nicholas was made a saint at a very young age, his parents, as earlier mentioned, raised him to become a faithful Christian, and, when they died, left him a vast fortune which he used mostly upon helping the poor and unfortunate. One story goes like this:

Once, there was a poor man who had three daughters. One of the daughters was old enough to get married, but her family was supposed to offer an expensive present, known as a dowry. Women from families without dowries were most likely to be sold as slaves. Then mysteriously, a bag of gold was tossed through the window, late at night. It provided enough money for the dowry. The gift was from Nicholas. In some versions of the tale, the gold landed in shoes or stockings, or, instead of in bags, the gold came as balls, which is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, is Santa's mark.
Once, he was imprisoned for being a Christian by the Roman emperor Diocletian. By then, the prisons were so full of priests, monks, and Christians in general, that there were no room left for the thieves, robbers, and murderers. Many died under the imprisonment.

But luckily, those alive were later released.
How he died

- Saint Nicholas passed away from old age on December the sixth, AD 343 in the town Myra.
- He was buried in his church, where a unique relic, called manna, formed inside his grave. It is thought a sign or blessing.
- The church is still standing today.
Santa Claus, whom everyone looks for on Christmas Eve, the bringer of gifts and happiness.
THE END
Bibliography

- www.stnicholas.org/pages/timeline/
- www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/
- http://www.biography.com/people/norman-rockwell-37249
- The Santa Claus Book – Alden Perkes
- Special thanks to our teachers for helping us complete this project.
- http://www.christmasarchives.org/santa.html